

Facing the Fear Dragon

By Becca Flintham

—*When did you first know?*

(That I was bisexual. Queer. Attracted to women, to men, to people of all genders.)

Coming out isn't a one-time process. We do it not just for the first time, but over and over, and to different people, at different points in our lives. We come out to our friends, our families, our lovers, our co-workers. Each time, it feels like stepping out onto untested ground, wondering if it will fall away beneath us. This is the nature of first times: moving into unknown territory, hoping that we'll find understanding and safety, but knowing that we might be walking into the fire.



I was 43 when I first left a partner. Before then, I'd always been the one who was left. It was an unhealthy relationship that left me with chronic anxiety, but I had enough strength remaining to recognize that to rescue myself I had to walk away. Some friends were shocked, having seen only a steady ten-year

relationship. Their questioning fell on me like sharp-edged stones, punching holes in the armor of my decision and letting guilt and doubt pierce me.

Only one friend said the words I needed to hear: *When I first met you, you had this lovely bright energy about you... And over the years you spent with him, I saw it all go away.* She didn't add, "You did the right thing." She didn't need to.

I first understood at nine years old that being a girl didn't quite fit me. I short-circuited gender expectations by wearing boys' clothes and having short hair, which allowed me to "pass" and do what I wanted to do uncriticized: climbing trees, building dens, making bows and arrows and adventuring in the woodlands near my home. I could be loud, bold, independent, take risks, and get dirty. I was "one of the boys."

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An Ode to Tinder

By Amanda Rose

The first time I saw a naked woman with my own eyes was on my very first date with a woman. Impressive, right? Well, let's go back a bit.

I had been raised and lived my young life with the assumption that I was straight. That's our heteronormative society for you, right? I was very aware of my crushes on boys—that was something I could readily process. I was exposed to so many examples of that. It was much harder to process how I was feeling about some of the girls in my life. I just assumed that was how other young ladies viewed their friends, too.

For a long while, dating didn't really happen for me. Filled with a fraught mix of self-doubt and fierce independence, I never really made any moves in my high school years, and no one made any moves on me. To be clear, while dateless, I wasn't having any sex either.

It wasn't until my senior year of college, when Tinder came into my life, that I started dating. I was newly questioning my

sexuality at that point, and quietly coming to terms with my ever-present, if latent, interest in women. So when my friends took it upon themselves to set up a Tinder profile for me in September, I decided to go for it, and started swiping for men. Within a month I was seeing someone who turned out to be a polyamorous, pansexual, non-binary person. It was a lovely but short-lived relationship. Speaking of firsts, they were actually the first person I came out to about realizing I was bisexual. Eventually they realized that their spring semester workload didn't leave enough time for more than one relationship, and the one they picked didn't involve me. We're still friends, though, and I am grateful for their support.

I continued on my Tinder journey, meeting men for dates over beers in campus bars, but nothing really stuck. It was January when I finally decided to add women to my preferences on the dating app. In February, I was messaging with a cisgender gay woman named Kaitlin (name has been changed), another student at my university. After a week of near-constant messaging on the app, we decided to meet in person. We planned to see

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Editor's Note

The theme of this issue is "Firsts." We asked: "What 'firsts' have been significant to you? A first awareness, first kiss, first relationship, first sexual experience? A first with someone of a particular gender? A first coming out? Tell us a story about a 'first' time, or about the 'firsts' you hope to have."

We are pleased to present you with writing by Alicia González, Alissa Morgan, Ana B. Freeman, Becca Flintham, Beth Innis, Bri Kerschner, J.M. Arrow, Jan Steckel, Jane Barnes, Martine Mussies, Samantha Pious, and two Amandas (Rose and Torres-Lantz).

I interview Spanish bi activist Noelia Mellado Pozas. Shayna Maci Warner reviews *Killing Eve*, and Casey Lawrence reviews *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing*.

You will also find artwork by Jo-Anne Carlson and Why Not Both Co, two different takes on the Creating Change Conference, and our calendar of events.

On an administrative note, we give our sincere thanks to all of the folks who supported this project in 2018, either by volunteering or with financial donations. *Bi Women Quarterly* would not exist without you.

If you find value in these pages, you can make a donation at biwomenboston.org/donate-2. We offer this resource for free, but it costs us to produce and mail *BWQ*. Please consider giving a one-time gift, or becoming a monthly sustainer.

-Robyn Ochs

Upcoming in *Bi Women Quarterly* Call for submissions

Summer 2019:

Non-binary x2 (or more)

Calling all readers with multiple non-binary identities—including bi+ folks with non-binary gender identities, multiracial identities, etc. How do your identities inform each other? How do you navigate others' reactions? What labels do you use? Do you see yourself represented in bi+ communities? Submissions are due by May 1.

Fall 2019:

Getting Older

What are the challenges/opportunities of being an older bi+ person? How has aging transformed you—in mind, body, spirit, or sexuality? How have you stayed the same? What have been the most significant moments or transitions in your life? For younger folks: What have you learned from older bi+ folks? And no matter your age, what do you imagine your future holds? Submissions are due by August 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.

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Boston-area women: Join our our Google group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/bi-womenboston>

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BBWN is an all-volunteer organization. Want to proofread, edit submissions, host one of our monthly brunches, help out with our new Etsy store, or 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. We strive to create 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: Noelia Mellado Pozas, Palma de Mallorca (Balearic Islands), Spain

Interviewed by Robyn Ochs

Noelia Mellado Pozas leads the Bisexual Policy Group of FELGTB, Spain's national LGBTI organization.

RO: Noelia please tell us a bit about yourself.

NMP: My name is Noelia Mellado Pozas. I was born in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, and I'm 26 years old. I studied Hispanic Philology at the University of the Balearic Islands but I left that field after discovering that I was happiest helping others directly. I then completed higher vocational training in Social Integration. I like my work because I can sow social awareness and even save lives, and that, always, is worth it.

I'm a proponent of a bisexual feminist activism that takes into account non-binary and/or trans people and brings together the plurisexual orientations included under the bisexual umbrella.

RO: Palma de Mallorca, where you were born and raised, is an island off the east coast of mainland Spain. What was it like growing up there? How does life there compare to major cities such as Madrid or Barcelona?

NMP: I was very happy on the island. But I would prefer to live in Andalusia or Madrid. Mallorca has good weather, better views, and you can get anywhere in no time at all. Unfortunately, it doesn't have many LGBTQ places like the ones found in big cities and it's difficult to find meeting points for the collective. Insularity also poses a challenge to LGBTQ organizations that have to move between islands to develop their work.

RO: How did you come to identify as bi?

NMP: I'm an atypical bisexual woman because my open-minded family supports me and my friends and partners. I have suffered internalized biphobia, though, because I was convinced that because I was bisexual I would suffer discrimination at the same level as my friends. I have experienced violent or discriminatory situations, but they have been very scarce.

When I was 16, I liked a girl and wanted to tell my parents that I was bisexual, but I didn't know how. My mother began to say that I dated girls a lot. I panicked and said, "Well, maybe, no, yes," and my mother smiled.

One day soon after that, I came home feeling brave and, instead of saying I was bisexual, I said, "Mom, Dad... I'm going to call my girlfriend." I ran to my room fearing something would happen. I let some time go by, but seeing that nothing was happening, I went back to my parents. My father asked, "Are you happy?" I said "Yes," and he added, "If you're happy, I'm happy too." My mother said, "Daughter, I knew that you are bisexual. You've never been in a closet; you've always been out of it. When you were little you saw a boy and said to me: 'Look, Mom, what a

beautiful boy. I'm going to marry him,' and then you later saw a girl and said to me, 'Look, Mom, what a beautiful girl. I'm going to marry her.'"

RO: What, if any, is your religious background, and what impact did it have on your coming out? Did it make it harder or easier? In what ways?

NMP: For me, religion hasn't been relevant to my coming out of the closet. I think it's been easier to make myself visible because I don't feel conditioned. I believe in humanity and that good people exist.

RO: What words are used to describe lesbian, gay, bi, or non-heterosexual people in Spain? Which terms are most common among people with non-binary sexualities? Are these words equivalent to their English counterparts, or do they have a different meaning?

NMP: The most common words are: lesbian, gay, and bisexual. In plurisexual orientations the most common popular terms are: bisexual (bi), pansexual, demisexual, and biromantic. Pansexuality is often confused with bisexuality and it is difficult for people to understand that pansexuality is part of the bisexual umbrella. Some pansexual people believe that they are made invisible and that bisexuality is binary. Although this is changing very slowly, in FELGTB's Bisexual Policy Group we have people who consider themselves pansexual and see themselves reflected within the bisexual umbrella.

The word that is the most different is gay. In some English-speaking areas, homosexual men and women identify themselves as gay. But in Spain it is common for a homosexual woman to identify herself as lesbian and a homosexual man to identify himself as gay.

RO: Tell us about your journey to becoming a bi+ activist.

NMP: My LGBT activism began in 2014, and since 2016 I have held various managerial positions en la Asociación LGTB de las Islas Baleares Ben Amics, one of the many LGBTI entities that make up the Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gais, Trans y Bisexuales (FELGTB).

I started my activism by going to meetings to meet LGBT people, going out for coffee and volunteering at information tables.

I remember one day in the office of Ben Amics I saw a flag. Someone told me it was the bisexual flag, and I promised to take it whenever possible to any events I might attend.

Noelia, continued on next page

Noelia, continued from previous page

RO: You currently lead the Bisexual Policy Group of FELGTB, Spain's national LGBTI organization. What exactly does the Bisexual Policy Group do? What kinds of activities do you organize? Do you have events open to the community?

NMP: The Coordinator's responsibilities are to communicate with the Spanish LGBT associations that are part of FELGTB, to promote and give visibility to the B, to offer resources to those groups that do not have bisexual activists, to form the associations that need it in this matter, and to coordinate our own activities. I also convene regular Skype meetings with bisexual activists to draft the collective's mission statement.

The group consists of approximately 20 people from different groups in Spain from places such as Castellón, Mallorca, Madrid, Salamanca, Zaragoza and Canarias. Soon, we will be more!

We organize conferences, book presentations, concentrations, and bi film series. Most of our activities are open to the public.

September 23 will mark the end of a campaign, in which Robyn Ochs participated, commemorating International Bisexual Visibility Day through short videos of bisexual people commenting on their own experiences (positive ones or experiences of biphobia) posted on social networks. The videos use the hashtag #DiadelaVisibilidadBisexual.

RO: How did you come to get involved with this group? And how did you come to be a leader of this group?

NMP: In 2016, the year Pride in Spain was dedicated to bisexuality, I joined the Bisexual Policies Group. In April 2018, the VIII FELGTB Congress was held in which, among other things, the new board of directors and the coordinators of the different in-



ternal groups were selected. The FELGTB Bisexual Policy Group met and decided that I would be their coordinator (a position I hold for three years) taking over from my friend and teacher, Carlos Castaño. You might be pleased to know that FELGTB uses your expansive definition of bisexuality!

RO: I've met Carlos. He is a good person and an effective activist! In your experience, are bi+ folks well-integrated into Spain's sexual minority community? And more specifically, is FELGTB welcoming of bi+ people? Have you seen changes over time?

NMP: In my opinion, bi+ people should have more visibility. But it is true that with time there has been a positive evolution and more bi+ people are raising their voices and getting involved in FELGTB's Bisexual Policy Group.

RO: As an activist, what is an accomplishment of which you are particularly proud?

NMP: I'm very proud to have lived through and played some part in important legal changes such as the approval of the autonomous LGBT law of the Balearic Islands and the Law of Marriage Equality in Spain. I'm proud to have been one of the few bisexual presidents of Ben Amics and to be Coordinator of the Bisexual Policy Group, which represents diverse bisexual activists, including trans and non-binary bisexual people. In everything that I do, I am proud to work alongside a vibrant team of bisexual activists, including trans and non-binary bisexual people, and I am especially proud to have worked with the eternal Pedro Zerolo. I look forward to the day when, finally, our efforts lead to national LGTB protections in Spain.

RO: Are you in contact with bi activists in other countries? Do you see a value in transnational activism?

NMP: Yes! Transnational activism is very valuable because contact with people of different nationalities makes it possible to update discourses in all countries and to reflect on the future challenges facing bisexuality in the world and even to exchange experiences that generate alliances between activists and, in turn, encourage creation and originality when inventing activities to combat stereotypes associated with the "B."

RO: I'm inspired by your enthusiasm! What motivates you to be a bi+ leader?

NMP: I'm motivated by my eternal gratitude to all those people who dedicated their lives to fight for the rights I now have. My way of expressing this gratitude for everything is to dedicate my own life to the collective. I am motivated by adversities. As long as even one person in the collective continues to suffer for being bi+, I will fight hatred and injustice, and work to create love and hope for a better world.

RO: Noelia, thank you so much for your time, and for the important work you do.

Robyn Ochs is editor of BWQ and the 42-country collection Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World.

Fourteen Things I've Learned From Dating A Trans Girl For The First Time

By Amanda Torres-Lantz

Two years ago, I would have told you that I was afraid of not being an informed enough ally to date a trans person. When I started dating someone who identified as trans femme, I didn't even know what that term meant. When I asked, they described it as "I've always sort of felt girly." I thought that sounded pretty simple to understand, and I was very interested in them for so many reasons. We flirted online and ended up going on a couple of dates. What was intended to be a short-term fling on my part ended up being over a year of casual dating and friendship because we really ended up enjoying each other's company and having great chemistry. Here are some things I've learned from dating her, some of them because I've gotten things wrong at times and some that are just the basics.

1. **"Transition" is the process a person goes through to align their body and experience with their correct gender.** It can mean many things for different people. Also, people will have different definitions for when they've "transitioned," i.e. completed their gender transition process. Some things this may include are: hormone replacement therapy (HRT), voice coaching, changing clothing, learning hair and makeup styling, facial feminization surgery, gender/sex reassignment surgery, and therapy.
2. **Dead Names.** If you haven't heard this before a dead name is the name a person went by before they chose a name that aligns with their correct gender. "Dead naming" someone is bad. It hurts and sucks. Make a special effort to get this right every time.
3. **Transition is hugely emotionally, mentally, and physically taxing.** It's a full-time+ job all on its own. It's hard for someone who hasn't been through it to even fathom how many areas of life transition directly effects. Everything is changing and it's all based on their own effort. It's hard work.
4. **Going out in public or into spaces that are not known to be trans friendly can be emotionally taxing.** She may be constantly worried about how the people around her are seeing her, or even if she is safe. There are also plenty of triggers out in the uncontrolled environment. From catcalling to side eye and even something like seeing another trans woman who is homeless can spark fear for her future.
5. **Some trans women want to "pass" as their correct gender to the public. Some trans women think even the idea of "passing" is transphobic.** Neither one is right or wrong, and as a cis person you don't get a say. Support the trans people in your life in whatever their goals are.
6. **Referring to someone by their preferred pronouns is just basic decency.** If you're not consistently doing this, I don't know why you're even trying to date a trans person. If

you know someone through their transition process, it can sometimes be hard to shift as things change, for example from they to she. Pronouns show how we see a person, and if you're not seeing them as their correct gender, that hurts.

7. **Don't try so hard.** Performing your allyship on someone and trying so hard to get everything right that you lose your sense of humor and connection is othering in and of itself. This isn't an excuse to be hurtful and careless; just be an empathetic human.
8. **Admit your mistakes, apologize, and learn.** It's likely you'll screw up, and when you do don't blame the other person, and don't just brush it under the rug. It's more hurtful to try to justify your mistakes with why you made them.
9. **Trans people are more than their gender identity.** Do you like her because of her interests and tastes? Your chemistry together? Do you have shared activities you're into? If you only like someone because they're trans, that's called fetishization and it's weird and gross.
10. **"Cis women deal with that too" is not a great response.** Yes, all women deal with struggles and discrimination based on their gender, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that trans women struggle more. I know you're trying to relate, but find something better to say. Try starting with, "That really sucks."
11. **As in other relationships, learn to listen instead of problem solve.** So she's struggling with clothes shopping? If she wanted you to go with her, she'd ask. Stop trying to fix it and just empathize. Learn more about active listening.
12. **Hormones affect sex drive and preferences.** If you expect to have the same chemistry and flirtation style throughout hormonal shifts, you're in for a bad time. Be prepared for change, especially if you're dating someone currently going through transition using HRT.
13. **Being a trans person affects everything.** Work, family, friendships, relationships. They've probably experienced more stress, heartache, and trauma than you can imagine or truly empathize with. They're stronger than you know, and you have so much to learn from them. However. ...
14. **Trans people are not responsible for educating you.** A list like this is a good place to start educating yourself. If you have a trans person in your life or want to create safer spaces for trans women, keep reading. Read forums and articles and even books. Read trans writers. Some things may make you really uncomfortable. It's up to you to figure out why and work on it. This is called confronting your cis privilege.

Amanda Torres-Lantz is a poly, bisexual/queer woman, writer, and Mama from the Seattle area. She lives with her husband, one daughter, and two cats, and fills her life with lots of love, friends, and family.

I, the worst of all

By Alicia González

She was the Sun. She was that kind of woman that could attract you into an invisible orbit spinning around her without even trying. She was power, she was wisdom, she was light and beauty in her late thirties. And I was only 19, a naïve Language and Literature student with a passionate fondness for Sor Juana's poetry that didn't know how to shield against the irresistible pull of her name and the enticing way she used to put an intended emphasis in the "g" every time she spoke. I knew it the very first time I saw her. It was too late to run.

"I remember looking at myself in the mirror, crying and tearing the ribbons from my hair," I said to my therapist. "I was heartbroken because she didn't show up. She was my second-grade teacher, and the only thing I knew was that I wanted to spend every minute of the day listening to her voice. I have a weakness for voices," I said, playing with my watch, looking to the floor and recalling my Abue's joyful smile at the celebration party of the twentieth anniversary of my uncle's ordainment as a priest of the Catholic Church. "And how does that feel now?" asked my therapist. "Uncomfortable," I answered. "Because she was a woman or because you were seven years old?" I took a deep breath. "Maybe I just admired her," I said holding back my tears. He gave me the kindest look I've ever gotten in my life; it was as if he were afraid of breaking me just by seeing me. "Or maybe you need to stop avoiding yourself and own your feelings," he said, and kept talking. "It's fine if you can't come out to your family and friends yet, but at least you need to come out to yourself. I have seen the way you look at her, so there's no point in lying to me." Besides being my therapist, Francisco was also a professor in the same university where I studied, and he knew her much better than I did. "It's all good," he said. "You don't have to feel ashamed for being bisexual. You fall in love with people regardless of their gender—that sounded like a superpower to me—and there's nothing wrong with it. Nothing wrong at all," he said, and he put his hand on my back. I let the word settle in my mind for a moment, it felt surprisingly liberating. A warm feeling of certainty finally started filling the void. "She's gorgeous," he said, trying to clear the air. I nodded. "And she was dating a woman last year," he added. My heart skipped a beat. Although I was aware that she was out of my league because she was much older, she was also the main patron of the university (oh yeah! I've always liked challenges), and had never talked to me. The fact that she also liked women propelled me into an ocean of promising maybes. I drove back home with the windows down, letting the chilling air hit my face. I was invincible. No one was going to take that away from me, not even my homophobic parents or the recent rejection of my male crush who dumped me for that curvy chaparrita who wore makeup and high heels as if she



had been born with them. "Sorry, you're not my type," he said after someone told him that I gasped every time I saw Carmen walking through the hall.

I woke up the next morning and got into the shower still repeating to myself the word "bisexual." As hard as it is to believe, that was the first time I heard it. Two hours later, I crossed the main entrance carrying my books and my coffee with the same pride I did every time I wore new shoes to elementary school. It was Sor Juana's birth anniversary, so it was going to be a very busy day full of lectures and Mexican baroque sweet treats. She used to live in that building as a nun. She wrote almost all her poetry within those walls and even her bones were buried there. She was everywhere.

I walked into the crowded room for the last lecture of the day, and, somehow, I managed to find a seat just in front of Carmen's spot behind the microphone. Soon enough, she was talking about Sor Juana's romantic affair with Maria Luisa Manrique de Lara, whom the nun referred to as "Divina Lysi" in every poem she wrote for her beloved Countess. Sor Juana's sexual orientation was discussed for at least one hour. At a shallow glance, she was pretty much a lesbian who entered the convent because she didn't want to get married and was eager to dedicate her life to books. Under the surface, there was

Alicia, continues on next page

Alicia, continued from previous page

much more about her. I looked at Francisco who was sitting at the other side of the room. He stared back at me and held his breath. He instantly knew what was going to happen.

I stood up, interrupting the panel discussion. “She was not a lesbian,” I said out loud, “she was bisexual.” I felt my blood rushing to my face; my heart was beating faster and for a moment I thought I was going to faint. The silence was painfully overwhelming. Then I realized it. That was the first day, of thousands of days, explaining myself to others, justifying my feelings and desires to not make them feel uncomfortable, to avoid being rejected, judged, excluded. The first day of thousands of days that I had to betray myself to fit through a door that wasn’t even built for me, until the day I stopped caring about the damn door. I waited for Carmen to say something because she had two children from her former marriage with a man, but instead she turned to those sitting beside her and pretended I wasn’t there. In a desperate attempt to not being ignored, I recited one of Sor Juana’s poems I knew by heart.

*That you’re a woman far away
Is no hindrance to my love:
For the souls, as you well know,
Distance and sex don’t count.*

*(Ser mujer, ni estar ausente
No es de amarte impedimento;
Pues sabes tú que las almas
Distancia ignoran y sexo.)*

Everyone in that room knew Juana Inés had had a couple of romantic affairs with young men before she concealed herself from secular life, and that she wrote dozens of love poems to at least one male recipient that were not proven to have been written by mandate. Silence.

I couldn’t bear it anymore. I was standing there, in the middle of a room full of people staring at me, and yet I had never felt more invisible. Francisco came to my rescue and took me out. He held me in his arms and let me sob over his sweater until I was able to breathe again. “It’s okay,” he said, “it’s okay. The first time is always the hardest to endure. It will get easier.”

I wiped my burning eyes and cleared my throat. Will it?

Alicia González is Mexican, bisexual, a writer, an activist for peace at Nuestra Aparente Rendición/Colectivo Fu, a translator, and an astrologer.

*If you live in the greater Boston area,
please consider joining us at an event...*



Left: At a “Stuff & Stuff” at Robyn’s, an event where we prepare to mail out an issue of Bi Women Quarterly and then share a meal and good conversation. Right: Sign on Linda and Maura’s door, welcoming us to the January brunch.

Edna

By Jan Steckel

My grandparents' Brazilian cook
danced with a band at night.
Evenings, she'd samba
around the mahogany table,
ladling vichyssoise into
gilded bowls. On each bowl
she'd float a carved radish rose.

She called her gnarled feet
"dancer's hooves," claimed
to be ashamed of them.
Still, she painted her toenails
the color of dried blood,
let them peek through
peep-toed shoes.

If I had told her she was
my first female crush, she'd have
laughed like samba bells.
She'd have shaken, whistled, rattled,
boomed like her boyfriend's band.

This poem first appeared in *Vitality*, Issue 1, February 2015
Appears in my new book *Like Flesh Covers Bone* (Zeitgeist
Press, December 2018)

*Jan Steckel won a Lambda
Literary Award for Bisexual
Nonfiction for her poetry
book *The Horizontal Poet*
(Zeitgeist Press, 2011). Her
latest book is *Like Flesh
Covers Bone* (Zeitgeist
Press, 2018).*



Second Baby, First Awakening

By Beth Innis

Being attracted to all genders never seemed weird
Especially if I never spoke of it
Being attracted to all genders never seemed odd
Especially if I married a man
Being attracted to all genders never seemed strange
Especially if I had little straight children

However

Shortly after my second daughter was born
Suddenly life seemed incredibly short
Shortly after my second daughter was born
Suddenly authenticity seemed paramount
Shortly after my second daughter was born
Suddenly bisexuality wasn't an option but a necessity

However

Trying to explain this revolution was tough
Especially to my husband and partner in crime
Trying to explain this revolution came with pain
Especially to my family who didn't see it coming
Trying to explain this revolution burned some bridges
Especially to friends who couldn't bend their minds

However

Living this revolution after I first woke up
Was worth it every single day
Living this revolution after I first came out
Opened up my eyes to others who felt like siblings
Living this revolution after I first asked for help
Will make my family's story more complete

*Beth Innis is a bisexual woman married to man with two
daughters, two dogs, one cat, and one chicken. She is a
veterinarian and small business owner in the Boston area.*

Visit our new ETSY Store:
www.etsy.com/shop/LGBTQplusPins4Good

First Menage à Trois

By Jane Barnes

1/16/19

we tried swinging two straight
couples and he was nicer than
Richard then another time
Richard was late and we three

got impatient and Don said to me
Did you ever consider... Laura?
Yes, I said, so he politely
got out of the way and she

told me just what she liked
and I described my geography
and each received what she'd
ordered just like that!

We got in the shower together.
I shook down to my toes.
What was this world I'd found?
and when Richard finally

arrived, I could only shake
my head and think I'm
in a volcano of touch.
And then we all went to see

2001. I saw nothing on the
screen. Later people would
say, Wasn't that a fantastic
movie? I'd say yeah, it was

just fabulous. Just fabulous.

*Jane is a long-time New Yorker, currently living on
Staten Island.*

Late-Blooming

By Samantha Pious

Pink and silver flowers raining down
float lingering, all around me, in mid-air

as though my body were a cherry tree
limbs branching toward a hundred thousand buds

disclosing, after twenty fallow springs,
the secret they've been holding in at last

of petals delicate and sheer and fine
and smooth and liquid as a roll of silk

that's aromatic with the heady scent
of sweet, full nectar. Yes, I know that this

is the oldest trick in the book,
but I am making a record anyway because

that night—and this I truly do believe,
despite my clumsy tongue, my shaking voice—

come out of Limbo, lyre and pen in hand,
the twin shadows of Sappho and H.D.

in crowns of ocean violets, blue and white,
who never shrink from flower imagery

paid me a visit as I lay asleep.

*Samantha Pious is the translator of A Crown of Violets:
Selected Poems of Renée Vivien (Headmistress Press,
2017) and acquisitions editor at Indolent Books.*

*If you rarely (or never) see people like you represented in print,
your voice is especially important. When you lift your voice,
someone, somewhere will FINALLY see their own experiences
reflected, perhaps for the first time. (see page 2)*

Some First Steps Are Missteps, Too

By Alissa Morgan

I don't remember the first time I encountered the word bisexual.

Certainly, it was not some kind of revolutionary moment for me. It can't have been, because I would surely recall something like that.

Admittedly, this is probably because we rarely hear the word, even now. As a child of the nineties and noughties, it was even rarer back in my adolescence. I wasn't quite as starved of queer representation as those who grew up decades earlier, but it was still hardly an oasis of positive bisexual images out there. An inhabitant of a small, isolated, and rural community, I was never privy to any pride marches or LGBTQ+ organizations in my youth. I was completely isolated from my own representation for perhaps even longer than many because there was no real catalyst in my day-to-day life that compelled me to explore my identity.

I was completely disconnected from what I now consider to be my community and one of the facets of my identity that I now treasure the very most.

For a number of reasons, not all of which could reasonably be listed here, it took me a long time to suss myself out. Perhaps happily, it was not so much a case of internalized biphobia and more a case of complete and perhaps slightly embarrassing obliviousness. There was a healthy dose of laziness in there (this seems like a lot to unpack, let's do that later), but there was also that well-known *bête noir*: a complete and total lack of representation and visibility.

I didn't know I was bisexual because it was never out there as an option. There were a few instances of lesbian representation, but I didn't only like women, so that didn't work for me. I had all the straight representation I could ever need (or, honestly, tolerate) and, although that label didn't seem quite right either, I thought that I must surely be straight. After all, I did, to some degree, like men too. That must mean I'm straight. That's how it works, right?

I don't remember the first time I heard the word bisexual, and I don't remember encountering it in a way that felt relevant to me for years.

What I do remember, however, is all the times I've heard the word bisexual in a derogatory context, whether that context be a poor attempt at light-hearted humor or out-and-out bigotry. Every one delivered a blow so strong it felt like a first.



In 2005, British television show *Casualty* tries to introduce a bisexual character. A female paramedic is about to embark on a relationship with a male colleague when her ex-girlfriend turns up unexpectedly. The male love interest reacts badly to his soon-to-be girlfriend's identity, finding he must "come around" to the idea.

Fast forward about six years. "Being bisexual is so much worse than being gay," a straight, teenaged school friend declares loudly one night at a pre-party. She laughs (or perhaps more accurately sneers) and concludes, "They're just not choosy, are they?"

Not long after, during the show's 2011 inaugural season, *2 Broke Girls*' Beth Behrs, in character, states, "Everyone keeps telling me they can't decide. It's like a support group for bisexuals."

To momentarily embody that age-old bisexual stereotype, I was confused. My identity didn't feel like bad news—was I wrong? There was no indecision about it, either. After some deep consideration, I absolutely could draw the conclusion that I was attracted to multiple genders. Furthermore, I was not and never have been an especially promiscuous person. No judgement, it's just not something I personally am.

Even after I came out as bisexual, the problems of aligning how I felt with what I saw in the media persisted.

In Netflix's *Orange Is the New Black*, Piper Chapman is an openly bisexual woman. She is at various times identified by others as lesbian and straight, but this is not used to challenge misconceptions. *Wynonna Earp*'s Waverly Earp—a personal favorite character of mine—has had a relationship with a man and a woman and has been described offscreen as bisexual numerous times by showrunner Emily Andras and actress Dominique Provost-Chalkley. The latter, in particular, takes great pains to highlight her character's identity, for which I remain very grateful. Yet on screen, Waverly has only been described as gay or lesbian by other characters and has, in one case, stated "I think I might be gay" in an alternate-universe-style episode of the Sci-Fi Western show. Every time, a statement of Waverly's identity is presented in the context of a joke. It is not that her sexuality is a joke, but that it is never given a serious backdrop to be discussed. Bisexuality is so frequently paired with flippancy, in a way that—whether intentionally or not—feels demeaning and demoralizing.

Both *Orange is the New Black* and *Wynonna Earp* are lauded by fans as shining examples of LGBTQ+ representation and this

Alissa, continued on next page

Alissa, continued from previous page

is not necessarily wrong. But it is hard, seeing the treatment of bisexuality, to argue that the representation is authentic all across the board.

Unsurprisingly, and in spite of all these bad odds, I do actually remember the first time I encountered the word bisexual in a way that felt relevant to me. I remember the first time the word set off a shotgun in my own head. Certainly, it was not the first time I discovered the word, and it came not with a shout but a whisper. It was not a fictional portrayal. It was not even from an LGBTQ+ activist. It was on the weird and wonderful world of the social media platform Tumblr, back before its popularity was beginning to surge. A user (whom I followed solely for their interest in the Marvel comics and cinematic universe) who was unknown to me on a personal level completely changed the game for me for the very first time.

It was nearly a decade ago. I was 17. In their blog's bio, the user wrote their forename. What followed was their age. Then, there it was written bold as brass. Bisexual. Three little identifiers, presented in a scenario where bisexuality was held up as an identifier equal in importance to that of this person's name.

I do not know this person. I am not even entirely sure I could still find their online profiles. But they were the person who taught me that bisexuality could simply be an identifier with absolutely no other connotations attached.

It felt like this person was saying, "Hi, this is what defines me and part of that is my bisexuality." Of course, this is exactly what they were saying. They had reached a different point in their own journey but, in spite of my age, I was just taking my first real step.

The fact that it took me 17 years to have this experience for the first time might speak a little to my naivety and my fairly narrow sampling of popular culture. But I think it speaks far more to how society failed and continues to fail the bi+ community.

The sad truth is that I believe many who identify under the bi+ umbrella will never remember the first time we heard the word bisexual or bisexuality. Yet we probably all know of countless instances of how we learned to associate it with something negative. We have heard the word used as a punchline, we have seen the identity erased entirely.

In a world of these kinds of constants, our firsts become so important to us. I still remember the first actress I unknowingly crushed on as a child (thank you, Rachel Weisz) and I remember my first conscious famous female crush, too. I remember the first time I really romanticized my attraction to women, and I remember the first time I acknowledged that it is my predominant experience of attraction.

I remember the first time I tried the label bisexual on, and I remember how it felt like wearing my oldest, comfiest sweater.

I remember the first time I really accepted that I was bi, and I remember the first time I realized that my identity was valid. I remember the first time I realized that everything would, eventually, be okay.

"Firsts" allow us to reclaim the experiences many of us were denied in our youth. The process of self-discovery takes place for some at a young age, but for many bisexual people this important facet of our identities remains shrouded for much longer. What is important today is that we create an environment where these firsts can happen for our bi+ siblings who might not be there yet and, crucially, where they can find support and community. After all, there will always be more firsts for all of us, and always so much further along our paths we can go.

Born in the British Channel Islands, Alissa is a History graduate and thalassophile (a lover of the sea), with a passion for writing, hiking, cycling, and the overt use of the pink-purple-blue color scheme.

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Core Truths, brought to you by Denial

By Bri Kerschmer

“Are you sure you’re not in love with her?” My therapist sat across from me, a woman with whom I had been sharing my deepest secrets and emotions to for over eight years.

“What? Why would you say that?! I came here because I don’t know how to deal with her. She wants to have kids together. What the hell am I supposed to say to that?” I wave my hands in emphatic frustration. Of course I wasn’t in love with her. She was my best friend of ten years, and we had just rented a townhouse together with the intention of making it a wonderfully cozy nest. That’s literally how we described it to people. We were just friends. Good friends. We hadn’t kissed or had sex. Besides I would *know*, with that deep-down, bone marrow self-truth of knowing, if I were gay. I wasn’t interested in men. I mean women. I mean I wasn’t interested in *anyone*. Definitely not my best friend of ten years. Certainly not her.

My therapist slowly leaned forward and stared right into my eyes.

“Are you SURE you’re not in love with her?”

No! Of course not, I angrily thought at my therapist. But the words wouldn’t come out. Instead, they broke inward like shattering glass, sticking in my throat. Was it possible? Was I so blind to my inner self that I literally hadn’t even *considered* the possibility of falling in love with her?

Where was the evidence? I mean, when we watched movies together we shared the same snuggly blanket, would lean on each other, hold hands. But besties do that. I remember her hugs: at first her ballerina arms and thin torso would feel like they

would break under my squeeze and then she would return that strength, her arms would become safe iron bands around me and I’d just want both of us to melt out of the world together. But she hugged other people, too—surely I was exaggerating it in my mind.

And then there was that time at the fair, when I was with my parents and she called me just to ask if I would be home for dinner. My mom asked, “Who’s calling?” And I replied, jokingly, “Just the wife, nagging me about dinner tonight.” And we all laughed while something warm and cuddly and soft nestled in the pit of my stomach.

There was the issue of health insurance. “I want to put you on my health insurance so you can go to the doctor without worrying about it,” she had said.

“Honey, you can’t put me on your health insurance unless we’re married. And same-sex marriage isn’t legal here.” I was always so practical.

“Well when it’s legal, we’re getting married and you’re going on my health insurance.” She was so matter-of-fact about it that I just laughed. Pipe dreams from a caring person. It wasn’t anything more than that.

But I remembered how soft her hair was. She wanted to grow it out and put upwards of 15 products in it, but it was like a river of honeyed gold in my hands. And the way her green eyes captivated those around her when she told a story. Even if it was a story that I had heard her tell numerous times, I was just as captivated by those eyes. When I came home, crying from

Bri, continues on next page

This photo was taken at our January bi+ women’s brunch at Maura & Linda’s. If you live in or around Boston, or are visiting, please consider attending and/or hosting one of our brunches, which are held more-or-less monthly in members’ homes. Our next events are scheduled for March 3 and April 14, and are listed in our calendar on p. 24. You are welcome to reach out to Charlotte (avon.alger@gmail.com) for more info about hosting or attending a brunch.



when a man harassed me at work, those eyes flashed dark and dangerous on my behalf and I had never felt so safe and cared for.

She always smelled *amazing!* I would love getting ready for work in the mornings and she would breeze through the bathroom to the bedroom and I could smell her scent, fresh and comforting and wonderful. I missed it when I was home for the holidays. I woke up in my old bedroom, wondering why it smelled so wrong—where was she? But before I called out for her, I realized where I was and suddenly missed her so fiercely, I could feel it in my marrow.

She wanted kids. We had tossed around the idea of getting married as a “joke.” We weren’t serious. Neither one of us identified as lesbian. But then she said she wanted kids with me. “We could adopt. We would love and spoil them so much!”

“Are you serious? I’m not sure I want kids. Besides we’re not even married.”

“I want to adopt kids with you. We would just explain that their Mommies sleep in different beds.”

I couldn’t fathom this. Kids had never crossed my mind. Marriage had always been just something we teased each other with. Besides, it wasn’t even legal in this state at this time. But I found myself debating if kids with her were a possibility. Did I... care about her enough to want to raise children together?

Oh no. I couldn’t be in love with her. I couldn’t be gay. I had liked men—I had dated them. Sort of. Jared and Paul and Chris. But then a flood of other names of those I had loved

crowded my thoughts: Nicole, with the flaming red hair and kick-your-ass attitude. Michelle, with her love of volleyball and her passion for animals. Amber and her intense study of chemistry, of which she would detail her studies to me as I hung on every word. Lisa had the singing voice of an opera star and I could have listened to it forever and that time when I stayed over at her house I remember feeling that I couldn’t love another human being more. Well, until now.

“Oh shit.” I didn’t try to stop the avalanche of tears that came. My therapist patted my hand and gave me the whole box of tissues. “How could I not know?!” I sobbed to her.

“Denial can be very powerful if we aren’t ready to face the truth. It seems as if you’ve realized some core truths about yourself. This is wonderful! Maybe you should do some research about being bisexual. You might find that you’ve known all along.”

Bisexual. I realized that I had indeed known all along. The first love of my life had forged me into the truest version of myself. A truth that I still wield today.

Bri Kerschmer is an English Instructor at a two-year community college in Minnesota. In addition to spending time with her mini zoo of animals with her partner, she loves running her small business making soap and candles. She is passionate about eliminating bi-erasure and encouraging LGBTQ+ voices.

Rest in Power, Martina



Martina Robinson, born May 29, 1976, in Clearfield, PA, passed away on November 27, 2018, at her home in West Roxbury, MA. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy at a young age, she used an electric wheelchair. She was an activist and advocate for disability rights. She was courageous, with a big heart, and eager to protest and march in a rally. Martina wanted equal rights for anyone she believed was not getting a fair deal. Martina spoke at many seminars. She was invited and attended women with disabilities conferences in Japan and India.

Martina was also a poet and writer, and had several poems published in *BWQ*. She graduated from Purchase College in NY with degrees in Journalism and Anthropology. She loved her cats Cupcake and Richard. She always said, “I don’t need to be rich or famous. I just want people to remember I was here and tried to make a difference.”

Fellow BBWN member Lorelei Erisis wrote, “Martina was one of the most dedicated activists that I have ever known. She was one of those people who always seemed to be everywhere I was. She was so sweet, and smart, but also so passionate and incredibly determined to fight for the causes, and the people, she cared about. I will miss her dearly. As I’m sure will many others who had the honor to know her and to fight side by side with her. Rest in Power, Martina.”

First explorations // Puppy love revisited // Still cannot conform

By Martine Mussies (Cyborg Mermaid)

*You may forget but
Let me tell you
This: someone in
Some future time
Will think of us
– Sappho, “The Art of Loving Women”*

“Martineeeee, who do *you* want to date?!” the children in the school yard yelled. Scattered, I looked up from my book about female pharaohs and their cats. Date? Like... a courtship? Hmm. Yeah, why not? I was a rather Romantic child, my heart sang of philosophy and poetry, and my mind was starved for travel beyond the road ahead. Connecting with my peers was too scary for me—I preferred to spend my time talking to my cats—but somehow, this idea of sharing a special intimacy, some sort of secret bond, with another human being fascinated me. It was an appealing thought.

My classmates nagged for a name, and I did not have to think hard. Annemieke. A beautiful, blue-eyed, outgoing, active 11-year-old who kept everyone on their toes. She always looked sweet and girlish because of her big blue eyes and her cute freckled face that was often covered by her flowing golden curls. I could draw a map of her whole countenance with my eyes closed—her sea-nymph ears, her dainty nose, and her shiny, halo-white teeth. Among the things she loved were animals, music, video games, bread with cheese and curry ketchup, drawing, dancing, and making others laugh.

I imagined us together, Annemieke and me. Drawing, singing, crafting. Maybe she would also like to go horseback riding and join me climbing trees. On rainy days, I would endlessly brush and caress her long hair. We could take a bath together, like the pharaohs. I would teach her how to talk to my cats. And I would watch when she played on the Sega Mega Drive that she got when her brother grew bored of it. I still remember some of her video games. My absolute favorite Genesis game was Ariel the Little Mermaid. I thought that Annemieke had much in common with the little mermaid. And with Gabriel, the girlfriend (or so I thought) of Xena Warrior Princess. She had a beauty that made those billboard-princesses look as paper thin as they are: she was something robust and real. Somehow, her imperfections made her perfect for me. That was my girl, I just knew it. So, I decided to rule the benefits over the risks and approached her.

Annemieke laughed at me, a ringing laughter supported by her twinkling eyes and the magical quality of confidence. She repeated my question out loud and others started to

laugh as well. My first reaction was a happy one, as I did not immediately recognize that they were making fun of me. She did a silly dance around me, and I tried to dance along with her. Then the other kids began to bully me. And Annemieke joined them, calling me a “filthy dyke” and more. Huh? Why would a dyke be filthy? The dyke is old and strong and protects our country from the mighty waters. Although I would like to be a mermaid, I am quite happy with the dyke. But apparently, the other kids were not, as they went on. I remember “retarded,” “crazy,” “dumb,” “ugly.” And then I had heard enough and walked away. Why did they have to be so mean? My cats would never set me up like this.

The deep husky voice of Tanita Tikaram reverberated through the windows, which meant that it was Friday and my mother was home. I still sobbed a bit and she was worried when she saw me so sad. I told her that my “date” had let me down, but I did not correct her when she said something about “him.” Not that I had expected her to freak out: she had friends who were lesbians. One of my father’s best friends was a gay man, no problem at all. But I somehow felt that I had to make a choice: did I fancy boys, or did I fancy girls? And I thought that I was not ready to choose. It felt like such a silly question: how can you generalize who you like better: people with a willy or people with a pussy? To me, that felt similar to stating that you will only date blonde people for the rest of your life. I couldn’t make such a big statement and I was worried that it would be really uncomfortable if my mother now would think that I were a lesbian, while later on I might decide that I was not. Or so. It was confusing—and that made me even sadder. So, after watching some Xena and Gabrielle on the Betamax, I decided to go upstairs to my room and to play some music on my cassette player.

My father had borrowed some records from the library and transferred them to tapes for me. It was Dutch pop music that was aimed at and sung by children, about subjects children themselves had chosen. The topics and lyrics were often rooted in leftist ideology and aimed to transgress and dismantle taboo topics. One of these topics was non-heterosexuality, which I was about to realize. With a pencil I rolled the cassette tape back to a song that I had discovered yesterday, “Joris en Jan,” and began to softly sing along with the catchy tune, written by homosexual songwriter Robert Long.

Two boys, Joris and Jan, are best friends or maybe more. They do everything together, from homework to soccer to holidays. When Joris and Jan are not near, their classmates gossip about them. One of the girls suggests that they might become flat

Martine, continued on next page

mates when moving out, to which another replies that her uncle shares his bed with his male friend. Immediately, a rather stuck-up posh boy pompously replies that this man is gay and that his dad says that this is “goor,” meaning gross, filthy, disgusting, and revolting. But the girl is not impressed: “Don’t act like an idiot,” she replies, which leads the boy to sing some Dutch swear words for male homosexuals. And then it happens: the girls unite in singing about the attractiveness of both “lads,” calling them a “nice chap” and “a stunner.” Apparently, Joris en Jan are viewed as dating material, both by each other and by the group of girls. Wham.

The song ends with Joris and Jan responding to the gossip, stating that they are not homosexual—although it wouldn’t matter if it were so—and that their classmates can just jabber away because they couldn’t care less. “And whether the whole class is pro or con: my friend’s mate is named Jan—and mine’s name is Joris.” Their lyrics deeply resonated with my experiences just a few hours earlier on the schoolyard. It was on that day that it not only occurred to me that I was a misfit in the traditional steps of courtship display—I simply could not make the “right” dance moves—but also that I was not the only one, and that we could claim our very own places in space using technology and music. Furthermore, it was the first time that I became aware of the lesson my first hurdle taught me: this isn’t going to be easy, but it won’t be impossible, and trust and love are the pillars on which I can create an authentic attitude to life.

And now? I still suck at playing platform games, which doesn’t stop me from liking them. I haven’t quit talking to cats. The female pharaohs continue to fascinate me—especially when they are depicted with symbols for male power, like beards. And I still refuse to choose between girls and boys. Since that “first time” of mine, I cannot stop wondering about the sense and the sensibilities of this oppressive binary normativity we happen to live in. Therefore, around three years ago, I



Why Not Both Co is a bisexual duo consisting of AV and Amanda Wells who create queer webcomics. Follow them on Tumblr, Facebook, and Instagram @whynotbothco.

stopped calling myself “bisexual” —the prefix annoyed me, as my attraction is person-based and can advert me to people of endless genders and preferences. But since I encountered Robyn’s expansive definition, I started to embrace the term. (Which was a bit problematic at first, as various ex-boyfriends insulted me by semi-jokingly stating that my bisexuality was just a trick to turn them on and/or their shortcut to some threesome sex... but that is something for another essay, I guess).

Since that “first time” of mine, I have been open about my bisexuality. As my current partner is male, it would be more than easy for me to hide behind our relationship, pretending to be your average heterosexual cis-woman. But I do not wish to

“I call myself bisexual because I acknowledge in myself the potential to be attracted—romantically and/or sexually—to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.”

—Robyn Ochs

Martine Mussies is a PhD candidate at Utrecht University, writing about the Cyborg Mermaid. Besides her research, Martine is a professional musician. Her other interests include autism, psychology, karate, kendo, King Alfred, and science fiction.

Becca, continued from page 1

Except that I wasn't. A fact that was brought home to me as years passed and hormones began to give me what I really didn't want: a female body. I ricocheted into puberty with a feeling of being betrayed by my own self. A betrayal that I tried to undermine with anorexia, and outsize clothing that I borrowed from boy-friends. (Because girlfriends didn't yet feature on my horizons.)

Fast forward to when I was 20 years old and first crushed hard on a woman. A musician whose husky voice and infectious giggle made me want to curl up inside her arms, somewhere warm and private. This first infatuation helped me realise that the close relationship I'd had with a female school friend was actually more than a friendship—Something that she'd figured out before me.

First times can bring fear. When that friend came on to me one night, I backed off. I don't know if she was braver than I or just that she'd drunk more cider and I not quite enough. And anyway, I was in a long-term relationship (with a boyfriend), living away from home for the first time (in London), and kind of failing at college (long story). In that perfect storm of anxiety it's little surprise that I didn't seize the moment.

Fear is a paralytic: energy-draining and downright boring. I've done battle with the fear dragon and slain it many times over, but the neural pathways that anxiety has burned into my brain are not easily overcome. Yet I know that I don't want to lose another moment of life experience by sacrificing it to the fear dragon. I'd rather burn to ashes under its onslaught.

It's easier to face the fear when someone walks with you, someone who's travelled the territory and can guide you through. I cried the first time I read a collection of real-life stories written by bi folks. It was like a whole tribe of people reaching out to me,

saying, "This is me. This is you too. We exist. And, by the way, we rock." I felt safe, welcomed, visible. In the infinite spectrum of human sexuality and gender, I had a home.

I needed this home because of other firsts that were happening to me about then. Like being mis-identified as a lesbian in an LGBTQ group, by a throwaway comment that left me feeling erased. No matter that it wasn't targeted at me: the woman who spoke it was just joking about how *all of us lesbians are handy with a toolbox*. She meant to be inclusive, making me one of the gang; and wow, did I want to be part of the queer gang. Newly out, I needed LGBTQ tribe so much it hurt. But as soon as those words left her lips, I felt like I'd just stepped into another closet.

Bi-erasure and biphobia: two more firsts to get to grips with. Add another coming out task to the list: coming out as bi in every single queer space I wanted to inhabit. And I wanted to inhabit those spaces because I wanted connection with queer folks. Not least because now I was out and proud in my joyful bisexual self, I was feeling fairly enthusiastic about the prospect of actually putting into practice all that bisexual theory I'd been reading about.

So I went on a date with a woman. I had my first queer PDA kissing her in a bar. I felt reckless, bold, ecstatic. Then I kissed her on her couch back at her house. And I kissed her in her bed, which had shimmery purple covers. I kissed her tattoo, a black flower inked into the soft skin of her upper arm. And the fear dragon came out to play, but I told it to back the hell off.

That first relationship didn't go somewhere lasting, but it left a lasting impression on me. That first kiss with a woman was emphatically a reminder that facing the fear dragon pays

Becca, continues on next page

Amanda, continued from page 1

a play produced by the graduate theater department, and then we would get coffee after. By that time, I had told a friend that I was interested in women, and, as I got ready for the date, he attempted to be encouraging by assuring me that "vaginas are great." Well, that did little to calm my nerves.

Kaitlin picked me up in her car, a little late, and we sped to the theater, making finally-in-person small talk along the way. The box office managed to find two open seats for us in the packed theater, and we shuffled awkwardly all the way into the middle of the crowded row. We settled into our theater seats and the play promptly began. It had all been such a rush we had barely made any eye contact yet.

The stage lights go up, and right there on stage is a young actress yawning and getting out of a bed, completely naked. I feel my face flush, and fight the urge to glance over at Kaitlin, my mind racing with the weird irony of this turn of events. I couldn't believe that here I was on my first date with a woman, my first foray into my queerness, and we were side-by-side gazing upon a naked woman as she spoke her monologue.

Maybe it wasn't such a big deal to Kaitlin. It probably wasn't. She likely didn't think anything of it. It was just art, and she was, in fact, an experienced lesbian. Our relationship ended before I ever got the chance to ask her what she had been thinking in that moment. But to me, it felt important.

Amanda, continued on next page

Becca, continued from previous page

dividends, because, *ummm, yeah*. I knew most assuredly that kissing women was something I would do more of.

The thing about being new to something, though, is that our grip on it can be fragile. When a woman I dated told me, “Maybe you’re not as queer as you think you are,” shame flooded me down to my toes. I wasn’t really queer. I had no right to explore my sexuality, to attempt to understand it, to be in LGBTQ spaces. I was trespassing in territory that only gold-standard queer people had the right to take up space in. Imposter-me retreated into self-doubt, questioning my own sexuality.

And then I attended my first UK BiCon... And suddenly I found my tribe. Bi folks and pan people, workshops about consent and gender exploration and fanfic, strap-ons and polyamory and board games. Geeks and shy-bis and hotties and divas. Dancing for hours on a Saturday night; cosplaying queer sci-fi characters and drinking whisky straight. Being unable to take my eyes off a woman in oh-so-tight tan riding breeches.

Having safe ground, home territory, makes you braver. Knowing you have community, people who’ve got your back. It makes it easier to face the fear dragon, to take up the challenge of all those firsts that come along. Like the first time I stood up for myself in a conversation with a straight friend who wasn’t dealing with their own homophobia, telling them, “This is me you’re talking about. And this is your shit you need to fix.” Shaking, suddenly furious that here was yet another person who expected me to legitimize their own narrow-mindedness by erasing my true self, realising that my determination to live a congruent life was going to rub up against other people’s edges, but that this wasn’t going to stop me.

Daring to be myself, I discovered that I didn’t want to be anything else. The first time I sang with an LGBTQ choir at a Pride festival, finding my voice, literally and figuratively. I had my tribe with me, we had each other’s back. We marched through the city, and the streets were ours to be in openly, unafraid. Everywhere there were rainbows. For the first time, I knew I could make this city my home. That I *was* home, in every sense of the word.

—*When did you first know?*

A simple question, with a complicated answer. I knew I was queer at nine years old, but I didn’t know exactly what that meant. Now, at the age of fifty-one, I know that I’m a queer woman who claims the word bisexual. I know who I am now. That’s what matters.

I know who I am, by *being* who I am. Which means facing first times, over and over. Facing down the fear dragon, as many times as it takes. Maybe I get a little singed about the edges, but I can take a little heat. And you know what? Each time, the dragon gets smaller, and I’m still standing.

A lifelong eco worrier and wordsmith, Becca Flintham lives and works in the UK as an educator of children, young people, and adults. Her current jobs involve dressing as an Anglo Saxon, running community choirs, hanging out with wolves, and teaching kids how to set fire to things.

Amanda, continued from previous page

As a newly queer-identified person, that night meant a lot. I was on a date. I was going for it. After so many years of avoiding it, I was finally putting myself out there. And Tinder, strangely enough, helped give me that push. I had a new sense of self-awareness, and I was making things happen. I was giving myself the space to explore. I was on my first date with a woman, effectively starting a new chapter of my life. The surprising theatrical introduction to real-life female nakedness was merely an added bonus.

A music educator living in a midwestern city, Amanda Rose is passionate about the arts, reading, hiking, and vegetarian cooking.



Review: *The Subversive Sex and Sensuality of Killing Eve*

By Shayna Macy Warner

(*spoilers ahead for *Killing Eve**)

“I’ve never done this before.”

“It’s OK—I know what I’m doing.”

Out of context, what filmic remembrances might this dialogue conjure? Probably not a woman with her knife to the stomach of the woman laying next to her. But maybe that’s just me, and my unimaginative visual associations.

Of course, this snapshot is a perfect example of the tone-switching, reveling-in-its-own-unpredictability roller coaster ride of Phoebe Waller Bridge’s *Killing Eve*. The at-times discombobulatingly funny, at-times knuckle-whitening BBC America espionage miniseries, based on Luke Jennings’ *Codename Villanelle* novels, is an ode to misdirection and gleeful subversions, most prominently for its main premise: the archetypal spy and assassin of the genre are both women.

This was creator Phoebe Waller-Bridge’s selling point of the series, and, along with an already lauded lead performance by Sandra Oh as the titular Eve, it stoked enough word-of-mouth interest to fuel a following that increased with every episode’s airing and a greenlight for a second season (which has already wrapped production). In a television landscape where creators are being urged, more than ever, to produce multi-layered, mold-breaking portrayals of “strong women,” Eve and Villanelle, played by remarkably chameleonic Jodie Comer, present more than just lip service to industry politics. Theirs is a truly twisted relationship, and *Killing Eve* is a stunning battle of wills and consuming desires in two fascinating, complex, and flawed individuals.

As a work of television, *Killing Eve* is undeniably entertaining. It juxtaposes expectation in every shape and form it can think

to use, including jarring smash cuts from one scene to another, minimal lead-in to suddenly, explosively high-octane scenarios, and strikingly funny dialogue that undercuts those scenarios for moments at a time before the characters re-realize the severity of their situation. This constant upheaval creates an atmosphere in which the at first relatively normal, if stifled, MI5 agent Eve, and the chaotic, inhibitionless assassin Villanelle can thrive (and suffer) as shifting, evolving foils.

Eve and Villanelle’s tempestuous, obsessive relationship to one another is written to be troubling. As they learn more about one another, their initial professional goals become increasingly complicated, and the audience faces questions when it comes to judging whether protagonist and antagonist are actually diametrically opposed, whether one can exist within the world of the show without the other, and whether the show would ever like to clarify that issue. Indeed, Eve and Villanelle so often meet each other in the reflection of physical mirrors that it is difficult to argue against such comparative symbolism.

Complicating matters is the brazenly sexual nature with which Eve and Villanelle regard one another. In another happy subversion of the genre, the homoeroticism hinted at in male portrayals of cat-and-mouse is all but blown out of the water by Eve’s spiraling obsession, and Villanelle’s unabashed, uncoded desire.

Villanelle’s bisexuality plays a factor in her origin story, and her attraction to Eve is not merely implied—it is explored in depth, made explicit as a motivation, and exploited as an Achilles heel. And rather than limit her sexual orientation to obsession with Eve, Villanelle picks up lovers of multiple genders throughout the series, without so much as a bat of the eye.

Shayna, continues on next page



As is the usual qualifier, it would be nice to continue seeing more storylines in which bisexuality is not linked to psychosexuality or psychopathy, but Villanelle's sexuality is only a piece of her as yet incomplete puzzle. Her characterization is a well-wrought, multi-level depiction of a queer woman that hasn't yet been seen, and, despite her murderous tendencies, offers a figure that somehow invokes sympathy and secret cheers.

Eve's own orientation remains somewhat of a muddle, even as she protests, after having described Villanelle in sweeping, poetic imagery to a hapless police sketch artist, that her attraction is purely, obsessively professional. However, as Eve uncovers more pieces of Villanelle's luxurious, violent, and recklessly indulgent world, she begins to fall into the same sensuality that makes Villanelle so committed to her job.

One scene in particular in Episode 5, "I Have A Thing for Bathrooms," finds Eve adorning herself with clothes and perfume sent by Villanelle, against any reasonable judgment. As she zips up a perfectly tailored dress, Eve is clearly enraptured by Villanelle's idea of her body, so much so that for at least the length of the sequence, her attraction overcomes her revulsion toward Villanelle's actions. Season One's final episode delves even further into both Eve and Villanelle's negotiations around each others' bodies, with the same aplomb seen throughout the season, but I'll leave that episode alone for those who have yet to experience it.

All the principal women of the show, when at full capacity, are as fascinating and brazen as their leads. In addition to Eve and Villanelle, Fiona Shaw's duplicitously polite Carolyn Martens, and Kirby Howell-Baptiste's unabashedly clear-headed Elena are free in their speech, judgment, and action, especially when it comes to topics of sex and sexuality. Often, their candor outruns that of their male counterparts, with the exception of Bill (David Haig), whose own sexual fluidity is a welcome addition in a landscape devoid of bi+ male characters.

Killing Eve could be at the top of my year-end television list for the performances of the female cast alone. As a queer female viewer, I might have even been satisfied with representations of queer characters who promise to continue evolving in exciting and idiosyncratic zig-zags. The series' unpretentious, startlingly humorous editing and edge-of-your-seat plot could be awarded in its own right. Luckily, I don't have to choose amongst any of these elements—*Killing Eve* is the whole package, even if it does sound suspiciously like a ticking time bomb.

Shayna Maci Warner is a GLAAD Rising Star and recent graduate from UCLA in World Arts and Cultures, and Film. She is currently working on her Master's in Cinema Studies at NYU, where she is pursuing the production, preservation, and programming of queer film and television.

The Firsts

By J.M. Arrow



Damn your pretty eyes
Damn your high cheekbones
Damn your cute ears
Damn your beautiful full mouth
Damn that you're a guy

As I occasionally passed by him in the street, I pretended to ignore him, even though we were classmates. He would never be into me, a tomboy whom girls kept away from, let alone befriended. I was never supposed to be attracted to him, either.

The books on my shelves screamed out 'women only' love. I had lots of lady crushes. But none for men. Until Angelo. I didn't care that my neighborhood was after my blood as an out lesbian of color and faith. I was a gay schoolgirl of sixteen, far from sweet and proud of it. I had really hoped that Angelo was a lesbian like me but he turned out to be a bloke. An actual guy that I was attracted to.

I never got to speak to the guy who made it okay for me to like fellas.

My first kiss was with a woman. My first relationship was with a woman. Leanne. The first thing she said to me when we settled into a relationship was "I hope you're not bisexual. I can't stand bisexuals." So I had to pretend I wasn't because, first love.

Being monogamous had nothing to do with my sexual orientation, but it sure did create a smokescreen for the ignorant. I had to be seen as either straight or gay in order to have a "proper" relationship.

Otherwise, coming out as bisexual meant this:

"Can we have a threesome then?"

"Ok, so how long have we got before you run away with a guy?"

"Are you ever going to get yourself sorted out?"

As time went by I never forgot Angelo or Leanne. You don't forget your firsts, do you?

I'm now with a partner I love and who loves me unconditionally in return, no longer needing smokescreens or pretensions. Gender is irrelevant, captain. I don't have to hide from others. I don't have to hide the person I am, or the people who I've been with or loved. Most of all, I don't have to hide from myself.

JM Arrow is a queer woman of faith (Muslim) and color from the UK. She is in the midst of writing her first novel and short stories about women of color. Including fan fiction. Yup.

The Creating Change Conference

Detroit Michigan, January 23-27, 2019

CC 2019: Redefining Activism

By Gabrielle Blonder

The first workshop I attended at Creating Change 2019 nearly brought me to tears. It was entitled “activism for introverts,” focusing on how to use our quiet, often-overlooked strengths to affect change, and recognize the differences we make in our everyday lives even when not at the forefront of the protest rallies. A quote from the ensuing discussion quickly stuck in my heart and became my steady mantra for the weekend: “We can often get so caught up in our own heads that we lose sight of the differences we make in our day-to-day lives.”

Friday night, several of my fellow board members and I were eating dinner in a restaurant attached to the hotel. As we started our drinks, one member of the waitstaff came up to tell us how excited they were that our conference was in their hotel and how much they’d been learning from talking to the participants. We gave them some BRC buttons and, throughout the course of our meal, answered several servers’ eager questions about gender and the importance of pronouns. By the end of our brief conversation, our waitress was fluently checking people’s pronoun badges before addressing them, thrilled to have learned about this new facet of identity.



A trans teenager told us he’d never been in a queer space before. He had arrived as a guest of a conference presenter and therefore didn’t have his own badge. Upon overhearing him lament that he wouldn’t be able to get into the ball that night because of his lack of badge, an older stranger in the elevator gave him his own, urging him to go to and thoroughly enjoy as many events as he could. He couldn’t stop talking about how much it meant to him to be able to be there.

At least one woman stopped by our table and nearly cried, saying she hadn’t known bi-specific organizations existed and had never felt so validated. Several performers at the bi+ open mic event I was lucky enough to run Saturday night talked about how relieving it was to present their art in a space where they knew they’d be fully understood. Simply by being there and holding space, we were able to make a huge difference in others’ lives. This was my third Creating Change, and, above all, every year I leave with renewed resolve and a myriad of ideas for small ways to effect positive differences in the world.

I often half-jokingly refer to myself as “an accidental activist.” I started going to a bi+ group several years ago because I desperately needed the support and community. I kept attending, slowly becoming more and more involved as needs arose, strengthened as much by what I was getting as what I was giving. Eventually, somehow, I ended up in front of an eager, enthusiastic crowd at nine a.m. on the final morning of an incredible four-day long conference, leading a workshop on centering joy in bi+ spaces. There were an infinite number of tiny individual decisions and interactions that led to that moment, and the vast majority of them seemed insignificant at the time. My point in this backstory is: Don’t ever underestimate your power.

Activism isn’t a noun; it’s a verb. A shifting, modifiable, fluid verb. You don’t have to “be an activist” to make change. Sometimes, activism is a single conversation. Sometimes, it’s pulling yourself out of your comfort zone just enough to inspire others to action. Sometimes it’s buying a snack for someone to power them through their next rally. Sometimes it’s simply having the courage to be yourself in a world that seems to wish otherwise. Never let your unique contributions to the world get washed away in your preconceptions of the “Big Picture.”

Because after all, every movement has a first step.

Gabrielle Blonder has been a board member of the Bisexual Resource Center for about four years. In her spare time, she writes, makes art, and spins fire.

The Bi+ Institute at CC 2019

By Belle Haggett Silverman

It was standing room only at the 2019 Creating Change Bi+ Institute. Not only were there many people gathered to spend an entire day discussing and learning about bi+ issues, they brought a multitude of perspectives, backgrounds, and visions for the future. In that room we had queerspawn, mothers, students, elders, pansexuals, demisexuals, many genders, many colors, and many more folk whom categories have yet to capture. Together, we were able to find a spirit of learning and engaging to lead us into a more powerful bi+ community moving forward.

We were led by a knowledgeable and thoughtful group of leaders in the bi+ community. Denarii Grace, an activist and creative; Andy, a lawyer; AL, a member of the Bisexual Organizing Project; and Aida Manduley, LCSW, a therapist and educator. Robyn Ochs facilitated a lesson on bi+ history. Our discussions centered on identity and our experience in queer and mainstream communities. Our learning spanned topics including bi+ history, sexual violence, sex and sexual health, religious experience, media, and terminology. Andy centered us in calming, empowering ritual to go forth and succeed throughout the Creating Change conference.

Why is it that today, in 2019, we still need to bring bi+ people together for a day of working, communing, and sharing? This was best captured when the skillful facilitators asked us to consider community. Who is our community, and how could we tell? Many people in the room expressed an unfortunately unifying thought: we lack community. Inside queer spaces, throughout mainstream US culture, in our families, among our friends, and in our workplaces, many bi+ people feel as if we cannot be our full selves without facing discrimination, dismissal, or disgust. We would know we found our community when we can share with people

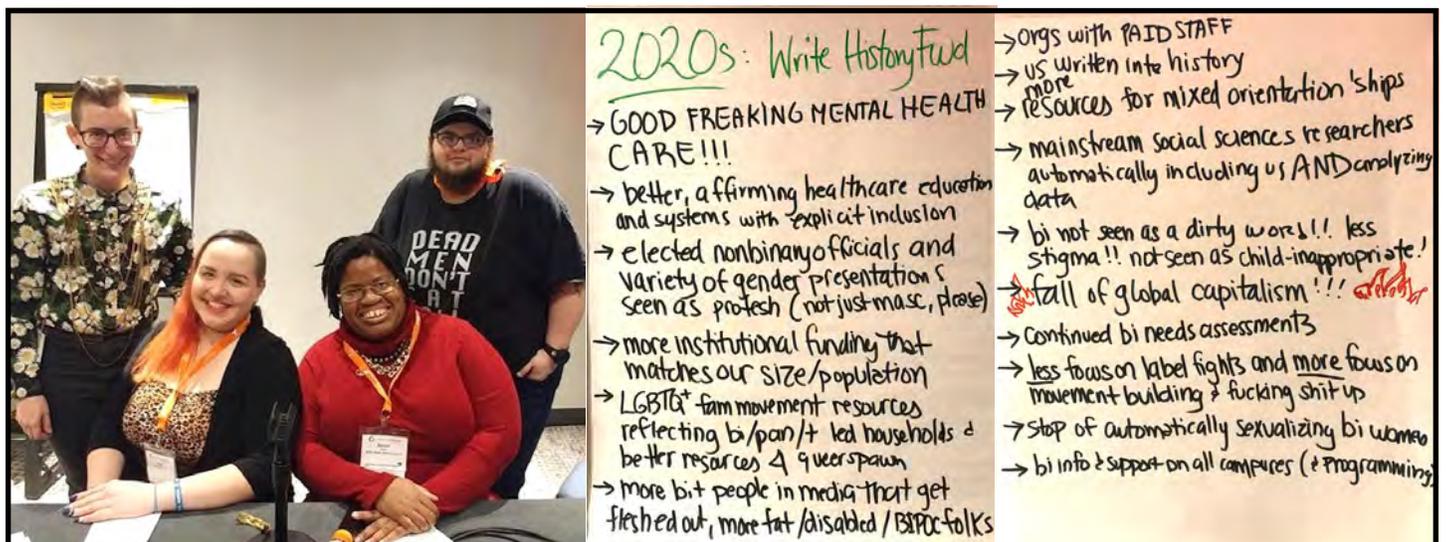


Bisexual Resource Center board members at CC 2019

without fear, and be met with wholehearted, nourishing recognition and validation. We must commit, as bi, pan, omni, and other multisexual identities, to come together and build community where none is found.

Together, we set a course for what's next for the bi+ community. In Robyn's bi+ history segment, we were asked to write our history forward by envisioning what we want to achieve in the 2020s and beyond. We envision more funding, more education, more resources. We envision less stigma, less discrimination, less sexualization. We envision intersectional and interconnected identities working together, and a community bolstered by representation throughout our cultures. And through this vision, the bi+ community is poised to act for a better future.

Belle Haggett Silverman is a nonprofit professional and President of the Bisexual Resource Center board of directors.



Andy, Aida, Denarii and AL, organizers of the Institute.

Institute participants brainstorm our future bi history.

Firsts

By Ana B. Freeman

First pet

(A fish named Cat. Died after two days.)

First kiss

(Dave from my Jewish youth group. Slobbery.)

First love

(Drunken doe eyes behind Rachel Maddow glasses. Hand sanitizer, wild laughter.)

First job

(Rigging curtains like sailors. Backs aching from hammering. Darkness. Backdrops.)

First drink

(Vodka out of a plastic water bottle at the park. Swinging.)

First love

(Introduced me to her father as her “friend.” Flower decals on the wall above her bed.)

First all-nighter

(Sunrise dizziness. Got in the car, coughing triumphantly.)

First time doing what the kids from the city did

(It smelled sharp. It tingled going in.)

First love

(We wore matching dresses once. We held hands for the whole year that I was seventeen.)

First love

(The first time we kissed, I shook so hard, I fell. The first time we broke up, I ran out the back door and into the graveyard, tripping over tombstones in the black. I slept in the cellar under blankets that stunk of other people’s sex fluids. I wanted her to worry.)

First love

(She smelled soft.)

First love

(She smiled as she showed me her condom collection. Hundreds.)

First love

(She was an expert in Civil War history. Her knees chattered in her sleep. She introduced me to cigarettes. For my birthday, she gave me a hug. We compared grades. She could go for days without eating. She always had cowlicks. She hated the way I always told her, “Come here now.” She said it was needy. It was needy. We made fun of everyone; we were having more fun than anyone who wasn’t us. When she decided she was straight, she gave me all her plaid shirts. We were the same size.)

First love

(Lacy skirts on second-chance first dates.)

First love

(Kissed me on the lips when her best friend killed himself. Her boyfriend was at a body painting party.)

First love

(The sixth time we broke up, I returned her pink sneakers.)

First love

(The last time I saw her was when she stumbled up to me at a party and slurred, “I’m soooo sorry for everything I’ve put you through.” Or, the last time I saw her was when I was returning her roommate’s headphones and she was home unexpectedly. She nearly shut my fingers in that thin dorm door. Or, the last time I saw her, she was in the passenger’s seat of her father’s car. He was driving straight towards me. She was looking right at me.)

First love

(It wasn’t until weeks later that I heard.)

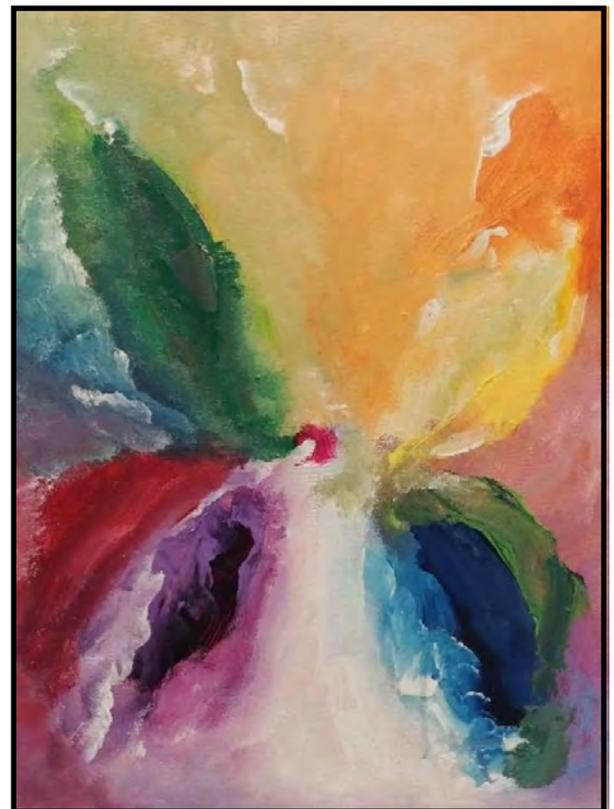
First love

(Hand sanitizer, wild laughter.)

First love

(Left school on a stretcher.)

Ana B. Freeman is a queer writer and educator. Her work has appeared on The Spun Yarn, Theatre is Easy, and Odyssey Works.



Abstract 25. Acrylic piece by Jo-Anne Carlson.

Jo-Anne Carlson is a writer, artist, and musician who believes that who you love, how you love, and how many you love, shouldn't matter.

An Absolutely Remarkable Thing (and some commonplace ones, like bisexuality)

A book review by Casey Lawrence

Of all the surprises in Hank Green's highly anticipated debut novel, *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing*, the protagonist's bisexuality was one I would never have predicted. The New Adult sci-fi novel seamlessly incorporates protagonist April May's queerness into an alternate universe where an HRC-like character is POTUS and an alien race has sent dozens of robots to earth to the tune of Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now." April, an art school graduate working for an app start-up in New York City, stumbles upon one of these robots in the middle of the night and, mistaking it for an art installation (or perhaps an ingenious marketing ploy for the next *Transformers* installment), films a funny YouTube video interviewing the creature she dubs "Carl." April, her best friend Andy, and "New York Carl" become an overnight sensation, and while the book is ostensibly a First Contact narrative with elements of both hard and soft sci-fi, it really becomes about the social internet, fame, and the dangers of feeding the trolls.

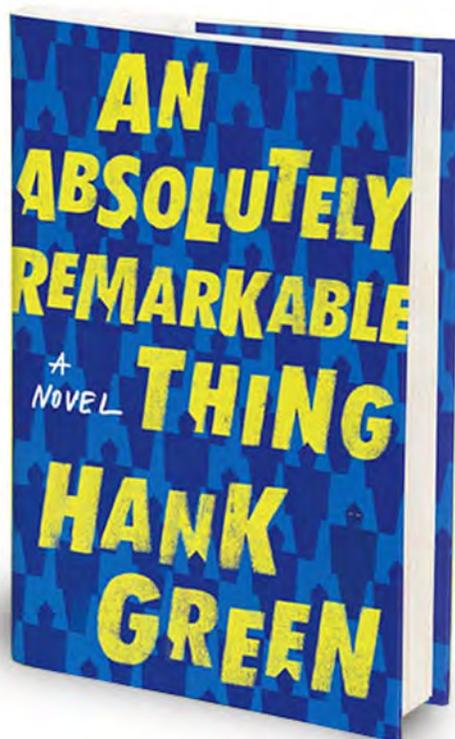
As April's notoriety grows and she is increasingly in demand for interviews as the person who first "discovered" the Carls, she is pressured by her publicist to frame herself as a lesbian, rather than bisexual, to make her more palatable to her growing audience. The biphobia of this moment is acknowledged and explored in a genuine way, which, in a book by straight/white/cis/male Hank Green, is delightfully unexpected. April's sexuality, rather than being treated as a novelty or a joke, is probably the least remarkable thing about her—and it's treated as such! If I had to nitpick, there are a few things Green gets wrong: for example, April comes close to falling into the "slutty bisexual" stereotype of being attracted to nearly everyone in her age range, although these attractions frequently come across as stray thoughts and are rarely acted on.

Likewise, for someone so well-versed on the social internet (Green's wildly successful YouTube channel *vlogbrothers*, started with brother John in 2007, has spawned numerous companies and side-projects, including the popular educational channel, *SciShow*), Green's privileged position shines through when it comes to his portrayal of online harassment. As a woman on the internet (and a queer woman, no less!) April somehow manages to avoid any of the gendered harassment that a pretty, young woman cast suddenly into online stardom would inevitably receive. Despite nailing other

issues—Green *knows* the ins and outs of the internet—the novel glosses over elements of internet culture that, even in a world with Madam President at the helm, would have made it even more difficult for April to adapt to going viral.

That being said, Hank Green does something in *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* that in most novels would have readers running for the hills—he lets his protagonist make the wrong choice again and again. April's missteps are frustrating, but they are what make her so engaging. Readers will love to hate April May as she self-sabotages her relationships with important allies, follows bad advice, and fumbles her way toward a greater understanding of what it means to be human in the digital age. Green translates real-world issues into the fantastic events of *AART*, such as when April posts a ranting retaliation video after being challenged by a radical conservative man proposing a drastically different course of action. Afterward, she thinks, "I had no idea of this then, but by engaging with him, I was affirming him and his wackos. Their ideas were getting more exposure through my larger audience, and I (and, of course, every news channel out there) was confirming the idea that there were two sides you could be on. It was a huge mistake, and also great for views." Like a punch to the gut, this moment will resonate with contemporary readers everywhere.

Timely and topical, Green's *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* offers important social commentary wrapped up in the gift of a unique sci-fi plot. The added bonus of unexpected bisexual representation in an otherwise "mainstream" book is just icing; I'm excited to add April to my short (but ever-expanding) list of bisexual characters in mainstream media.



*Casey Lawrence is a Canadian grad student studying English Literature in Dublin, Ireland. She is the author of two bi+ YA novels, *Out of Order* and *Order in the Court*, and the co-editor of *11/9: The Fall of American Democracy*. Check out her YouTube channel *RealIssuesRealLife* and follow her on Twitter @myexplodingpen.*

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+ women's brunch! See calendar for dates.

2nd Mondays:

Tea with Bi Women Partnered with Men. 7pm. Info: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com.

2nd Wednesdays:

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

2nd Thursdays:

Young BLiSS Group. (20s & 30s) 7pm. For bi folks 20-29. Info: Gabby at young-blissboston@gmail.com.

3rd Saturdays:

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

More about Boston-area groups biresource.org/boston-groups/

Metro-Boston women: Keep up with local events by subscribing to our Google group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/biwomenboston>

We offer FREE electronic subscriptions to this publication. Sign up at www.biwomenboston.org.



CALENDAR

March

All month, Bi Health Awareness Month.

To learn more, visit bihealthmonth.org

2 (Saturday) 12-3pm, Bi Women's Brunch at Beth's in Belmont. Bring a potluck item to share. This a great way to meet bi+ and bi-friendly women in the area! There are steps leading up to this home, but there is also a ramp at the back of the house. RSVP: bethin-nis@gmail.com

6 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). Bi and bi-friendly people of all genders and orientations welcome. Meetings are peer-facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Meets 1st Wednesdays. Info: bliss@biresource.org

11 (Monday) 7-9pm, 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. RSVP/Info: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com

14 (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 discussion, support, and/or the eating and drinking of delicious things. Info/RSVP: youngblissboston@gmail.com

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

17 (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 only trans and cis women and non-binary folks of all races and ethnic backgrounds. RSVP: www.meetup.com/Bi-Community-Activities/events/ftvxgmyzfbnb/

April

3 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See March 6th)

8 (Monday) 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See March 11th)

11 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). (See March 14th)

14 (Sunday) 12-3pm, Bi Women's Brunch at Char's in Dorchester. RSVP: avon.alger@gmail.com

20 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch. (See March 16th)

May

1 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See March 6th)

5 (Sunday) 2-4pm, Tea with Bisexual Women Partnered with Men (BWPM). (See March 17th) Please note this tea is a week earlier than usual due to Mother's Day.

9 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). (See March 14th)

13 (Monday) 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See March 11th)

18 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch. (See March 16th)

18 (Saturday) 12-3pm, Bi Women's Brunch at Robyn's in Jamaica Plain. Four steps into the house, & cats. Children are welcome. RSVP: robyn@robynocho.com