

Taylor, Abridged

By Theresa Tyree

Taylor is the barback at my bar. I've been a regular longer than he's worked there. When he got the job, it didn't take me long to learn his name because the very first thing he did was insult me. My bartenders and I regularly give each other a hard time. I suppose you could say it's our love language. We're sincere from time to time – we're all friends, and our jibes aren't meant to hurt. Instead, it feels like sparring. And Taylor caught on fast.

Taylor quickly became one of my favorite people to talk shit with. He was wicked in the ring; clever, articulate, and entirely too observant for his own good – everything he said was tailored with intention.

He was fun. That was all. Just fun. A pretty face, immaculate ginger hair, dark lengths of skinny jeans and a silver tongue. He was candy, something sweet for the eyes and ears while I sat at the bar with whiskey singeing my tongue, but something I could never trust to nourish me.

He was a man.

When I tell people I'm bisexual but don't date men, I get quizzical looks. "Doesn't that mean you're a lesbian?" they ask.

What it means is that I trust women to be sympathetic and respectful. One man I tried to date told me he was a feminist. Three dates later, he was guilt-tripping me for asking him not to

compliment me physically. This is the difference in gender; this is the divide in my interest: I can't be with partners who make me less than I am, who turn my needs into problems, who explain how symptoms of this corrupt society are something I should learn to avoid instead of fix.

One night, one of my bartenders came into the bar. It was the first time I'd gone dancing since the shooting in Orlando. I'd not only spent time on my makeup that night, I'd worn my favorite little black dress. I could have gone to war in that dress, a brunette version of Black Widow – I was dressed to kill. I'd done it on purpose to make myself feel comfortable that night at Blues. I was scared. Forty-nine of my queer siblings had just been murdered at Pulse, fifty-three injured. In response, I'd decided to go dancing to remind myself that not everyone in the world wanted to kill me with an assault rifle for being different. I wore my dress and mascara like battle paint – an anthem of my pride and a testament to my strength.



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A Matter of Gender

By Francesca Bongiorno Fortunato

It seems unlikely that there is anyone who truly "doesn't see gender," any more than there are people who "don't see color," though you'll find plenty of folk who make both of those claims. Some of my sisters and brothers in the bisexual/non-monosexual community will talk about "hearts, not parts." To some extent, that resonates with me. I am attracted to people, first because of who they are, not because of what's in their pants. As a bisexual woman married to a transgender woman, and with many trans and non-binary friends, I am constantly aware of the truth that gender is not defined by what's in your pants. And for people who aren't cisgender, gender (identity) can be very important, indeed. Because gender matters to them, it matters to me, too.

It seems that gender matters in an especially powerful way for transgender people whose identities do, in fact, express themselves on the binary. My wife would never use "they" pronouns. She is, most definitely, a "she," as much so as any cisgender woman. Because that matters to her (as a core identity), it matters, very much, to me too.

So, gender identity (and the imperative to honor it) is one reason that gender matters to me. There are other reasons too, though...

When I love someone, and am attracted to that person, I am drawn not only to a beautiful soul, but also to a face and body that become more and more beautiful to me as intimacy with that person deepens. If that person is a man, I revel in everything about him (appearance, voice, manner)

Francesca, continues on page 5

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From the Editors

Dear Reader,

This month's theme is "Does Gender Matter?" Is love really just love, no matter the gender of your partner(s)? Are your affections and attractions genderless, or do you crave or seek experiences with particular genders? Are you treated differently with different-gendered partners? Do you behave differently? In this issue, Theresa Tyree, Francesca Bongiorno Fortunato, Sara McCormick, Denarii Monroe, Marisa Rebecca, Jo-Anne Carlson, Courtney Carola and Liz share their writing on or around this theme.

We are particularly delighted to premier in this issue TWO new columns: The Bi Bookshelf by Sarah E. Rowley (pp. 10-11), and Advice From A. Rose Bi (pp. 14-15). And we plan to introduce a third new column in the next issue of *BWQ*. (Can you stand the suspense?)

For Around the World, Apphia Kumar interviews Indian bi activist Sonal Giani, and we are delighted to have a new comic from Why Not Both Co.

MB Austin interviews author Victoria Avilan, Amy M. Liebowitz reviews Casey Lawrence's latest book, *Order in the Court*, and finally, true to form, we bring you our **News Briefs** and **Calendar**.

If you live in the Boston area, please join us at one of our upcoming bi women's brunches on September 10 and October 16.

And if you've never contributed to *BWQ* before, please consider sharing your words, your artwork ... or your \$\$\$.

- Robyn

Another fan reads *BWQ*. Send a picture of yourself reading *BWQ* to biwomeneditor@gmail.com. Be creative!



Upcoming in the *Bi Women Quarterly*

Call for writing Winter 2017 issue: **Bi+ Space**

How do you find or build community? Where do you get support and affirmation of your bi+ identity? How important is it to build distinct bi+ support and social spaces? Why does it matter? Should we aim instead for an open, accepting queer society – or is the advancement of bi+ identity a necessary precursor or parallel track to that? *DUE BY Nov. 1.*

Call for writing Spring 2017 issue **Bi+ Creativity**

Does your bisexuality affect your creativity? How do you express your identity and/or sexuality in your writing, art, photography, dance, music? Share your inspirations, your process, your creative spirit, and whatever form you express it in (that is possible to print in this publication). *DUE BY Feb. 1.*

Submission guidelines are online at biwomenboston.org.

Send your submissions and suggestions for future topics to biwomeneditor@gmail.com

Note: If you do not want your full name published, or wish to use a pseudonym, just let us know.

***Bi Women Quarterly* is online at biwomenboston.org.**

BBWN is an all-volunteer organization. Want to host one of our monthly brunches, be the woman who coordinates the brunches or help out with our website (we use WordPress)? Or, if you're a student, consider an internship. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Robyn (biwomeneditor@gmail.com).

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. It is meant to be a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities, class backgrounds, racial, ethnic and religious groups, ages, abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay and transgender people within the larger society.

Around the World:

Apphia K. interviews Sonal Giani (India)

The first time we met, in July 2009, we were celebrating the decision of the Delhi High Court to decriminalize same-sex acts. I had been invited to speak and represent the bisexual community and had driven about 125 miles that morning, brought a custom-made 16-foot-long bisexual pride flag with me and was nervous. The flag hung from the roof of the high-rise metal shelter under which we had gathered that rainy morning. The crowded space next to it slowly emptied. Even the friends who had driven down with me disappeared. I waited by the bi flag, with a 10-foot radius of empty space around me, for another bisexual activist, L. Ramki, to join me. He was flying in from Chennai for moral support and to bear witness to the event. A young person came up to me and asked me what the flag was. She broke into a grin and said that she was bisexual too! She introduced herself as Sonal Giani.

On October 11, 2011, Sonal and I created a group on Facebook called [BOZ](#). It was magic to watch people adding each other, and those people adding more bisexuals they knew. We were so happy that we had found our community. That was five years ago.

AK: What has it been like, being bisexual and visible in India?

SG: When I met the LGBT community initially, I experienced phobia when people learned I was bisexual – being ambiguous about it was better. You were one of the first people I knew who openly identified as bisexual. I remember that you were at the [Queer Azaadi Mumbai](#) event with a big Bi Pride flag. It was natural for me to come stand with you. I felt a strong sense of belonging under that flag. Once I had that affirmation, I felt more confident to identify as bisexual.

I remember coming to your party in Pune way back when. There was a pretty girl there with a guy. I noticed her noticing me so I went to talk to her. I asked her if she was bisexual. She stared at me for a moment, then firmly stated that she was bisexual and that this place was for everyone! I think she thought that I was cute right until that moment. I found it funny but good at the same time, and glad that it was a safe place. I like the way she “handled me.” After that incident and party, I felt like I could identify as bisexual again.

At the [Integrated Network for Sexual Minorities Conference](#), we were on a panel together and you talked about biphobia and gaywashing (when a bisexual person does something and then that act or person is identified as gay by the media or the community at large). I realized that someone was articulating these issues for the first time. That was a turning point for me; it resonated with me. You and I were the only people who were openly identified as bisexual at that conference. I felt like the bisexual movement didn't really exist here earlier and I had yet to meet people in my immediate community who would speak about bisexuality. When we created BOZ I didn't expect more than 10 people to join up. We grew so rapidly! Overnight, we had grown to 150 members.

At the [AMALTAS summit](#) in 2012, I remember speaking about poly relationships, bi invisibility, the right to marry, not wanting the right to marry and how it affected our bi-

sexual community. We did an online focus group discussion with 20 people who were talking about the bi community. I felt like I was way ahead of my time.

Looking back, I realize that even though it seemed like we weren't doing enough back then, we were creating history.

AK: What has your experience been like ‘coming into’ the community, through a bisexual lens?

Sonal, continues on next page

Photo: Kashish



Sonal, continued from previous page

SG: I prefer using the term ‘communities.’ We’re activists, party goers, a social community, etc. My “coming into community story” was specifically a coming into an activist community. Seven years ago I wouldn’t have imagined being where I am. At [Humsafar Trust](#) (one of the largest non-governmental organizations in Mumbai that creates spaces for LGBT people) I was always invited to the table. They ensured that the bi community was represented and given independent spaces in which to exist.

My experiences at parties and dating haven’t been nice. I’ve had people not wanting to talk to me when I came out as bi. Assumptions were flung. Partners had insecurities and promiscuity came along with the label. I have identified as ‘queer’ to avoid the biphobia. The word ‘queer’ is great, but we shouldn’t hide behind it... I’m trying to use the positivity that I’ve found in the activist space to influence the dating/social world.

AK: It used to be difficult to be bisexual in India. When we first started BOZ, it was very active but seems to have gone quiet. But! There seem to be more of us now than before. What in your opinion has changed for bisexuals in India?

SG: BOZ is proof that we have been around for a while now. They can never take that away from us. We used it as a space to tackle biphobia in our communities but didn’t do anything offline; that’s what hurt us. There is a lot more bisexual presence in offline groups.

My being visible has definitely changed things for the bi community in Mumbai. In the last six years, I’ve seen more bisexual women being out and visible. I see them in [Yaariyan](#) and other youth groups, and I see a strong presence of bi women in leadership positions. Bisexual men are slowly becoming more visible, which is a great change to see and experience. They are far behind the women in the movement, and that’s the reverse of what we see in the gay community, and I wonder what that means.

We are actively addressing and fighting biphobia and that is creating space for people to come out. When you see someone challenging biphobia, it helps. When one of your friends is out as bisexual, that helps too!

We now have people demanding bi inclusion in queer spaces and in a lot of assumed non-queer spaces, people are coming out about fluid sexualities, pansexuality and bi curiosity. We’re seeing people embrace these other labels. There are more people talking about biphobia in various forums. I get tagged in conversations where people are challenging biphobia... and I get tagged when the person has stopped making progress.

Even today, if a bisexual woman is forced to get married and she leaves her same-sex partner to marry a man, the community alienates her, cutting her off, simply because she



Photo: Purple Skies

Sonal in a rainbow saree with her partner at a shoot for *Purple Skies* (2014)

was forced into another path. We’re harsher on queer people who have an opposite gender attraction. There is a pressure on bisexuals to prove monogamy and I don’t understand why that’s on us!

A lot of people have tried to conveniently erase our history. Raja Rao erased the work you did in Pune, in an article I read – he wrote about older groups but very conveniently erased the Youth LGBTQ Movement and Bisexual Movement that you had created – which at the time was one of the largest, most active groups. We, groups like Yaariyan, came after that. The only way to counter that is to be so visible that they cannot erase us!

AK: What are you working on now, community-wise?

SG: I’m taking a bit of a sabbatical; Self-care is my top priority. I feel like I’ve been in a bubble. I want to meet people outside Humsafar Trust (HST) and expand my horizons. I want to get back to my first love – working in film. There is very little content on film about bisexuals. I would like to tell stories through film and document bi history. It is something I have to do. Left to the others, we will be erased from history and I want to make sure that I do something about it.

AK: You recently left HST. What have been some of your greatest accomplishments and challenges?

SG: HST was my strongest support system. There, I learned how to stand up for myself. I saw people who were visible, representing the community with the media. It gave me a sense of Pride. There are a couple of biphobic people there, but they don’t represent the organization. In my experience HST is bi-friendly and has created a very accessible space. There were jokes made, I was called a lesbian – but I kept correcting them. I appreciate that they stayed engaged and took the time to understand that there was something more

Sonal, continues on next page

Sonal, continued from previous page

here. I value that I was challenged while we delved into the challenges of what the bi identity means.

Luckily, that girl at your party taught me to have thick skin to be able to take it on!



Over the years, Sonal has become one of the most recognized, visible and inspiring activists on the ground in India. She has previously worked with [Humsafar Trust](#). She is a part of [Umang](#) – a support group for lesbians, bi women and transpersons and is the founder of [Yaariyan](#) – a youth group for LGBT people. A filmmaker at heart, Sonal has played a pivotal role in [Kashish](#), an LGBT Film Festival in Mumbai, and produced a Marathi play called [Ek Madhav Baug](#). She has starred in [Connected HumTum](#), a popular Indian TV show and [W](#), a Bollywood film. Sonal is also featured in [Purple Skies](#), the first LBT Documentary to be broadcast on public television!

A warrior, survivor, the voice in the room reminding it to be bi affirming and inclusive, a hugabolic, a poet who loves to sing, [Apphia Kumar](#) refuses to tiptoe around biphobia and bi-erasure. To her knowledge, she is the first person to be granted asylum in the U.S. as a bisexual person and, in addition to her work with SALGA-NYC, she is working on creating more AAPI bisexual spaces and on immigration issues through the bisexual experience.



Photo: Apphia Kumar

Sonal (left) with Apphia, in 2012, right after the taping of *Zindagi Live*, a talk show that did a story about three bisexual women and one queer woman.

Francesca, continued from page 1

that strikes me as masculine. If that person is a woman, I delight in all of her outward signs of femininity, as well as her womanly ways of being in the world. I have never been in an intimate relationship with someone non-binary, but, if I were, I imagine that the ways that non-binary gender was expressed, in their appearance and personality, would be wonderful to me, too. In essence, what this means is that I can be attracted to people of more than one gender, and that the person's gender expression will, in every case, be part of what attracts me. It will never be irrelevant.

Another way gender matters for me as a bisexual woman is the ways in which the gender of my partner impact the ways that I am seen by others in the world. I have always had to work much harder at staying out as bisexual when in a relationship with a man. The "straight appearing" relationship creates a default closet if you're not constantly vigilant about outing yourself as bisexual. And, of course, when in a relationship with a woman (as I have been now with my wife, for seven years), there is the assumption that I identify as lesbian. That, too, is something that I have to be very intentional about correcting. It's a bit easier, though, because at least people aren't assuming that I'm straight.

Finally, gender matters for me as an individual. I am a cisgender woman who has a very strong feminine identity, and a presentation that's usually somewhere on the medium-high femme spectrum. I feel most comfortable emotionally when my outward appearance corresponds to my inner sense of self. Sometimes this manifests in ways that make me laugh at myself just a bit, as happened a few days ago when I realized that I had forgotten to put on earrings. "Oh, no; not naked ears!" And so I went to a dollar store and bought a pair of earrings so I wouldn't have to go a whole day without any.

It also manifests as discomfort when I am in circumstances that require me to dress and present in ways that I would not otherwise choose. I do occasional staged readings with the Instant Shakespeare Company. Earlier this summer, I was cast as Valentine, one of the two gentlemen in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. With my hair scraped back in a ponytail, no makeup except foundation, and a pair of plain black pants with a black blazer, I looked as masculine as it's possible for a curvy woman to look (without binding her chest; something I wouldn't do even for art.) When I looked in the mirror, there were two voices in my head. One voice said, "Good. You look the part. Now go and act it well." The other voice said, "Yuck. You look ugly!" It's experiences like those described which have helped me to reflect on my own gender identity and to understand that gender identity is something that I, as a cisgender woman, actually have.

These are the ways in which gender matters, for this bisexual woman, in relationships with others, and with myself. Your mileage may vary.



Rev. Francesca Bongiorno Fortunato lives in New York City with her wife, Lynn, and their cats, Alice and Gracie. She is teaching dance classes twice a week and is otherwise unemployed, so her job is looking for work!

why all my friends have curly hair/why all my friends are redheads

By Sara McCormick

my first love was curls
she was frost and silver and bare branches
she was hawthorn and she was stars
she pressed her bleeding palm against mine and we were joined
i did not know then that when i cut out her heart i was also carving out mine

my last love is freckles
he is copper and amber and red
he is dandelion and he is sun
where i have turned to ashes he gently rakes them into a soft bed
he gathers kindling and tinder and coal
he strikes steel to flint and breathes and breathes

i am still surrounded by curls
but they are gold and red and chestnut and red
and red and red and red
she was snowfall
she was moonlight
but he is spring

~~~~~  
*Sara McCormick is a Public Health student, activist and writer from Cleveland, Ohio. Her professional interests are in promoting queer health, preventing sexual- and gender-based violence and deconstructing systematic oppression.*

## \*\*\*Counting\*\*\*

By Denarii Monroe

“How are you doing?”

I’m empty  
inside;  
no will  
to fill  
my belly.  
I’m useless;  
unable  
to defend  
my Pride.  
I’m frozen  
in fear  
in anger  
in sorrow  
in



“Is this when it hits?”

The PFZT PFZT PFZT of bullets striking into the mist.

I’m tired  
of the merry-go-round.

Let me out  
of this amusement  
park.

We are  
no longer  
amused,  
used  
for political gain.

This isn’t a game.

How many victims can you name?

How many newscasts look the same?

So many pointing fingers, but we’re to blame.

“How are you doing?”

I’m silent  
and screaming  
and quiet

and reeling,

but

I can laugh.

I can laugh.

And that’s  
something.

~~~~~  
Denarii (rhymes with “canary”) is a New York-based freelance writer/editor, aspiring screenwriter and activist. She loves social justice liberation, red wine, cooking and eating, and blues and jazz.

Crush

By Marisa Rebecca

What I think of when I think of you:
That you must drive the silver car in the lot
Because it matches your hair.
You must know this about me,
That I think of you, just because,
That I continue to tell endless stories—
Continue to look endlessly for you
When I know nothing of you at all, except the snap
That woke me in the night. The snap
That was always there; the crush of it
Telling me to be who I am from the deep.
It is electric—my desire, and barbed.
It is an impossible knot threaded with an ocean of
your salt.

Still there is a lapping at the shore, a tidal breathing,
A pattern of content. There is time, still.
Letting go is breathing;
Letting go is a practice.
The snap of my electric fence is a metronome,
listen—
May you be happy. May you be safe. May you have
peace in your heart.
What I think of when I think of you:
You are ice,
You are the last day of ice on the pond.



Marisa Rebecca is a graduate student of Public Health. She is a reader, writer, diarist, happily married and living in Vermont.

The Love I Give

By Jo-Anne Carlson

He or she
You, me,
Together.
I feel free,
No matter
The parts you have.
He or she,
Within, without,
Never defines
The love I give
You, me,
Together.
The person within
Brings joy, and still
Who you are
Is all that matters,
The love I give
You, me
Together.



Jo-Anne Carlson is a writer, artist and musician. Check out her websites: www.expressionsbyjo.com and www.lifebyjo.com.

Speed Dating

By Why Not Both Co



Why Not Both Co is a duo incorporating humor and inclusivity through online comics. The duo consists of the bisexual creators AV and Amanda Wells.

Love is Blind (but people are not)

By Courtney Carola

Love won a year ago, but my relationship is still a street performance
I know my girlfriend has always wanted to be an actress, and I can't deny that a talent like her deserves to be in the spotlight, but not like this
No, certainly, not like this
But when my girlfriend and I hold hands in public, or when I lean on her shoulder at the movies, or when I kiss her goodbye at the bus stop, anxiety eats away at my chest
And I find myself drowning in fear instead of her
Just being together, I know we attract unwanted attention, lingering eyes
People sneer in disgust or stare for too long
They get off of the train when they see us leaning against each other
Uber drivers won't make conversation with us when they see our fingers laced in the back seat
Meanwhile, everywhere I look –
On the street, at the store, in movies, on book and magazine covers –
Men and women are able to embrace each other
To kiss each other
To love fully and without limits
Without fear of ridicule or abuse
And I know it isn't fair to assume every couple I see is straight
But damn it, if I don't envy the privilege they have –
The privilege they don't even realize they have
The privilege they take for granted when they take their partner out of the house
Because when I take mine out, I have to survey the scene and judge the crowd before deciding if I can be brave enough to take her hand in mine

Love won a year ago, but my relationship is still a rebellion
I certainly enjoyed reading *The Hunger Games* and I always thought Katniss was a brilliant character
But in all honesty, I never wanted to be like her
I never wanted to be a rebel, I never wanted to be a hero
I just wanted to be a girl who finally found love
And I did, and she just happened to be a girl as well
And yes, our love is beautiful and a story in itself, but just because two girls love each other does not mean they have to become protagonists in a feature film they didn't want to be cast in
I suppose it is brave to be nothing but yourself when it feels like the rest of the world wants you to be something else
And yes, I can understand why people tell me that my relationship is a radical act of protest
But it's just so exhausting sometimes
Because sometimes, I don't want to be resilient
And I don't want to be strong
I just want to be held by the girl I love
Without feeling like the entire world is watching us

Love won a year ago,
But I can't figure out why I still feel like such a loser



Courtney Carola, 22, is a bisexual amateur indie author and college student at Fairleigh Dickinson University, studying to be a teacher. Her hobbies include fighting bi erasure, reminding everyone that bisexuals are valid, and taking pictures of the moon.



Photo: Courtney Carola

The Bi Bookshelf

Books that might be of interest to readers of the *Bi Women Quarterly*

By Sarah E. Rowley

New Fiction Featuring Bisexual Women

One of the biggest U.S. books of 2016 so far is **Jennifer Haigh's *Heat and Light***, a novel about the coming of fracking to a small Pennsylvania town. A bisexual woman grappling with her sexuality and her lesbian or trans partner appears to be central to the plot, and so far reviews, which are using the term "Great American Novel," are glowing.

A bi woman is also central to ***The Regulars* by Georgia Clark**, which seems to be a fluffy feminist beach novel with a sci-fi twist. A bi feminist journalist in New York and her two straight friends drink a substance that temporarily changes them into more conventionally attractive versions of themselves; in the journalist's case, it leads to an affair with a famous lesbian filmmaker.

Nina Revoyr's *Lost Canyon*, a thriller about a hiking trip gone wrong, is a fast-paced, fun read deepened by good character work, and though her sexuality is a very minor point, its true hero is a Black bisexual woman. Out Japanese-American author Revoyr brilliantly shows how the different racial identities of the hikers affect their approaches to moral dilemmas and survival, and explores the racial realities of the marijuana wars in US national parks.

Tessa Hadley's deeply English family drama ***The Past*** features Harriet, a married woman who falls hard for her brother's Argentinian wife. The book is an elegy for the English gentry – rural, middle-class, Anglican liberals who are disappearing along with the farmers they once lorded over – and explores how each generation repeats the mistakes of the last.

In Malaysian-British author **Zen Cho's** brief novella ***The Terracotta Bride*** (currently available only as an e-book), a dead woman married to the richest bureaucrat in hell finds her life transformed when he brings home a golem-like second wife made from terracotta. Reviews praise her exploration of hell as metaphor for patriarchy and queer women's experience in a traditional Chinese supernatural setting.

All the short stories in **Helen Oyeyemi's** excellent collection ***What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours: Stories*** feature keys in some way, but they also center on bisexual, lesbian, gay and trans characters who are normalized in a magical realist world where ghosts, sentient puppets, and witches rub shoulders with middle-aged psychiatrists, tyrants, and feminist undergrads. It's a great introduction for anyone who hasn't yet encountered this talented British-Nigerian author.

Sarah McCarry's *About a Girl*, a retelling of the Greek myth of Atalanta with a bisexual heroine and transboy

love interest, was a finalist for the 2016 Lambda Literary Award in Young Adult literature. The last in the author's well-reviewed *Metamorphoses* trilogy, the book probably improves if you've read the first two.

New Work from Out Authors

Out bisexual author **Nalo Hopkinson** has a new book out! ***Falling in Love with Hominids***, a collection of eight short stories, is the latest from the acclaimed science fiction and fantasy author who has revolutionized science fiction and fantasy with her clever use of her own African-Caribbean-Canadian heritage.

In other exciting news, out lesbian African-American author **Jacqueline Woodson** has published her first adult novel in twenty years. ***Another Brooklyn*** explores black female friendship in 1970s New York, and will likely find a wide audience coming just after Woodson won the National Book Award for her memoir in verse, *Brown Girl Dreaming*.

Out Japanese-Canadian author **Mariko Tamaki**, who together with her illustrator cousin Jillian has taken on queer teen experience and female friendship in the excellent graphic novels *Skim* and *This One Summer*, has written a solo (non-graphic) young adult novel with a queerspawn [child of LGBTQ parents] protagonist. ***Saving Montgomery Sole*** finds the title character, a 16-year-old with two moms and an interest in the occult, struggling not to meet bigotry with bigotry when a conservative preacher moves to her small town.

Other Books of Interest

Chinelo Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees* – a beautifully written account of a young lesbian growing up in Nigeria during the 1970s and '80s – is now out in paperback. Unlike many authors, Okparanta doesn't vilify queer women who marry men, and boldly argues with homophobic use of the Bible. The book is a direct response to the 2014 Nigerian law that criminalized same-sex relationships and support for such relationships, making those offenses punishable by up to fourteen years in prison or stoning; it will grab anyone who read Okparanta's wonderful short story collection, *Happiness, Like Water*.

Somali-American fantasy writer **Sofia Samatar** has published ***The Winged Histories***, a companion to her dazzling

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novel *A Stranger in Olondria*. It tells the stories of four women on different sides of the Olondrian civil war, including that of the cross-dressing general who starts the conflict, and her lover, a poet who grapples with the good and bad of her nomadic people's traditional ways. Samatar's brainy and beautiful work explores the different ways women's stories are told and not told; you don't need to have read the first book, though I found it helpful.

One of the hottest young adult books of the summer is *If I Was Your Girl* by **Meredith Russo**, which has won acclaim as a novel about a teen trans girl actually written by a trans woman.

Also attracting positive attention is *Symptoms of Being Human* by **Jeff Garvin**, a young adult novel about Riley, a

gender-fluid teenager grappling with friendship, romance, and bullies. Readers never learn Riley's birth-assigned gender, but their story has been winning hearts left and right.

The Sunlight Pilgrims by **Jenni Fagan** is out in paperback. This book, often compared to the literary post-apocalyptic hit *Station Eleven*, centers on three characters in a Scottish trailer park when nuclear winters hits; one of them is a 12-year-old trans girl who finds the apocalypse interrupts her ability to get hormone blockers. So far reviews are excellent.

~~~~~  
*Sarah E. Rowley is co-editor of Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World.*

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## Gender Matters in Relationships Because We Experience Gender as Meaningful Elsewhere

*By Liz*

On paper, gender might not matter because it might not be an influential factor in attraction. Ideally, I don't want gender to matter. My capacities for affection and attraction are not confined by gender. In concept, gender might not matter because positive intimate relationships can offer oases from everyday patriarchal pressures and binary assumptions. I feel most relaxed and cared for in spaces where gender does not dictate social behaviors and I've found a person's gender doesn't affect their ability to provide that space. However, in practice, gender matters.

We experience gender as meaningful outside relationships and our relationships are not insulated from the rest of our lives. We experience family, workplace, and public spaces similarly or differently from our partners depending on similarities and differences in our perceived genders or lack thereof. We bring those experiences back to our partners, positive and negative. Reasonably, we may want our partners to have similar or different experiences related to gender, race, class, religion, or other aspects of identity and lived experience.

As an adolescent, I assumed dating men and women would be inherently different and each would have their upsides and downsides. I later learned it is only inherently different if a person wants it to be by emphasizing gender roles. Casually dating in my early twenties, I was bothered by the fact that my presumed role in a potential relationship changed depending on the preferred gender performance of my partner. In this small sampling of experiences I found my masculinity was more valued among women and my femininity was more valued among men. So moving into

more committed partnerships, I primarily dated individuals with non-binary sexualities [beyond gay and straight] and with similar perspectives on gender. This change led to comfortable relationships, but had the side-effect of skewing my available dating pool away from men. I felt a lot gayer and a bit higher on the Kinsey scale. I redefined the role gender played in my practiced sexuality. I felt more "homo" since even my male partners' perspectives on gender were more similar to mine.

As women with non-binary sexualities explore their identities and how they speak and write about their sexuality it is likely that gender will continue to have a great influence on the language of sexuality. Historically, academic and scientific knowledge of sexuality has been instrumental in normalizing LGBTQIA experiences and pressing for civil rights legislation. The embrace of the "non-label" could work to minimize the importance of gender in discussing sexuality, but labels with definitions are easier to study. My more recent understanding of my sexuality and how I conduct my partnerships didn't quite fit into survey studies hoping to inform physical and mental health treatments in our communities. There wasn't exactly space in multiple choice questions to express that my male partner was also bi and the default list of sexual activity questions for a different sex couple didn't quite fit. For better or worse, gender matters in how we learn about ourselves as individuals and as a community because it is meaningful elsewhere.

~~~~~  
Liz is a twenty-something science writer.

Real Characters: Love & Gender in Victoria Avilan's Novels

By MB Austin

Victoria Avilan is the author of two stand-alone novels, *A Small Country About to Vanish* and *The Art of Peeling an Orange*. The first follows two women over the course of forty years, from their shared girlhood in Israel to their very different adulthoods. It reads with the intimacy of a memoir, but weaves the voices of multiple characters together to give a richer perspective on life in Israel from the 1970's to current times. The second follows Carly, a painter knocked out of her own reality by grief, betrayal, and an obsession with the woman for whom her fiancée left her. As she uncovers layers of truth about herself and Anna, we share her sense of peril and exhilaration. The twists never end and when the curtain falls we have two equally fitting endings to choose from.

Both novels share two key elements crucial to me as a reader: beautiful writing that makes me feel like I am in the story, experiencing it through my own senses, and characters who grab me by the hand and pull me along on their journeys. You can find them on Amazon, and by visiting www.vicavilan.com.



MB: *As a bi woman married to a woman, with friends all over the map in terms of gender and sexual orientation, I love that your character ensembles reflect my reality in a way that feels organic and authentic. How do you manage that?*

VA: The world we all share isn't perfect, but literature should be. I wanted my books to be real life but without the labels. In love and hate gender is irrelevant. When writing, I think only of my characters, who fall in love, suffer heartbreak and do what they want, be it art, music, gardening or mixing potent alcoholic drinks. We like to think we have control, we try to move a certain way in the world and we do have choices. But since we don't know the future, mostly we swim in the dark and bump into random objects, sometimes sharp. We fall in love unexpectedly, desperately. I never expected to fall in love with a woman, yet I've loved my wife for 28 years now. Before her I loved a man with what I thought was the same intimacy, and when it was over the heartbreak was just a heartbreak.

MB: On the question, "Does gender matter?" I interpreted *A Small Country's* answer as "sometimes." In this story, Rona shares Shelli's attraction, but her adolescent self can't see bucking her own expectations and her peers' to choose Shelli over her boyfriend Eithan. One generation later, her teenage daughter feels torn by a similar triangle, but instead of societal pressure, only worries about making the right choice between two individuals she could love. Does the difference in choices and concerns for these two represent a societal shift, or personality differences, or both?

VA: A societal shift. Gila is roughly at the age her mother had been when peer pressure had made her give up her girl-lover. Twenty years later, the young Gila is naturally subject to peer pressure, but she isn't judged by who she chooses to love. Her peers couldn't care less whether she loves Sophie, Ramon, or both equally.

MB: In contrast, gender feels like a minor factor in *The Art of Peeling an Orange*. Larger-than-life Anna has a string of lovers, starting with her unforgettable first love, a man, and then women and men, as a serial monogamist. One of the points of suspense is whether she really loves any of them, or only uses them. Are you intentionally working in a point about the quality of love being more important than the genders of the lovers, or am I projecting my own views here?

VA: Does art exist if we can't see it? Does love exist when we die? Yes. Carly and Anna find the answer to that question the hard way. Writing *Orange*, I imagined "love absolute," the poetic and grand operatic kind that doesn't notice gender.

Avilan, continues on next page

Avilan, continued from previous page

That love is Anna, whose beauty goes beyond the obvious. Anyone who sees her is stupefied and blinded by her physical beauty, unable to see her truth. Then Carly – who has the sensitive eye of an artist – shows up in her life. Carly isn't fooled for a second.

MB: I can see it being hard to fit either of these novels into a tidy category, or virtual shelf, on book sites online. Have you run into any trouble with readers who expect things they won't get, such as a traditional-formula romance, straight-only relationships, lesbian-only relationships, or characters who fit neatly into boxes?

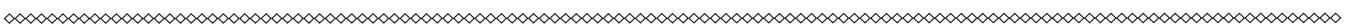
VA: Thanks for noticing my intention. I don't have a publisher behind me, so I write only to please myself. Readers don't know what to expect from either one of my books, and when they find out, they either love or hate it. I've seen complaints about my obsession with sex, or art, or descriptions of color, or about the insanity of either myself and/or my characters. One of my favorite reviews claimed, "It could have been written without the massive amount of alcohol consumption." It's all good. I read all genres, but

when writing I avoid anything I may have read elsewhere. My novels, like my characters, don't have labels or genre and they won't give you a restful reading time, sorry about that....

MB: When I love a book I've just read, I talk it up to my friends, mention it on Facebook, sometimes tweet a link. But what can I do to help people outside my circles find your work?

VA: Keep talking and tweeting – thank you for that. My readers and their word of mouth are my best advertisers. At the moment both my books and the alternative ending for *Orange* are only available on Amazon. The number of reviews is most effective in generating interest on Amazon. Without honest reviews even an award-winning novel will eventually sink into book oblivion and die. Readers, please review all the books you enjoyed reading.

Writer MB Austin has been bi all of her life, and graced by the love of her wife for half of it. Learn more at www.mbaustin.me.



BBWN's May brunch at Robyn's



Stuff & Stuff for the Summer 2016 issue

JOIN US!

**Come spend time with
some smart, interesting
women!**

Advice From A. Rose Bi



A. Rose Bi is thrilled to be writing *Bi Women Quarterly's* new advice column. An avid BWQ reader herself, A. proudly identifies as a bisexual woman. She currently lives in New England with her boyfriend and her two stupidly adorable cats.

In addition to being an out bi woman, A. has a degree in Cognitive Science, has completed trainings for LGBTQ+ and sexual assault survivor advocacy, and has experience answering calls for an anonymous LGBTQ+ help line. She is passionate about feminism, the bi+ community, LGBTQ+ and female representation in the media, and helping others.

A. Rose Bi's column relies on questions from readers like you! You can send any questions you might have or suspect other readers may have to the author directly at askbwq@gmail.com. All questions are anonymous, nothing is off-limits, and anything related to upcoming issue topics is extra-encouraged!

Dear A. Rose Bi,

My girlfriend jokes a lot about how gross it is that I've slept with, and am attracted to, men. She reassures me that it's all in good fun, and I'm inclined to believe her. How do I know if she's not simply rejecting my identity?

Thanks,

Is She Joking?

Dear *Is She Joking*,

I'm sorry to hear that there's even a question that your girlfriend might be rejecting your identity! Unfortunately, many bi+ people deal with slight skepticism (or full dismissal) of their identity from their gay, lesbian, or straight partners – and it totally sucks.

For your situation, I'm wondering what makes you inclined to believe her? If you have a happy and healthy relationship, my guess would be that she isn't dismissing your identity and is genuinely just sticking with a joke, albeit a really unfunny joke. However, if she has said or done anything outside

of this that also makes you feel like this, this might need to be a larger conversation. Either way, if her comments, offhanded or not, are bothering you at all, my suggestion is to call her out next time. Let your girlfriend know that even though she might mean it as a joke, what she's saying is giving you doubts about whether or not she has issues with you being bi. Even if she pushes back and continues to argue that it's "just a joke," explain to her that it's not a joke to you, and that you'd appreciate it if she stopped. At that point, regardless of what the topic is, if one person in a relationship is making a joke that makes the other feel uncomfortable and it's been communicated clearly that this is the case, the respectful way for them to handle it is to stop making the joke.

Hopefully this is just a misguided attempt at a laugh from your girlfriend and not a sign of a deeper issue, but at the end of the day, you'll never really know without talking to her about it. And just to remind you, your identity is *never gross* and *no one should make you feel that way*.

Thanks & love,

A. Rose Bi

Letter to the Editor

Dear BWQ,

In my two or three years of reading/contributing/editing, I think the Labels issue is the very best issue ever. The topic elicited so many spirited responses echoing two primary themes: "Yes, they are important," and "Who cares?" I particularly enjoyed the oft repeated thought, "I embrace my labels." I believe we need labels because they are maps to who people are. Properly used, properly owned, they can empower us. At my age (79), I realize from these young voices how much life I have missed due to my Naval Academy college environment, naval career, and having been married for all but two years since 1960. No room for exploration. (Well, I do have a Honduras dive trip coming up next month.) Will be different in my next life when I am born into the right body and have a broader education? One can hope. For now, one can dream.

Thank you for this world.
Me ke aloha pumehana
Robyn Walters, Hawai'i

Theresa, continued from page 1

But when my relationship-troubled, drunk-off-his-ass bartender walks in for a nightcap at his place of work before calling it a night, that isn't how he seems to see it.

Pete is a wonderful man. He makes some of the best damn cocktails I've ever had. He's inventive, he's funny, and he's made me laugh in dark times. But too many friendly back rubs on exposed skin suddenly screamed danger.

My bar is a safe place. I'm never afraid there the way I am in other establishments, the way I am sometimes on the streets where I thread my keys preemptively through my fingers. Everyone looks out for each other here, and the bar staff is watchful. Even though Tony is busy with drink orders and Kelly (the only woman employed at the bar and my automatic ally) and Cliff set out for home a half hour before when their shifts ended, Jim sits two chairs down from me at the bar, nursing his mezcal. I know he's paying attention.

He's not the only one.

Taylor stops to talk to me. He cleans a glass nearby. He passes us at the end of the bar on his way to the backroom. I know he's aware. I can feel him watching.

So even though I'm uncomfortable and Pete is invading my space and leaning against me in a way I know he never would when sober, I smile and I laugh and I verbally disarm him. When he grasps my wrist and holds too tight, I ask him what he's doing and hold my wrist up so he and everybody else can see his fingers on my skin. Perhaps it is this last action that restores a modicum of sense to Pete's alcohol-riddled brain, the sight of my bare wrist confined in his hand for no reason. He lets go. Then he departs for a smoke outside.

I immediately switch chairs, changing my position from the easily accessible end of the bar to one chair in, next to Jim. I stay for another twenty minutes. Tony and Jim talk some smack about Pete's behavior, finish me with a champagne cocktail, and send me on my way feeling full and relieved again. But as I turn the corner to my car, I pull out my phone and send a message to Taylor.

I have a few of the bar staff's numbers. Taylor asked to be my friend on Facebook a while back. This is the first time I've made direct use of this connection, however.

I pull up a new message and type. *I wasn't imagining it, right? Pete was definitely a little too much in my space?*

I'm driving when I get his response. I wait until I get home to check it. When I do, I'm taken aback.

No, you weren't imagining it. I don't know why he thought that was appropriate, but everyone noticed. I apologize for that. He seemed pretty fucked up. But that's no excuse.

I expected a very short answer, just a yes or no. A small reassurance, like the ones Tony and Jim offered me at the bar. Instead, he's apologizing. He's angry.

Thanks, dude, I respond. It was good knowing you and Jim were there, though. This wasn't your fault at all. Toootally on Pete. I'm just glad to know I wasn't imagining it.

I'm saying this because I don't want him to feel like I'm mad at him. Or maybe it's a conditioned response at this point. I like what he's saying, and I'm afraid if he thinks I take issue with him or "all men" he'll stop saying it.

Yeah but still, he continues, I feel the need to apologize for more. This is a total boys' club (even with Kelly) and all of our humor is unnecessarily crude and of a rudimentary sexual nature. None of it is serious, but it can get out of hand sometimes. Seeing not only Pete, but some things Jim did really reminded me why women desire safe spaces, generally and understandably, with other women. You're an awesome and intelligent person and I'm always happy to have you in my bar. I hope this hasn't deterred you from joining us sometime in the future.

Now I'm touched. The empathy of his first message was enough to make me feel justified in my discomfort earlier. Now he's calling out not only Pete, but the bar as a whole, even maybe himself. He's admitting things I didn't ask him to admit. Completely unsolicited, with no nudging whatsoever from me.

I wash off my makeup, change into my pajamas, and write back. *Dude, never. I love the bar, and I've called out the staff before about sexist stuff and been met with totally mature responses when they're sober. I feel valued and protected at the bar. I know if it had gotten out of hand not only could I have dealt with it, but I wouldn't have had to. You and Jim totally had my back, and I knew you were there for me. I do appreciate the apology and the sympathy, though. I don't know many men that could be as upfront about this as you've been. Seriously, thanks.*

Not a problem, he tells me. I would do it to my dying breath. Although we're all victims of the human condition with all of its ego and stupidity, we will continue to fall short of greatness many more times. Assuredly. AND I WILL NOT FUCKING STAND FOR IT!!!

Curled up in bed, I stare at my phone with a sense of awe. Taylor's messages weren't just an apology, weren't just an admonishment of others or an admission of participation, however accidental. They were the rage I felt whenever a man catcalled me on the street, whenever someone talked down to me or reduced me to my body. They were the exhaustion and the nights hidden in books and bottles of wine, because at least those couldn't argue with me or call me crazy. They were the battle cry against the acceptance of learning to live in a world where when male friends got drunk and touched me, I let them.

Suddenly, Taylor's not just a pretty face in flattering skinny jeans. Suddenly, he's done everything I'd grown to think men incapable of in a few short messages. Suddenly, I'm intrigued.

You have a good night, Theresa, he says. Keep dancing, keep talking shit.

Theresa Tyree is a graduate student studying book publishing at Portland State University. In her spare time, she blogs about food and media at noodlesfromtomorrow.blogspot.com.

Book Review: Order in the Court

By Amy M. Leibowitz

In this new young adult novel, Corey Nguyen watched her three best friends fall victim to a killer, but it's becoming clear her ordeal won't end there. While trying to be a college student, have some kind of social life, and just be normal again, she learns the murderer is demanding a trial. He claims he's innocent and was forced into confessing – which means Corey will have to testify to what she saw. The idea of facing the killer in court worsens Corey's anxiety and forces her to relive the horrifying events of that night. And just when she thinks things can't get worse, she realizes her mother and the prosecuting attorney are probably more than friends. All Corey wants is to put the tragedy behind her, but it's clear the end is not yet in sight.

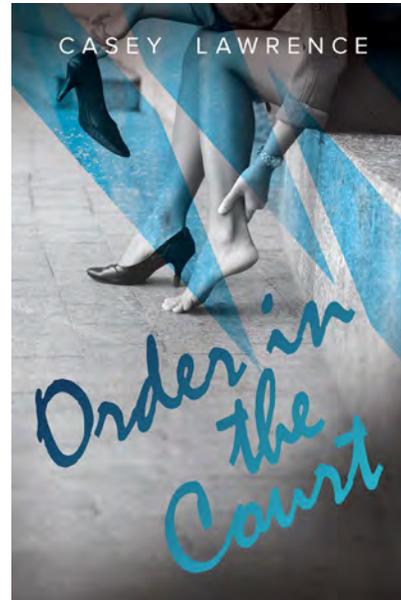
Like its predecessor (*Out of Order*), the second book in the Survivors Club series relies on an unusual narrative timeline to tell the continuing story of Corey Ngyuen in the aftermath of the brutal murders of her best friends. I was doubtful a second book could keep pace with the first, but any misgivings I had were quickly banished. It's every bit as good, and the variable timeline works equally well with the new story.

While preparing for and testifying at the trial of her friends' killer as the only witness, Corey is navigating life as a college freshman and staying under the radar to keep from being found out as "murder girl." She's also maintaining friendships with the two boys who had emotional connections to her friends.

Corey is an excellent narrator. She's imperfect, but it's in her flaws that we're able both to relate to her and see how strong she is. Corey makes mistakes, particularly in some of her key relationships. Yet she also learns from them, and that's what makes her worth reading about.

Similar to the first book, there is an underlying relationship arc which is suggested from the beginning and explored through flashbacks. As part of that storyline, she begins dating and it sours on the first attempt. Corey calls her date on some bisexual-antagonistic behavior, but she does it in a hurtful way. What I appreciate here is the balance: Corey has the right to defend herself, but she shows little compassion. Yet afterward, acknowledging her poor reaction becomes a turning point toward her healing.

Once again, this is a well-written piece of LGBTQ+ (emphasis on the B, as Corey's bisexuality is a central theme) literature. I have no idea if Ms. Lawrence plans to write more in the series, but if she does, guaranteed I'll be reading and sharing. This is another five-star book, and I highly recommend it.



Amy M. Leibowitz is an author of LGBTQIA fiction, freelance editor and book blogger falling somewhere on the Geek-Nerd Spectrum. You can follow their commentary on family, faith, reading, and writing at amleibowitz.com.

New(ish) groups:

Bi+/^{*}Trans^{*} Support

Bi+/^{*}Trans^{*} Support Group is a peer-facilitated, safe space where individuals who identify as both bisexual+ and transgender* can discuss a wide range of topics related to gender and sexuality. This group is held on the last Thursday of odd-numbered months (January, March, etc.) 7-9pm at Hope Central, 85 Seaverns Avenue, Jamaica Plain.

Social BLiSS in JP

This group is focused on socializing and discussion with like-minded bi+ folks of all ages and genders. Each month, the group starts off with a different topic and ends up wherever the conversation takes us. Meetings are held on the 4th Thursdays of each month, 6:30-8:00pm at Cafe Nero in Jamaica Plain. For more information, email Mia at youngblissboston@gmail.com.

News Briefs

“**Transgender, at War and in Love,**” a film by **Fiona Dawson, an out bi activist, has been nominated for Outstanding Short Documentary** in the 37th Annual News & Documentary Emmy® Awards.

On June 25th, **Robyn Ochs was celebrated at North Shore Pride in Salem, MA** as one of the “Fabulous Five” for her community activism. She rode the parade route in a convertible and was given a trophy and a proclamation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

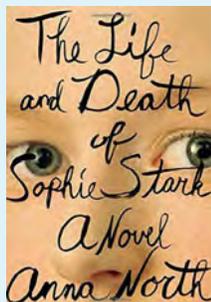
While the **Transgender Accommodations Bill** was handily passed by the Massachusetts State House and signed in July by Governor Baker, some opponents are still trying to defeat the bill another way. Organizers for the group Keep MA Safe are trying to gather 32,000 signatures by October in order to have a referendum question put on the November 2018 ballot. We will keep you posted on whether that campaign is successful or not.



Photo: Marilyn Humphries

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP), the Bisexual Resource Center (BRC), the Broadway Youth Center at Howard Brown Health, and Project Safe released in July a new report, **Bisexual Youth: The unique experiences of bisexual youth experiencing homelessness**. “The largest proportion of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth experiencing homelessness identify as bisexual: in a recent study of street outreach programs by the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, 20% of youth identified as bisexual, compared to 9.9% of youth who identified as gay or lesbian, and 4.1% as “something else.” Gender identity was collected separately from sexual orientation; 6.8% of youth in this survey identified as transgender. Despite bisexual youth comprising the largest proportion of LGB youth, bisexual youth have little access to targeted services. And a growing body of research shows that bisexual youth experience unique challenges and barriers that put them at an increased risk of experiencing homelessness.” Visit: attheintersections.org/bisexual-youth/

The Movement Advancement Project (MAP) also just released in August “**Unjust: How the Broken Criminal Justice System Fails LGBT People of Color.**” The report “examines how racism and anti-LGBT discrimination combine to make LGBT people of color uniquely vulnerable to entering the criminal justice system and also facing unfair and abusive treatment once they are in it. The report identifies three factors in the overrepresentation of LGBT people of color in the criminal justice system: racism and pervasive anti-LGBT stigma and discrimination in communities, schools and families; discriminatory enforcement of drug laws and HIV criminalization laws; and policing strategies and tactics that increase the likelihood of LGBT people of color being subject to police stops, arrest and incarceration.” Visit: www.lgbtmap.org/criminal-justice-poc



On June 6th, **28th Annual Lambda Literary Award Winners** were announced. For Bisexual Fiction, the winner is Anna North, *The Life and Death of Sophie Spark* (Penguin Random House/ Blue Rider Press). For Bisexual Nonfiction, the award went to Emily Bingham for *Irrepressible: The Jazz Age Life of Henrietta Bingham* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

On June 3rd, the **Fourth Annual Bisexual Book Awards** announced the following winners:

Bisexual Non-Fiction: *Bisexuality in Education: Erasure, Exclusion and the Absence of Intersectionality* edited by Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, Routledge

Bisexual Memoir/Biography: *Call It Wonder: An Odyssey of Love, Sex, Spirit, and Travel* by Kate Evans, Coyote Creek Books

Bisexual Fiction: *The Small Backs of Children* by Lidia Yuknavitch, Harper Books/Harper Collins

Bisexual Romance: *Bound with Honor* by Megan Mulry, Riptide Publishing

Bisexual Erotic Fiction: *Dead Ringer* by Heidi Belleau and Sam Schooler, Riptide Publishing

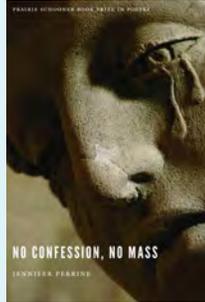
Bisexual Speculative Fiction: *Ariah* by B R Sanders, The Zharmae Publishing Press

Bisexual Teen/YA Fiction: *Not Otherwise Specified* by Hannah Moskowitz, Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster

Bisexual Poetry: *No Confession, No Mass* by Jennifer Perrine, University of Nebraska Press

Publisher of the Year: Tie: Less Than Three Press and Macmillan

Bi Writer of the Year: Kate Evans, author of *Call It Wonder: An Odyssey of Love, Sex, Spirit, and Travel*, Coyote Cree Books



On May 28, BWQ frequent contributor **Francisca Maria Bongiorno was consecrated as a Bishop** in the Progressive Episcopal Church. (See p. 1: “A Matter of Gender”)

EuroBiReCon (European Bisexual Resource Conference) and **EuroBiCon** (European Bisexual Conference) were held in Amsterdam 28-31 July. Look for coverage in the next issue of *BWQ*.

November (continued)

10 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). (See September 8th)

14 (Monday) 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See September 12th)

24 (Thursday) 7pm, Social BLiSS, Jamaica Plain. (See September 22nd)

29 (Saturday) 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See September 18th)



Photo: Maureen Golden

For the second year in a row, the Bisexual Resource Center and the local bi+ community carried the 45-foot bi pride flag through the streets of Boston for Pride Day.

We are looking for a new **CALENDAR EDITOR!** For every issue, the calendar editor compiles a list of events to feature in *BWQ*, coordinates BBWN potluck brunches each month, and updates events for the BBWN web calendar. This is a fantastic opportunity to work with a one-of-a-kind publication! Contact Kate at thewriterkate@gmail.com if you're interested.

STUDENTS: Looking for a **PAID SUMMER INTERNSHIP FOR SUMMER 2017?** We are looking for a communications intern with amazing design and web skills to work for 200 hours at \$10/hr. Boston-based a plus, but you could live anywhere. Details at <http://biwomenboston.org/2015/11/20/paid-summer-internship>.

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston, behind Club Cafe. Call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

Come to our monthly bi brunch! All women are welcome! See calendar for dates.

2nd Mondays:

Bisexual Resource Center Board Meeting. 7-9pm at the Bi Office. All are welcome.

Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. 7pm. Info: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com.

1st Wednesdays:

BLiSS: Bisexual Social & Support Group. 7pm. All genders welcome. Info: bliss@biresource.net

2nd Thursdays:

Younger Bi Group. 7pm. For bi folks 20-29. Info: Kate at youngblissboston@gmail.com.

3rd Saturdays:

Biversity Bi Brunch. 11:30am at The Burren, 247 Elm Street, Davis Square, Somerville.

4th Thursdays:

Social BLiSS, Jamaica Plain. 7pm at Café Nero. Info: Mia at youngblissboston@gmail.com

Metro-Boston women: Keep up with local events. Sign up for our email list! Send an email to: biwomenboston-subscribe@yahoo.com.



CALENDAR

September

7 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). All bi and bi-friendly people of all genders and orientations welcome to attend. Meetings are peer-facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Meets 1st Wednesdays at the Boston Living Center, 29 Stanhope St. Info/RSVP: bliss@biresource.net.

8 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). If you are in your 20s or mid-30s (or thereabouts) and identify somewhere along the lines of bisexual/omni/pan/fluid (or are questioning in that direction), please join us on the second Thursdays for a few hours of laughter, discussion, activities, and/or the eating and drinking of delicious things! Info/RSVP: youngblissboston@gmail.com.

10 (Saturday) 12-3pm, Monthly BBWN Potluck Brunch at Kate's in Somerville. Bring a potluck brunch item to share. This is a great way to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the area! Info/RSVP: thewriterkate@gmail.com.

11 (Sunday) 2-4pm, Tea with Bisexual Women Partnered with Men (BWPM). A peer-led support meetup co-hosted by BIWOC and the BRC. We will discuss a wide range of issues related to attraction, sexuality, and gender in a supportive safe space for trans and cis women and non-binary folks of all races and ethnic backgrounds. Meets at Blue Shirt Café in Somerville. Info/RSVP: www.meetup.com/Bi-Community-Activities/events/229651329/

12 (Monday) 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. A peer-led support group for women in a straight marriage/relationship struggling with sexual orientation or coming out. Meets 2nd Mondays. Info/RSVP: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com

18 (Saturday) 11:30am, Bi Brunch. This mixed-gender bi group brunches at The Burren on Elm St. in Davis Sq., Somerville. Meets 3rd Saturdays.

22 (Thursday) 7pm, Social BLiSS, Jamaica Plain. This group is now for people of all ages who are interested in some tasty snacks and discussion with like-minded bis. Feel free to bring any topics you're interested in discussing! Meets at Café Nero in JP on 4th Thursdays. Info/RSVP: Mia at youngblissboston@gmail.com.

23 (Friday), Annual Celebrate Bisexuality Day (CBD). 7-10pm. CBD is an annual day to honor and celebrate our bi-tastic community around the world. Join the Bisexual Resource Center and the bi+ community at the Lir Pub, 903 Boylston Street, Boston. Info/RSVP: brc@biresource.net. Check www.biresource.net and BRC's Facebook/Twitter for more details.

October

5 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See September 7th)

10 (Monday) 7pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See September 12th)

13 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). (See September 8th)

15 (Saturday) 11:30am, Saturday Bi Brunch. (See September 18th)

16 (Sunday) 12-3pm, Annual BBWN Book Swap Potluck Brunch at Steph's in Arlington. It's time for the much-anticipated annual BBWN book swap. Ellyn and Steph will be co-hosting. Bring a potluck dish to share and books in good condition of all genres to be swapped for more great reads. Audiobooks are also encouraged. No textbooks please. Info/RSVP: smiserlis@gmail.com

27 (Thursday) 7pm, Social BLiSS, Jamaica Plain. (See September 22nd)

November

2 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See September 7th)

Calendar, continues on p. 19