Bi Women Quarterly

Winter 2026
Allies & Accomplices
Vol. 44 No. 1

Between Allyship and Accompliceship: Lessons from Exile and Art

By Farnaz Abdoli

Credit: Augustas Didžgalvis

I am an Iranian-born multidisciplinary artist, writer, and activist, now based in Munich, Germany. From 2010 to 2016, I worked as a fashion designer and stylist in Iran, creating collections that challenged restrictive dress codes and introduced variety, color, and freedom into women's fashion. My work was celebrated—in 2013, I was named one of CNN's ten most influential women of the year for the wide social changes it inspired—but it also led to persecution. I was arrested by Iran's Revolutionary Guard, spent one month in solitary confinement, and was sentenced to five years in prison along with a ban on all activities in fashion and clothing. To escape this, I was forced to leave Iran and lived seven years in Turkey in a state of limbo. During that time, I began collaborating with Spectrum—an anti-racist, intersectional feminist, trans, and gender diverse inclusive organization—where I finally found the courage to speak openly about my bi+ identity, a part of myself that had been silenced for many years. Today, my artistic and written work weaves together themes of exile, identity, migration, fashion, and human rights.

When I first learned the distinction between "ally" and "accomplice," it resonated deeply with my own story. As a bi+ woman, an artist, and someone who has lived through exile, I know what it means when support goes beyond kind words and transforms into action. Allyship is important. It acknowledges our struggles and offers moral encouragement.

Farnaz, continued on page 6

My Quiet Revolution: On Art, Writing, and the Radical Act of Showing Up as an Accomplice

By Martine Mussies

When we picture activism, we often imagine bodies in motion—marching, chanting, confronting power. But not all revolutions are loud. Some take place in the small rooms where we paint, write, compose, and dream. Some happen when we dare to tell our stories differently. My own activism unfolds there: in music, in writing, in collaborative art projects. I rarely hold a megaphone. Instead, I hold a pen.

For a long time, I thought this made me less of an activist. I'm autistic, bi+, and chronically tired; protest crowds overwhelm me. Yet, my desire to dismantle injustice is no smaller. Art became my accompliceship—not a substitute for direct action, but a form of it. Still, I've had to learn what that word really means.

Dean Spade reminds us that accompliceship isn't simply solidarity; it involves risk, redistribution, and accountability. It means using one's privilege to materially disrupt oppressive systems, and letting those most impacted lead the way. My early understanding was naïve—"showing up in whatever form we can." That was safe. Comforting. But accompliceship begins where comfort ends. It requires the willingness to give up control, to make mistakes publicly, to fund, to listen, to step back.

For me, that has meant using my platform to pay and promote artists who are too often tokenized or excluded. It has meant refusing to curate "Asian aesthetics" through a Western gaze, and instead inviting Japanese teachers and collaborators to define the direction of the *Japan Fans* project themselves. I am constantly learning how to unlearn extraction—how to move from fascination to accountability. My admiration for Japanese, Korean, and Chinese art forms must not erase the complex histories and hierarchies between them. As Edward Said warned, Western fascination with "the East" often disguises power. I try to ensure my cultural work resists that—not through purity, but through transparency, relationships, and reparative exchange.

Martine, continued on page 25

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Boston-area women: Join our Google group: groups.google.com/g/biwomenboston

Editor's Note

For this issue we asked, "What does it mean to you to be an ally or an accomplice? What are meaningful ways that people have shown allyship and accompliceship to you or to the bi+ community on a large scale or individual level? How do you practice allyship and accompliceship for others, and does your experience as a bi+ person impact the way you do so?"

In social justice education, an "accomplice" refers to someone who participates actively in dismantling oppressive systems by using their privilege to challenge the status quo and support marginalized groups. It is going beyond passive "allyship" to take concrete actions that may involve personal risk or discomfort to create meaningful change. All accomplices are allies, but not all allies are accomplices.

This subject has been central to my thinking for years. I remember clearly the times when straight, lesbian, gay, and/or trans people supported me as a bisexual woman, and how much these actions meant—and still mean—to me. I've also tried as best I know how to be a good ally and accomplice to others. There are actions I've taken of which I am proud, and at time I have not lived up to my own expectations, and Being an accomplice is an ongoing learning process and journey.

We hope you find value in this issue.

~Robyn

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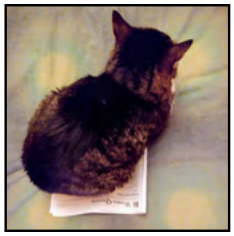
Boots finds BWQ very comforting. Send a picture of yourself reading BWQ to biwomeneditor@gmail.com. Be creative!



Upcoming in *Bi Women Quarterly*

Call for submissions

Spring 2026: Relationships

When thinking about your preferred relationship structure, what is your ideal configuration? Is it monogamous? Polyamorous? Solo? Are you currently in the type of relationship that is the same as your ideal choice, or were you ever? Describe the structure and fabric of your most treasured (or current) relationship, whatever form that may take. **Submit by February 1, 2026.**

Summer 2026: Dear ___

We all wish we could speak our hearts all the time, but sometimes, it's just not possible. For this issue, we'd like you to write a letter to someone who has impacted your bi+ identity in some way and let them know how you feel. Maybe it's a parent who didn't react well to your coming out, a public figure who changed your life by example, or a lawmaker who's trying to take away your rights, a first same-gender crush, or a love letter to your partner of 20 years. Feel free to say things you might not feel comfortable telling them face-to-face, as this is a more creative and anonymous medium to express your emotions. **Submit by May 1, 2026.**

We welcome essays, reviews, poetry, short fiction, news articles, and visual art. Our submission guidelines are on our website. Send your submissions and suggestions for future themes to biwomeneditor@gmail.com. You may use a pseudonym, if you prefer.

***Consider this:* If you rarely (or never) see people like yourself 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.**

Bi Women Quarterly (ISSN 2834-5096) has been in continuous publication since 1983. It began as a project of the Boston Bisexual Women's Network (BBWN), a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women and nonbinary folks together for support and validation. Through the production of *Bi Women Quarterly* and related activities, we seek full acceptance for bisexuals and those with other nonbinary sexualities. More broadly, we work through an intersectional lens and seek the liberation of people of all genders, sexual orientations, abilities, nationalities, and racial and ethnic identities.

AROUND THE WORLD: India

"If Something Is to Be Told About My Life I Will"—Interviews with Indian Bi Women

By Aishwarya Amrit Vijay Raj

The term "bisexual" was first written in 1793. Its *Merriam-Webster* definition at the time said it meant "possessing characters of both sexes." Over time, it has undergone numerous expansions and changes, and more recently, *bisexuality* was defined as "the potential to be attracted—romantically and/or sexually—to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree," by Robyn Ochs, editor of *Bi Women Quarterly* magazine. The "Bisexual Manifesto," a statement published in 1990 in *Anything that Moves*, a magazine published by the Bay Area Bisexual Network, emphasized that bisexuality is a fluid identity, and that the "bi" in bisexual in no way stands for living gender or accepting sexuality in binaries.

The cisgender bisexual women I interviewed for this article were all on journeys of unlearning the norms of the binary world. In their responses, one may read that the choice of a cisgender heterosexual man as a partner isn't always a "free" one. I felt a shared acceptance in their journeys, having to do with undoing hetero learnings. At one point, one of them said, "With a man, he does all the labor of sustaining the conversation. With a woman on a date, you need to take that burden equally, if not more." I wondered how heteronormative ways impact and design very basic and important life choices and situations.

There was also the question of families. In a 2017 essay, "Unhousing Sexuality: Sexuality and Singlehood in Singapore's Public Housing," Lilian Chee observes: "The family is the basic block of our society… And by family in Singapore, we mean one man, one woman, marrying, having children and bringing up children within that framework of a stable family unit." According to Chee, state-controlled housing rules permit only those Singaporeans with a "proper family nucleus" to purchase apartments. The said nucleus may be achieved through various means, by married couples, parents and children, a widowed person and their children, siblings, etc. We know this notion of what constitutes a proper relationship isn't unique to Singapore.

Akansha Patidar, a 21-year-old from Madhya Pradesh, expresses deep appreciation for her friends and her Masters degree in Gender Studies, acknowledging their role as a vital support system and catalyst for her acceptance of her sexuality. She contemplates the potential reactions of her parents when they discover her sexuality, fearing it might be perceived as a "failure of upbringing." As her elderly parents need her support, she finds herself stalling the potentially confrontational conversation.

"Compulsory heterosexuality" is a term coined by U.S. poet and feminist Adrienne Rich, who argued that women are constantly bombarded with messages portraying them as the emotional and sexual possessions of men. She argues

Artwork by Aishwarya Amrit Vijay Raj

the autonomy and equality of women are seen as threats to established institutions such as family, religion, and the state. Conventional mechanisms of controlling women, such as patriarchal motherhood, economic exploitation, adherence to the nuclear family, and the enforcement of compulsory heterosexuality, are reinforced by legislative actions, religious influence, media representations, and censorship attempts. The resulting heteronormativity places systemic pressures and expectations on people to adhere to heterosexual norms, disregarding the diversity and complexity of human genders, sexes, and sexualities.[1]

The women I spoke to were all on journeys of undoing compulsory heterosexuality. Besides the long and ongoing process of accepting their queerness themselves, each had a long journey ahead before she could open up to her family.

Born and brought up in Delhi, Nikita, a 26-year-old cis-bi woman, said her undergrad days' experience with a best friend prompted her to reflect and question her sexuality. "I could not completely connect to queerness, but I knew for sure that it was not a mere friendship. I was reading a lot about queerness, attending MHQC (Miranda House Queer Collective) discussions, and listening to other queers speak about their journey. It took me two months to finally accept my queerness, but I was only dating men until then, and it was a one-and-a-half-year journey to come to terms with my own bisexuality."

Her parents do not know about her sexuality yet.

I pondered the notion of "cheating" and the way that cishet, monogamous men understand it for themselves and their partners. In this regard, the women I interviewed had similar views and stories to tell. Shreya, a 23-year-old cis-bi woman from Karnataka, recounted an incident involving her ex-boyfriend, a cishet man, who expressed to her that he would not feel as upset if his partner had an intimate encounter with another woman as opposed to a man. He also mentioned that he'd be fine if she communicated her interest beforehand. That conversation emerged while they were discussing the concept of cheating in heterosexual relationships.

Do some men tend not to get offended because the non-hetero relationships of women don't feel like a threat to their manhood? Or perhaps they consider the romantic interest between women as "just a phase," thus stealing the authenticity of the sexuality of the person who is in such bonds.

Nikita had a different experience. After she revealed her sexual orientation to her ex-partner, a cishet man, he felt as continually intimidated and uneasy about her interactions with other women as with men.

Often bi people are called "confused," and I wonder if the heterosexist setting and ignorance leads some cishet men into the "confusion" about how love, desire, and sexuality work.

When the media representation in popular culture does show women attracted to each other, often one appears feminine and the other masculine. This isn't always the case in real life. Many Indian femme bi women who are into femme women recall their teen attraction to a screen celebrity who was also a femme woman. It is a common experience in the community—an incident in the early days gets them into a dilemma of, "Do I like her or do I want to be like her?"

Bi women are different in their journeys of what gets them to like women, when they do. Shreya appreciates women with self-awareness and self-assurance. Akansha believes women make life much easier, and holds them to a higher standard than men, because of her prior dating experiences with men.

The Bisexual Manifesto in 1990 clearly read: "Bisexuality is a whole, fluid identity. Do not assume that bisexuality is binary or duogamous in nature; that we must have 'two' sides or that we must be involved simultaneously with both genders to be fulfilled human beings. In fact, don't assume that there are only two genders. Do not mistake our fluidity for confusion, irresponsibility, or an inability to commit. Do not equate promiscuity, infidelity, or unsafe sexual behavior with bisexuality. Those are human traits that cross all sexual orientations. Nothing should be assumed about anyone's sexuality—including your own."

To counter the heteronormativity-sponsored myths of being bi, we need more awareness of bisexuality and queerness in general.

The first issue of *Anything that Moves* carried a piece on "The New Bisexual Orthodoxy," describing "the new bisexual hero," who knows her sexual identity very well, without any conflicts, contradicting the image that constructing a bisexual identity is a long-term and slow process.

Some bi women express their dilemma of "not being bi enough" if they have not dated or been with someone who is not a cishet man for a longer time. Bi people can be coupled or single, monogamous or not, and many times the choice of dating or committing is influenced by the hetero norms of the society around.

For Akansha, "I am still on my journey to undo hetero conditioning, but dating a man does not mean you are not bi. Sexuality is about oneself, about knowing oneself, exploring it, living it. Not everyone can do the exploring part—it has a cost."

The findings of a recent survey by the Yale School of Public Health are that the majority of the world's sexual minorities—about 83 percent of those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual—conceal their orientation from all or most of the people in their lives. Published in the *PLOS One* journal, the study is perhaps the first effort to estimate the extent of

[1] Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Women: Sex and Sexuality (Summer, 1980).

the "global closet" and to assess its effects on public health. It argues that making people maintain secrecy has a negative impact, as it keeps sexual minorities apart and also keeps them from accessing public health resources.

Sharing knowledge of one's sexuality with a cishet partner can influence the direction of many aspects of the relationship. When Nikita would notify prospective partners (cishet men) about her sexual background and orientation, they would become quite uncomfortable. Some even questioned whether she was certain about her bisexuality. As she explains, "It took me a long time to come to terms with my sexuality and I still struggle with issues that heteronormativity imposes—in that case, I cannot take such inquiries. Even my sharing of queer memes has decreased from what it used to be five years ago. I've experienced unfavorable responses from folks as a result." Her response comes not from a place of shame or confusion about her orientation, but rather from a place to save the labor of catering to irresponsible and unwanted cishet intrusion. "I tell the amount of detail needed to a partner who has never had awareness about queerness—but they could do some basic reading or self-education. Rest we may always talk." Adding, "I don't owe anyone all the teaching—you also need to educate yourself and if something is to be told about my life I will."

The fetishization that occurs as a result of these myths is another reason why women often choose not to reveal or discuss their queerness. The myths depict bisexual women as "loose" or "confused," suggesting their openness to all sorts of sexual requests. They are a gross violation of women's choices, autonomy and right to sexual expression. As Shreya said, "They also say that bi women are confused. I heard people say all this. I consciously surround myself with friends who don't think this way."

It is interesting how romantic bonds too can have their place of origin in shared experiences of oppression. For one respondent, "I like women who are able to express anger, who are not stigmatized or conscious about being angry wherever she should be." Another respondent likes women who are confident and have a sense of self. They are reflections of the possibility of a unique bond that is fostered between women who might be interested in each other, a bond coming from a plane of some shared embodied and societal experience.

A message to oneself, while living against hetero impositions, can be what was said by Loraine Hutchins, co-editor of *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*, an anthology of bisexual essays and coming-out stories. "I come out as single and non-monogamous and bi… I feel that the power and responsibility for sexual freedom and sexual self-satisfaction rests on me rather than equally on the viewer who is viewing me… you have to listen to your heart, your head, your pussy, and put them all together."

Aishwarya Amrit Vijay Raj lives in India and holds a Master's degree in philosophy from Delhi University. A three-time UN Laadli Media awardee, she is an independent writer and researcher who believes in questioning and rethinking dominant knowledge and practices. Her hobby is to lie down and gaze at the ceiling fan.

This article originally appeared in *The Citizen*, November 5, 2023. https://www.thecitizen.in/gender/if-something-is-to-be-told-about-my-life-i-will-972188. This is a condensed version and it is reprinted with permission.

Farnaz, continued from page 1

position, their privilege, or even their safety to stand beside you in a concrete, risky, and visible way.

Throughout my journey, I have experienced both. There were many allies who expressed sympathy when I was forced to leave Iran, after facing persecution for my artistic work. They offered kind words, promises of solidarity, and hopes for a brighter future. I am grateful for their intentions, but in moments of crisis, I learned that allyship alone is often not enough.

The people who made survival possible for me were not only allies—they were accomplices. They took risks. They opened doors. They gave me their keys when I had no safe place to stay. They vouched for me when institutions hesitated. They used their privilege—whether in the form of citizenship, professional networks, or institutional influence—to ensure that I could continue my work and rebuild my life. Some wrote official letters for me, stood up to authorities on my behalf, or shared their own reputations so that I could gain entry into spaces from which I had been excluded. Their actions carried personal cost: time, energy, and sometimes reputational risk. That is the essence of being an accomplice.

In the art world, where visibility and access often depend on gatekeepers, accompliceship has meant even more. As a migrant and a bi+ artist, I have often found myself standing at the margins of institutions. An ally might say, "Your work matters," while an accomplice will physically insist that my work be shown, included, and supported. An ally applauds from the sidelines; an accomplice steps onto the stage with you, even when it is uncomfortable.

I remember moments when people crossed this threshold. One curator insisted on showing my collection despite pressure to avoid politically sensitive themes. Another activist shared their platform with me, allowing my voice to be heard at an international conference where I would otherwise have been invisible. A friend translated endless documents and navigated bureaucracies with me, treating my struggle as their own. These acts were not symbolic; they altered the trajectory of my life.

Of course, I have also learned how fragile allyship can be. Some people disappear when solidarity requires effort or risk. Their silence is painful because it shows that their commitment was conditional. Yet this distinction has also shaped how I want to show up for others.

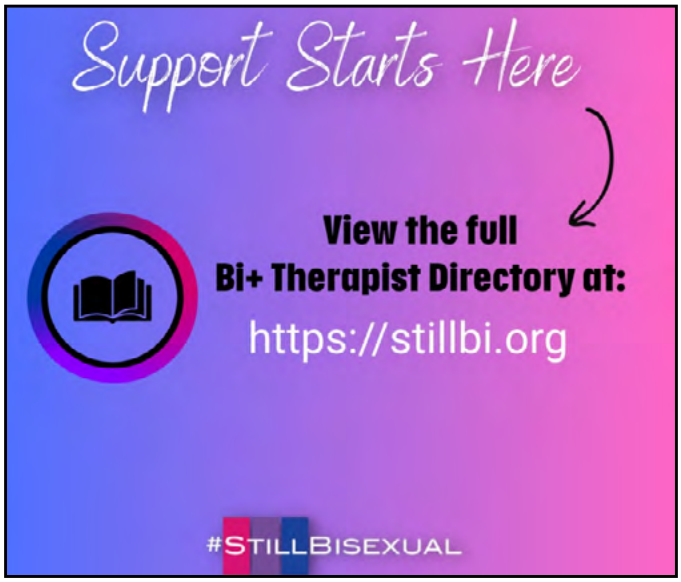
As someone who has lived through persecution, exile, and constant displacement, I carry a responsibility to practice accompliceship myself. Within queer spaces, within migrant communities, within artistic networks—I try to use my experiences and my platforms to create openings for others. When I see someone being excluded, I do not want to be only an ally who says, "I support you." I want to intervene, to invite, to act. Sometimes that means recommending another artist for an opportunity instead of keeping it for myself. Sometimes it means refusing to participate in a project unless it includes marginalized voices. Sometimes it means sharing my resources or networks with people who are just beginning their journey.

My bi+ identity shapes all of this. Being bi+ often means living in-between, navigating invisibility, or being questioned by both queer and straight spaces. That experience has taught me empathy for others who are erased, silenced, or doubted. It has made me attuned to the difference between symbolic gestures and real risk. It is why I insist on the word *accomplice*—because real change only comes when people step beyond comfort.

So, what does it mean to be an accomplice today? It means asking yourself: What can I risk? What can I give? What doors can I open that might remain closed otherwise? And it means recognizing that solidarity is not passive; it is an active, living practice.

I dream of a future in which accompliceship is not rare but expected, a future in which supporting bi+ people, migrants, women, and marginalized voices does not rely on extraordinary courage, but becomes part of our everyday ethics. Until then, I continue to honor those who have been my accomplices and to practice this role for others. Because only through risk, action, and shared struggle can we truly transform the structures that keep us apart.

Farnaz Abdoli is an Iranian-born fashion designer, writer, and visual artist based in Munich, Germany. In 2013, CNN named her one of its ten Visionary Women for the social change her work inspired in Iran. After being arrested, spending one month in solitary confinement, and receiving a five-year prison sentence with a ban on all fashion activities, she was forced to leave Iran. She spent seven years in Turkey in a state of limbo, where she began collaborating with Spectrum and, for the first time, found the courage to speak openly about her bi+ identity—a part of herself that had been silenced for many years.



the man who stands on Silas Creek Parkway with a "Black Lives Matter" sign

By Alexis Rhodes

the man has a standing date on Silas Creek Parkway
daily, 4:30 to 5.
a
standing
date
holding a "Black Lives Matter" sign.

i pass him on an errand run, or
carpool duty. he rarely misses a day.
i've lived in Winston-Salem for 486 days.

he is retirement age, but fit. tanned.
hippie-hair, long and grey.
always smiling, always alone.
he has stood in rain and heat
as chicken breasts climbed from three dollars a pound
to six.
as pregnancies devolved from Facebook-announcement
gender balloons
to corpse incubation chambers.
as children in Gaza and of U.S. barrios faded from happy
to orphaned.

this Ben and Jerry's statue holding his
"Black Lives Matter" sign like a talisman
clings to simpler times, when
Black lives
were the ones most at risk.
and now that streets fill with tear gas and the military is
deployed to L.A.
he needs to make his sign
larger.

i'd stand with him tomorrow if i thought
his 486-plus days of protest
had done anything that
mattered.
i still might.

Alexis Rhodes (she/her) is a queer, polyamorous poet, playwright, and performer based in North Carolina, in the U.S. She has been published in Action, Spectacle, The Wayfarer, Blood+Honey, *and more. She has completed five poetry manuscripts, including her latest collection, "lex, your poetry's grotesque." Alexis lives with her husband, two kids, and a hedgehog named Hedge. Instagram: @alexis_writes_things*

The She in Me

By Kaylee Baucom

I'm a pony-tailed girl in church
Watching you talk under the cross
Dressed in white with no sin
I'm a little lamb sleeping on green moss

I'm a lipstick tube
In the brightest red you've ever seen
Paint my kisses all over the town
I'm the slut you sweat on in daydreams

I'm a spiritual eye
Connecting deeply with your soul
Yoga, mantras, prayers, and chants
I'm holding truth you want to know

I'm a freak, I'm a John, Jane, a client, I pay to be
In hidden warehouse bars
Naked people all over me
I'm the nymph you hate to see love so freely

I'm a warm bowl of soup
A comforting ladle of satisfying stew
A warm breast of healing milk
I'm mommy to the hurt inside of you

I'm a mirror for you
Anything you want to see
I'm every woman in one
Everything you want to be
Now look inside of you
Then at the outside of me
Which who will you be
When you see
The she in me

Kaylee Baucom lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, in the U.S. and is a Professor of English at The College of Southern Nevada.

This Hill I Will Die On

By Casey Lawrence

How very boring it must be,
without a hill to die on;
no ups and downs nor endless sea,
just roads leading straight to compromise.

Upon wide-open plains of accommodation
and empty parking lots of complicity—
this is where you choose to make your home
and raise your family?

Not I,
who marvels at your barren world
from atop my sacred hills.
My world is full of highs and lows:
I conquer mountains of ignorance,
fall into pits of despair,
tumble down slippery slopes,
hit rock bottom,
dig in my heels
and try again.

My hills grow with piled convictions
carefully chosen with love and with pride.
I cultivate these rolling hills, planting flowers
on the graves of those who came before us,
whose bodies, having died on these hills,
nourish the land that I stake my claim on.

I have traveled over turbulent seas to reach these hills;
I have burned bridges and straw men,
lost friends and found others,
offering a hand up to help them
to join me in the clouds.

I will die upon a lush, green hill—
if not this one, then another.
My hills are defensible positions;
it is strategic in love and in warfare
to have the highest ground.

My hills have names. This one is
My Body, My Choice; she abuts another,
Healthcare is a Human Right.
Over there is Trans Women are Women,
standing tall among her sister-hills:
Love is Love, Gender is a Spectrum, and
Your Identity is Valid.

My hills are a big and varied group;
Some wax and wane like the phases of the moon.
I used to have a hill named Prescriptive Grammar,
but she has eroded over time into something
less like a mountain and more like a molehill,
which can be stepped over when the time comes.

This road leads to Tax the Rich
and that information highway leads to
Vaccines Don't Cause Autism.
I am piling stones onto The Virus is Airborne;
the stones themselves have names like
Wear a Mask and Aspirated Droplets and
Vaccine Efficacy and Viral Load.
The stones are big and heavy,
but I shall carry the burden happily.

The winds of change push and pull the sands of time,
creating great dunes that appear immovable.
They are fragile, these sand dunes;
the waves and ridges collapse underfoot
and topple with the slightest pressure.
That one, once a monolith named Gender Roles,
has been in free-fall for a century or more;
I kick at its foundations every chance I get.

If it falls upon me
and buries me in sand,
so be it.
I shall dig my own grave here,
in the fertile ground of dissent.

I would much rather die upon a hill
among the clouds of possibility
than toeing the party line
or lying flat upon acceptance
in the wasteland of conformity.

Casey Lawrence (she/they) has a PhD from Trinity College Dublin. After taking a five-year hiatus from creative writing to pursue her doctorate, Casey published her third Young Adult novel with JMS Books in 2023, and has since published many short stories, poems, and nonfiction articles. She is from Ontario, Canada, and currently lives in Sweden with her husband, Rhys. This poem was written during the pandemic. Find her on Bluesky @ myexplodingpen.bsky.social.

Using My Platform

By Cathy Renna

Over the years I have had countless people ask me how and why I am such an ally to our bisexual siblings. In fact, being so vocal has prompted countless questions from others about my own identity. I take these as a compliment and as a sign that my allyship is visible, impactful, and convincing.

Having done LGBTQ+ advocacy work for decades, primarily focusing on visibility and representation as a means to educate and advocate, the bisexual community remains, in many ways, the least visible part of our LGBTQ+ world. It's frustrating to see that, still, "the call is coming from inside the house." Our own LGBTQ+ community needs to be a place where we do bi+ advocacy and work for visibility, particularly as a younger generation of people is coming up with a much more open-minded, fluid, and realistic sense of their own identities and the identities of others.

This is not something new for me either—allyship for bi and trans folks has been in my DNA from the beginning. One of the first "big things" I worked on in the early 1990's with GLAAD (then Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) was the release of the film *Basic Instinct*, which had three bisexual characters—all murderers. Protests were held across the country and in Washington, D.C. We were picketing and protesting, but we also handed educational flyers to the folks in line and I did a *lot* of media about the bisexual tropes in the film. It was a watershed moment and started many conversations.

But as I like to say, "ally is a verb" and my actions are integrated into my work on the daily. It can be as "simple" as speaking up in meetings where issues and strategies are discussed and bi folks are not brought up or included, in messaging that ignores the diversity of sexual orientation, or simply not putting the bi+ folks in the room (including our bi+ Task Force President Kierra Johnson) on the spot all the time to hold others accountable.

So, when people ask me why I'm an ally, my response is usually "How can I not be?"—followed by the invariable messaging that I utilize that includes words like science, reality, common sense, not being afraid of difference, and more.

As an ally, I find it very discouraging that we continue to see a complete lack of willingness to open hearts and minds and understand that sexual orientation—like every other human trait—can be incredibly diverse and fall along a spectrum.

As an adjunct professor teaching a course on media advocacy and LGBTQ issues, it's heartbreaking to hear students who identify as bisexual telling me they get the same dumb questions I've been hearing about forever. There is a lot of work to do—for all of us—but especially for those of us who have a platform, access, and power, particularly in areas of visibility and media. We should all be advocating that our organizations and media tell more stories and dispel myths and stereotypes about our bisexual siblings.

At the end of the day, the most important thing all of us can do is help amplify and tell the stories of real people whose lived experience will help others understand the diversity of our community and, frankly, the reality of the human sexual experience.

Of course, to do that we need to get past the many issues that create barriers, particularly in American culture, one that uses sex to sell everything but is so ashamed to talk about sexuality in a realistic way.

I continue to think that one of the biggest challenges, and in some ways mistakes, of the LGBTQ movement has been the complete de-sexualization of the conversation. Sure, we don't want to be one dimensional, but the reality is that what brings our community together is something that has nothing to do with the other aspects of our lives, age, race, class, geography, ability, and so much more. What sets us apart is who we are attracted to and how we identify.

And I will continue to speak out in my capacity as an advocate and also work with my movement colleagues to encourage the kind of work that will make bisexual people more visible, better understood, and in the end, less abstract and more real.

Cathy Renna is a veteran in the communications industry and currently serves as the Communications Director at the National LGBTQ Task Force, a position she has held since 2021. Since her time at GLAAD in the 1990s and early aughts, Cathy has executed her particular expertise in crisis and strategic communications, playing a central role in shaping nearly all major issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community, from the beating death of Matthew Shepard in 1998 to the fight for marriage equality and the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell." She worked with the team that coordinated historic coverage for World Pride/Stonewall 50, working with NYC Pride. In 2020, she was part of the team that organized the historic Global Pride, a 26-hour virtual event that was viewed by 57 million people around the Globe. Cathy lives in New Jersey, in the U.S.

Robyn Ochs and Cathy Renna, 2020

One of the Few Times in My Life that Somebody Stood Up for Me

By Gloria Jackson-Nefertiti

In the early 1970s, my family and I moved to Portland, Oregon, from Mississippi. From the beginning of my time in Portland (October 1972) to the time that I left and moved to Seattle, Washington (June 1990), I would frequently find myself in situations where I'd be the only Black person: on the job, at events, in religious organizations, etc.

When Portland was still new to me, I was a junior in high school. And because I had always been extremely religious, I had gravitated toward a group called "Campus Crusade for Christ." Of course, I would usually be the only Black person at their "Sing & Share" meetings held in the home of one of the students' parents. Phil and Tanya, a married couple who were also Campus Crusade staff members and ran the meetings, would give me a ride home afterwards.

One day, another female staff member of Campus Crusade announced that she would be having a potluck social for the women/girls at her and her husband's home. So I went to their home, thinking I would be attending the potluck. The only problem is that I went on the wrong day! So, there I was, a bowl of potato salad in hand. When Mary opened the door, she was a little bit shocked—partially because I was there on the wrong day, but I'm sure it was mostly because it didn't occur to her, after she talked to me on the phone, that I was Black. I gave her the potato salad and then left. Our encounter seemed friendly enough to me.

The following week, after the "Sing & Share" meeting was over, I got a ride home from Phil and Tanya, as usual. As we were heading to my home, Tanya said that Mary called her after I left her home, and said, "I didn't know she was Black!" And as Tanya was laughing, she just kept repeating that line: "And then, Mary said, 'I didn't know she was Black!'" After she said it for about the third or fourth time, her husband, Phil, put a stop to it, and said, "Tanya! That's enough!" (Thankfully, Tanya apologized to me later.)

But now, as I remember this incident from 50+ years ago, something occurred to me: this was one of the few times in my life that someone actually stood up for me. Eventually, I just had to get used to advocating for myself. That's because nobody else would. Today, I can't imagine that anyone would just stand by and say nothing if someone spoke to me the way that Tanya did.

Gloria Jackson-Nefertiti is a writer, frequent podcast guest, panelist, workshop presenter, and artists' model. She lives in Seattle, Washington, in the U.S.

Unexpected Allies

By Jamie Clark

When I came out to my extended family four years ago, I received some amazing and unexpected messages of love and support. One came from a woman I've never actually met. She is the wife of a cousin I don't know very well, and we only keep up with each other through holiday cards. She sent me a simple, sweet, personalized card with a picture of a rainbow heart that gave me chills and brought tears to my eyes.

Another was a hand-written, heartfelt letter of love and acceptance from my uncle, who is a religious leader in a denomination known for its conservative views on homosexuality. He and my mom grew up in that faith, and my mom always talked about it as bigoted and closed-minded. While my uncle's warmth and support surprised me, when I reflect on what I know of him, I realize that this loving gesture was completely in character. He has always been compassionate and inclusive, supporting his gay siblings and blessing the union of my aunts when they married in 2008. His letter touched me to the core, and I have felt a special bond with him ever since.

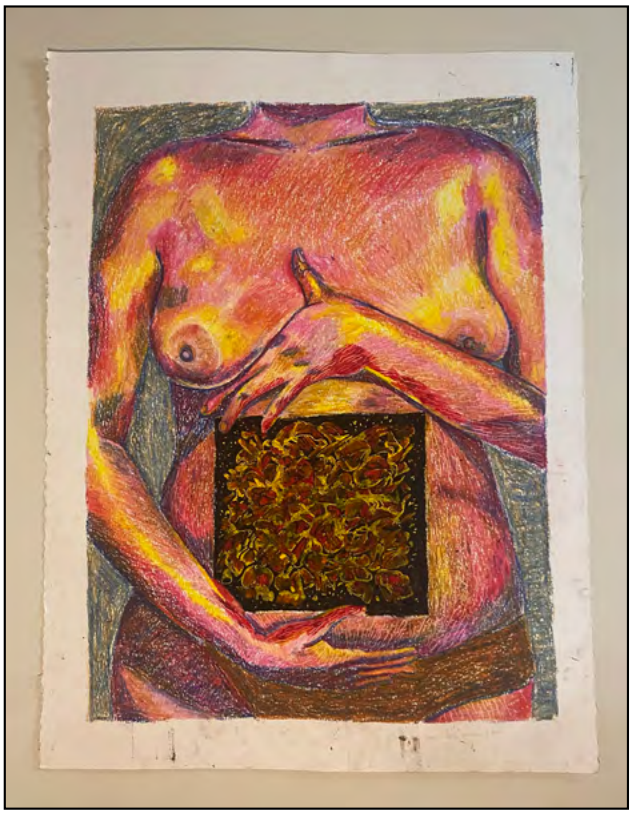
And then there was the cousin whom I'd been close to in childhood and who has always considered my dad a father figure. After I came out, she opened up to me, sharing that she "used to be bisexual" and had romantic relationships with both men and women in her youth. I never knew about this aspect of her history, only about one boyfriend and her current husband. It meant a lot that she chose to share her experiences with me, creating an intimate connection.

All these unexpected yet direct messages of support and love have helped me to keep my faith in humanity and to believe that I really am a valued and worthwhile person, exactly as I am.

Jamie Clark (she/her/hers) is an autistic, queer, bi+ Renaissance woman living in the U.S. She enjoys hiking with her dog, making music, and nurturing friendships over ThinkDivergent, Discord, Zoom, phone, and occasionally in-person.

Listen to My Gut

By Jasmine Garcia



Jasmine Garcia is an oil pastel and oil paint artist working and living out of Washington D.C. in the U.S. Her work focuses on her anxiety and its overlap with her identity as a disabled black woman. Through highly-saturated colors and the mix of abstract expression and portraiture, her work has a dream-like vision that demonstrates her high-sprung emotional experience.

Accomplice To Who?

By Rachael Arsenault

I thought, at first, that I had an ally. An accomplice. Someone who accepted and understood, who was ready to stand by me and stand up with me. Someone I could be my whole self with, unapologetically and fearlessly.

You talked about looking out for "a woman who wanted to be a dude"—wrong phrasing, but right spirit. And you protected him. Supported him. Were a friend to him. Someone I could introduce to trans loved ones without fearing backlash and toxicity.

You talked about an ex who turned out to be a lesbian, how she asked if you wanted to be a sperm donor if she and her girlfriend ever had kids, how cool they both were. A friend to women who love women, who doesn't get weird about his girlfriend turning out to be gay. Someone I could come out to without fearing for my safety.

You attended Pride. You bought me my first bi pride flag. You were supportively excited about progress in queer rights and queer characters in our favourite shows.

But.

You also argued with me about the difference between bi and pan. "Being bi is a sex thing. Being pan is about feelings." It didn't matter that I was trying to explain the definition of my own identity to you. You had to be right.

At a work function, when one of the guys dropped the f-slur, you laughed right along with them, even playing into the "joke." It didn't matter that I was standing there with you, openly queer, suddenly wondering how safe I was in this room full of laughing, homophobic men. You had to be fun.

On a questionnaire for your job, when it asked about sexuality, you decided to put yourself down as pan "to be supportive," and insisted we had to commit to the bit going forward. It didn't matter if you were actually queer (and I truly do not know, because these days each of your truths has a lie tucked in between them), because queerness was just a box to check to skew statistics and force administrative tolerance, something you could leverage. You had to be the ultimate accomplice.

But an accomplice does not lie out of both sides of their mouth. An accomplice does not make me question who they are, while trying to tell me who I am. An accomplice does not keep the peace with bigots while hushing queer voices.

I thought, at first, that I had an ally. An accomplice. Instead, I found a wolf in sheep's clothing. Someone who calls himself my protector while shaking hands and laughing with the very people who want to hurt me.

Rachael Arsenault is a bi Canadian author who currently lives in New Brunswick with her son. She primarily writes contemporary fantasy featuring bi women in over their heads and some variety of plant magic.

Queer, Too

By Jakki Johnston

I was sound asleep until my normally shy, polite friend John started banging on my door. Of course I didn't know it was him until I opened it, but there he was, determination written on his face.

"I've got to talk to you!" he exclaimed and pushed past me to go inside. I followed him in, concerned. He turned to face me.

"What, John? What's wrong?" I inquired urgently, as all kinds of scary scenarios went through my mind.

"Jakki, I'm gay!" John blurted out.

"Honey, I know that! I'm bi!" I answered him gently.

And we hugged each other for a long time.

That was over 30 years ago, and we're still besties.

Jakki Johnston is a Seattle-based writer in the U.S. and a queer and disability activist. She has lived and traveled around the world. She is currently owned by a small but powerful calico cat.

On Being a Disability Rights Accomplice

By Lisa Matin

To me, being a social justice accomplice means that I step forward when others who have to focus on more serious matters, often due to being oppressed, cannot. My most recent accomplishment in this vein has been successfully campaigning for Governor Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania to proclaim July 2025 as Disability Pride Month, as you can see. As a proud bisexual woman myself, I look forward to the day when LGBTQ+ and disability pride is honored and proclaimed everywhere.

Lisa Matin lives in Pennsylvania in the U.S., and works as an administrative assistant.

Closer than Ever

By Jane Barnes

When I contacted my "brother" to make amends, they said they were trans nonbinary so, being bi, I knew I had an ally. We both had suffered my father's rage.

Since then, we've connected in other ways: we've both written at least 11 novels and they researched my father's World War II PTSD, which softened my anger.

We share titles of Asian movies. I tell them about my stroke; they about a sore back. We are Democrats, musicians, and recommend books to each other.

I'm 81 and in NYC. They're 77 and in Boston. Better late than never. We're closer than ever and I'm so grateful.

Jane Barnes has published work in BWQ *for more than 14 years, and has poems in the* Gay & Lesbian Quarterly, Ploughshares, River Styx, The Massachusetts Review, *and* Wrongdoing. *Her work appears in the anthologies* Bi Any Other Name *and* Getting Bi.

Jane and her sibling

Did You Hear?

By Robyn Ochs

We were at a large conference, and it was long enough ago—likely in the early 1990s—that it was still called a "lesbian and gay" conference.

I arrived on site just as folks were exiting the first plenary session.

My friend Warren J. Blumenfeld, a prominent figure in the community who identified as a gay man, came out of the auditorium, rushed up to me, and said, "Can you believe the biphobic words that came out of that speaker's mouth? Aren't you going to go say something?"

I paused, a bit embarrassed to tell Warren I had missed the plenary and thus had no idea what had been said.

In that moment, before I had a chance to say another word, something clicked in Warren's brain, and his expression changed. He stated, "I am going back inside to talk to that speaker," and he turned and re-entered the auditorium.

I often say that folks in targeted groups shouldn't have to be the only ones advocating for themselves. This small action meant the world to me.

My next story also involves Warren. But I've asked Warren to share this story:

What's In a Name? Very Much Indeed!

By Warren J. Blumenfeld

Social movements often evolve through a developmental process. Well, at least successful movements do. The same applies to organizations within movements.

We can visualize social movements and the organizations within them as an ascending staircase. From the ground level, we take a step up and forward. As we rise to the next step, and the next, and the next, we find ourselves at qualitatively different levels from where we were at each of the previous steps. We continue this procedure until the movement or the organization has outlived its function or fails to remain unified. This sometimes occurs from overpowering resistance or backlash coming from the outside. At times, it comes from irreconcilable divisions from within.

I have read, I have discussed, and I have learned that all of the multiple forms of oppression are inextricably connected. I heard the words of Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. when he declared that "no one is free until we are all free." And I have always been struck by Pastor Martin Niemöller's cautionary poem "First They Came," ending with "Then they came for me / And there was no one left / To speak out for me."

I understood that the German Nazis never distinguished between gay and bisexual males; never rankied them as Nazi soldiers pinned pink triangles on their garments in the concentration camps.

From my understanding of the Jewish Holocaust, I connected and attempted to apply what I knew to learning as much as I could about the specific plight of bisexual people in the United States. I again read, I discussed with my bisexual friends, and I learned the forms that biphobia took: the epithets and stereotypes, the marginalization, the violence—yes violence—psychological and physical coming from straight people *and* from gay and lesbian people.

Throughout the 1980s, bisexual people were villainized falsely in the media and in the minds of many heterosexuals as so-called contaminators or vectors of HIV/AIDS from the gay community to the straight community. Many gay and lesbian people refused to date bisexuals, often considering them as "traitors" and as "sexually confused," and some Pride March organizers refused to allow them to participate with any visible signage announcing their bisexual activism.

For example, despite the fact that bisexual people had been involved in the planning and implementation of the Pride March in Northampton, Massachusetts, for years, controversy arose in the late 1980s and early 1990 when organizers added "Bisexual" to the "Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual March" in 1989.

Tensions arose as some lesbian activists asserted that adding "Bisexual" to the event's title would marginalize or relegate their own issues to the sidelines. For the next two years, organizers deleted "Bisexual" from the name. Bisexual activists resigned from the organizing committee and bisexual community members called for a boycott of the March, saying they felt erased and relegated to invisibility.

As social movements and organizations are affected by the times in which they exist, the times are also affected by those movements and organizations in a kind of synergistic dance. And so it was and continues to be for what today is known as the LGBTQ+ movement and for SpeakOut: An LGBTQ+ Speakers Bureau of Boston, Massachusetts.

SpeakOut: An LGBTQ+ Speakers Bureau of Boston:

What has become known as SpeakOut: An LGBTQ+ Speakers Bureau (the Bureau) has been operating almost continuously under varying names since February 1972. It is the oldest LGBTQ+ speakers bureau in the United States.

It developed as an outgrowth of two organizations in the Boston area: the Daughters of Bilitis, serving the needs of lesbians, and the Homophile Union of Boston, an organization of gay men. Before 1972, each of these organizations included small speakers bureaus for the purpose of educating the public about their lives and experiences. On occasion, when a professor or community organization requested to hear the stories of both a lesbian and a gay man, the Daughters of Bilitis and the Homophile Union of Boston contacted one another and arranged to send a member of each group to the speaking engagement.

Over time, since the speaking functions of both groups could be more efficiently coordinated through one organization, representatives from each group connected to form the Gay Speakers Bureau.

I joined one year later in 1973 by attending the speaker training session at the Charles Street Meeting House at the lower end of Beacon Hill. There I learned about the format for speaking engagements and facilitated workshops and the Bureau's mission, composed of four main goals. In summary:

Education: to teach people the truths about our lives and to eradicate the myths that contribute to misunderstanding and oppression.

Social Change: to help create a society free from homophobia and other forms of oppression.

Outreach: to reach out to other members of our community including those who are still struggling to affirm their identities.

Leadership: to build leadership in our community by training public speakers in ways that develop their self esteem and confidence.

Within a year or two after joining the Bureau, I spoke at several engagements in high school and college classes and at

community organizations such as the Rotary Club. I became involved in the Coordinating Committee where I helped to plan training sessions. Soon thereafter, I was elected as an officer. The Coordinating Committee passed a resolution, which we brought to our members in our monthly newsletter that, at the next two in-person monthly Bureau meetings, we would discuss whether we would like to add the word "Lesbian" to our name. The resolution passed almost unanimously, and we became the Gay and Lesbian Speakers Bureau of Boston in 1982.

For several years, I served as the unpaid Coordinator. This was before the advent of social media, the internet, email, Skype, and Zoom. I had the Bureau phone installed in my small Cambridge apartment. When I received a request for a speaker, I attempted to match the backgrounds and experiences of our trained speakers with the needs of the host organization.

Meanwhile, in part because of the increasing visibility and political power of the feminist and gay/lesbian movements, bisexuals began to organize as a movement in the 1970s. For many reasons, neither the gay and lesbian rights movements nor mainstream political movements initially responded to the needs of bisexuals. In fact, some bisexuals felt compelled to hide their true identities due to the biphobia coming from these other movements.

At first, bisexual women organized in same-sex groups for support and consciousness-raising; bisexual men later followed their example, and mixed-gender groups were also formed. Over 450 people attended the first National Bisexual Conference in the United States held in San Francisco at Mission High School in 1990, hosted by BiPol, a bisexual political organizing committee out of the San Francisco Bay Area.

This was during a time in U.S. history largely before what we experience today as visible and above-ground transgender, intersex, asexual, intersectional LGBTQ+ movements; before most of us understood the meaning of "gender queer," "non-binary," "agender," "polyamorous," "pansexual," and other postmodernist terminology; and before what many of us knew as "critical theory," "gender theory," "queer theory," "trans politics," and "queer studies" as taught and studied today in the academy and within social movements.

J. Jack Halberstam has coined the term "perverse presentism," which means that in order to understand the true meanings and nature of historical events, we must not look back at history filtered through our contemporary lens of perception. Rather, we need to understand the social, political, economic, cultural, and so on, contexts in which these events occurred.

In my capacity as President of the Gay and Lesbian Speakers Bureau, I met with a few of our bisexual members and with other bisexual friends from the larger community sometime in 1989. I remember talking with my good friends Robyn Ochs, Laura Sachs, Woody Glenn, and Alan Hamilton about whether they felt we should introduce a motion to finally add "Bisexual" to the Bureau's title and mission.

We were all excited about this change, but we also understood the forms of resistance this might engender since our members represented a microcosm of the greater gay and lesbian community and the biphobia that had been so apparent.

So, we decided on a strategy for a process leading to a vote by our members regarding whether we would initiate a name change. We crafted an announcement sent to our members and other supporters about the Coordinating Committee's unanimous vote to place in front of our membership the possibility of updating our name change to provide bisexual people what they have worked tirelessly for and deserve.

In the announcement, we added that for the next two months, at our monthly Speakers Bureau meetings, we would conduct a speaking engagement with panels of bisexuals, some current members of the Bureau, and some invited guests from the local community. At those meetings, our panelists told their stories one by one, followed by questions from Bureau members and other interested participants.

People asked some good questions and were very respectful while maintaining direct honesty over their concerns. The following month, we continued this process for members who were unable to attend the first panel discussion.

Over the course of two months, Bureau members discussed with one another and with people in their communities to better understand the topics and reasons why including "Bisexual" in our title could be positive and empowering or limiting and diversionary to the Bureau and to the larger movement.

Bureau and community members contacted people on the Coordinating Committee to give their comments, some congratulatory and some highly critical. A few members wrote to us that they would resign from the Bureau if we changed the name. Some wrote that they would discontinue their financial support if the change were enacted.

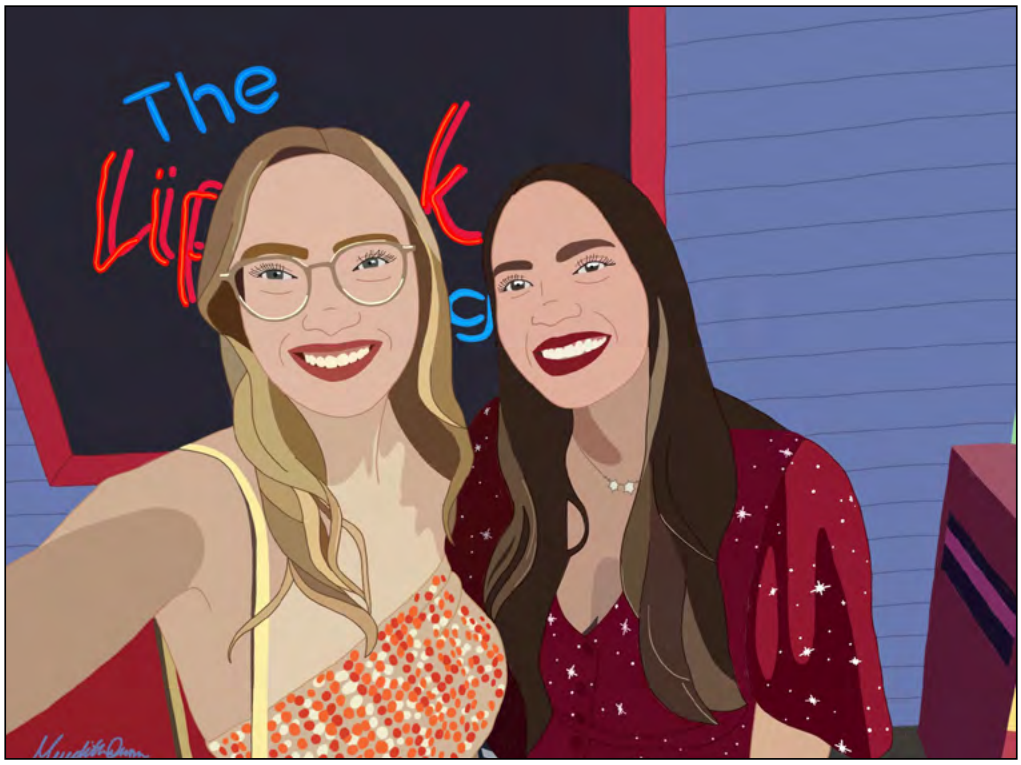
When current Bureau members took a vote, the name change was approved by a substantial margin. In early 1990, we formally became The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Speakers Bureau of Boston on all our official documents, and on our stationary. While bisexual people had always been a part of the Bureau, their contributions, creativity, and indomitable spirit were finally recognized.

While bisexual people still face difficulties in today's communities, bisexual people and topics appear more fully welcomed into organizations and included within agenda items. Currently, unfortunately, some LGBTQ+ organizations are figuratively throwing trans people and topics under the bus. These organizations do not seem to understand that in mathematics, addition means adding rather than subtracting, that adding people and intersectional topics not only adds to our numbers in terms of people but also increases our strength and social power. Our work continues.

W*arren J. Blumenfeld lives in Massachusetts in the U.S. and is the author and editor of many books and a long-time social justice activist.*

You Held the Mirror First

By Meredith Dunn



Artist Statement: My sister found her light as a bi woman first, and in its glow, I began to see myself. "You Held the Mirror First" celebrates our bond as sisters and as bi women—two artists who hold space for each other, reflect strength, and stand together in front of a place that has stood as a beacon of safety and joy for the queer community in Nashville.

Meredith Dunn is a political organizer in the Nashville, Tennessee, area of the U.S. She works with local Democratic and nonpartisan activist groups in hopes of making Tennessee a safer space for everyone in the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

Strand

By Terese Coe

Say what you said in the car last night,
say a little more.
We are the sea with a crested wave
drawn to a distant shore.

As once we lived in rivers
as once we tumbled to seas,
as once we knew by scent and sense
the gift of human ease.

We are the silver in the salt,
the gleeful and the grave,
both breath and decimation,
the holy and the save.

Allies

By Terese Coe

I was the spy who came in from the cold
and you were the cold, my dear.
One day timid and one day bold,
and never distinguishing courage from fear.

Terese Coe's poems, translations, and prose appear in Cyphers, Poetry, Threepenny Review, *the* TLS, *and many other publications. Her collection* Shot Silk *was shortlisted for the 2017 Poets Prize, and her poem, "More" was heli-dropped across London for the 2012 Olympics' Rain of Poems. Terese lives in New York, in the U.S.*

Silent Rebellion

By Amethisté Allustria Amor

Mine will never be the loudest voice in the room
I don't always have the strength—or the time and energy—to waste
To butt into people's cruel, uneducated conversations
I can't fathom or articulate the words to express my distaste.
I don't want to be hurt or make myself unsafe.
To fight with people who don't wish to learn or understand
Anything bigger and deeper than what's on the surface.

Mine is the silent rebellion: the self expression;
The pin badges that tell a million tales of who I am and what I stand for.
The clothes that present me in beauty beyond the realms of gender binary,
The bright colors, pride flags, dopamine dressing, all of which I adore.
The love of which I receive and reciprocate,
Sheer, queer joy; my beautiful chosen family.
The embracing of love, and rejection of hate.

Seeking community, seeking unity, creating safe circles of joy,
In a world which seeks to divide.
Performing on stage; unapologetic representation
Refusal to not just survive; permitting myself to soar and thrive.

"Hate the sin, not the sinner"; the hypocrisy of the self righteous.
For it is in fact we who do not hate.
We stay pure of heart, kind and respectful in the face of adversity.
We choose to "forgive those who trespass against us."
No matter how much they hurt, disrespect, and berate us.

Believe me, I am angry, I am hurting as of late;
There's a painful burning fire in my chest and in my soul.
There's repressed tears stinging my eyes and forming a lump in my throat,
draining me and taking its toll.
Yet I continue to show up, quietly but unapologetically me.
A smile on my face, the joy of immersing myself in our beautiful queer culture
The love in my heart that burns harder than the flames of anger
For the beautiful souls in my own little world, and for our wider community.
The kind words over cups of coffee, spaces we can speak our truth and be real
Let down our guard completely for awhile,
Soothe ourselves, allow ourselves a moment to heal.
The silent rebellion is in those moments,
In our love, our sense of self and feeling at home.
The silent rebellion is in the clothes that we wear, the unapologetic authenticity in how we present, wear our makeup, style our hair.
The silent rebellion is the smiles on our faces, the energy we exude.
The silent rebellion is the glue holding us together, silently screaming our truth.

Amethisté Allustria Amor is a 31-year-old queer actress, burlesque dancer, singer, and poet from Hull in the U.K.

Curtain Call

By Betty Stanton

Once the director caught us, two shadows
overlapping, curtains lifting like pale throats.
Every lamp hummed, filled with the voices
of the dead, of a silence that belongs to her now.
After I scattered her name like sparrows, I kept
dialing her absence, loneliness a dial tone I still
believe is love, or static, two shadows speaking
across a vast ocean of wire and glass. She leaves
fingerprints on the mirror of our laughter. We
rehearsed bows over and over again, learned
our exits. Every kiss was a rehearsal for leaving.

Betty Stanton (she/her) is a Pushcart nominated writer who lives and works in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the U.S.. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in various journals and collections and has been included in various anthologies. She received her MFA from The University of Texas, El Paso, and holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership. She is currently on the editorial board of Ivo Review.

Kyra, Bisexuality, and Gay Marriage

By Olivia Buntaine

Two days before my wedding, I am drunk, glittery, and so, so happy as I attempt to line dance at Charlie's—Denver's gay cowboy bar—with my dearest friends in the world and my soon-to-be wife. Well, they were already my wife—we got legally married in October of 2024, wanting to make sure we had the paperwork done before Donald Trump became president. Just in case.

…

Alex and I have been in love with each other from the first day of college orientation. Now that we were both 32, we had a whole community of people so excited that it was *finally* happening. Our love story was far from a straight line from freshman year to marriage—there were break ups, other people, state lines, moving in together, moving out, and lots of flights with lots of turbulence. But we were never able to let go of the soft golden string that tied us to each other—even when we tried.

My bisexuality has always been a part of that story. I came out in early high school, and in an inversion of what many bi women go through, I have had much more experience with AFAB [assigned female at birth)-bodied people than male. I'm sure this was for many reasons: partly just the unpredictable nature of love, partly because—especially as a young person—I was probably pretty terrifying to young men, but also because of my sense of safety. As a teenager, I unfortunately already had plenty of reasons to be afraid of boys and men. So I blossomed into my queerness in ways I am so grateful for—while keeping a peripheral eye on my still steady attraction to men. I spent a lot of time correcting people who assumed I was a lesbian, and sometimes mourning the typical coming of age experiences of my straight peers.

That's all to say that, in our various separations, Alex understood part of my need for space was to reclaim and re-understand my intimate relationships with men. I wanted to know for certain that my queerness was not anchored in my fear of intimacy with AMAB [assigned male at birth]-bodied people. So I explored. That exploration was beautiful and messy and sometimes heartbreaking, but ultimately, it led me back to the one I loved.

…

Planning a queer marriage is strange as a bisexual woman. What traditions do we keep from an institution designed, originally, for men to formalize women as their property? Every choice during our engagement felt like a puzzle: are we replicating straight culture or is it just wedding culture? What if something is cute but it also reinforces the gender binary? Is someone supposed to take someone's last name? If amongst the endlessly heteronormative and gendered wedding industry it is confusing to be a gay couple, it is *very* confusing to be a nonbinary lesbian/bisexual woman couple.

I began to wonder if, through a queer marriage, my bisexuality would slowly just fade away. Or become irrelevant. If you've found the person you hope to be with for the long haul, does your attraction to multiple genders still matter? Six months into my very happy marriage, a beautiful flag hangs on our front porch with the words: "A day without lesbians is like a day without sunshine." I feel seen by it. And also I don't. I want to find comfort in lesbian culture, in the ways in which gay women (and others who align with womanhood in some capacity) so lovingly shape my world. But where does bisexuality fit in a "gay marriage?" Where does bisexuality fit in marriage at all?

…

But back to Charlie's, and one of the happiest nights of my life. I am dancing under the light of a dangling cowboy boot disco ball feeling lucky and beautiful. Two gay male friends of mine start chanting around me—yelling "Les-bi-ans! Les-bi-ans!" over the music, while I dance. I am too happy to think about challenging the misnomer, but then I hear a soft voice to my left. "She's bisexual." And then she says it louder—and louder—until she's shouting back at them. The boys are too gay and drunk to notice, but I do. And I realize, two days before my wedding, how very very much I needed someone to say that.

Kyra is straight. And beautiful, and so smart and funny, and sometimes mysterious. I've wondered before if she cares for me as much as I care for her. I am an extremely emotional and expressive (bordering on needy) person, and Kyra is a badass, independent Capricorn. We don't move through the world in the same way. But these are the moments I know she loves me. She had nothing to gain from correcting them. In fact, she might have been called a buzzkill by my way-too-drunk friends. But she chose to show up for me in a way I wasn't even going to show up for myself.

She is a reminder that at the core of friendship is allyship—that you can't really have one without the other. Kyra's allyship buzzed around my heart in the following nuptial days, and reminded me to be a better ally to myself during this important milestone. Kyra helped me remember, as I walked down our non-traditional queer aisle, that marriage is not about leaving "inconvenient" parts of yourself behind. It is about bringing your brightest, fullest, most multifaceted self to exist alongside someone else's. And if you're lucky, you'll have a community of people like Kyra smiling back at you. Reminding you who you are.

Olivia Buntaine (she/her) believes in theatre, poetry, and prose that brings everyone to the table—starting with those of us who haven't been invited. She recently gave up New York for Denver, U.S., where she is trying to be a cowboy. More at www.oliviabuntaine.com.

And She Called Herself an Ally

By Erica V

I've learned to be wary of self-proclaimed allies.

Hear me out: experiences shape our understanding, and I recall one that gives me the credence to make this somewhat controversial statement.

I have a distinct memory from several years ago: I've recently arrived at a notable downtown restaurant, celebrating something-or-other for a woman I don't know very well. I'm an obligation invite, that oddball person you're required to include due to some semblance of a relationship—a godmother's great-aunt who's in town for the week, a parent's neighbor who was always "good to you," a distant cousin you never text but still counts as family…you get the idea. As with all memories, some of the less-important details have been lost in time. But I can say for sure that I hate the dress I've picked for the occasion, the food is late, and I've never met most of the women sitting at my table. There are a few notable exceptions, such as the one sitting right next to me. She's someone with whom I have a "situational" friendship; if not for our mutual connections, we wouldn't necessarily be socializing at a party. But circumstances had previously brought us together, and here we are. I enjoy her company, and it's good to have a familiar face among strangers.

Before I continue, you should know that I do my homework before attending events with people I see fairly irregularly. I'll hit their socials and scroll to the previous June, looking for traces of anything Pride-positive, even just a quick article share. I'll keep a mental list of these people, while also noticing the ones who stay silent or actively crusade against the enemy team—a team that I sit on, sometimes quietly but always knowingly. I notice these people as much as I notice the ones who inadvertently tell me they're safe by way of an unhidden Facebook timeline. I hate to admit this dictates my participation at events; but society as of late unfortunately seems to encourage this of me, someone in the LGBTQ+ community who straight people tend to forget about.

My friend's Facebook profile screams motherhood sprinkled with inspirational memes. It's pretty neutral, but that doesn't really matter; she's fully aware of my identity. We've talked about it cordially, and I'm relaxed in her presence.

You see, I'm the type of bisexual who sits in the corner to claim prime people-watching real estate with a view of the whole room. You'll notice me smirking at the crowd, but you may not pay me much attention—unless, of course, you want to smirk back and share a hearty laugh over my glass of wine. I'm softly and loudly visible at the same time. I wear my pink, purple, and blue colors openly while holding my dear husband's hand. The ones invited into my circle of intimate friendship see me for exactly who I am, just as the ones who merely recognize the vibrant pattern on my shirt give me a nod of solidarity, comfort, or perhaps something else. I find genuine joy in talking through my identity with those who would like to listen and experience my entirety—not just the parts they want to see. I don't view the sharing of my bisexuality as vulnerable, and I enjoy destigmatizing queer discourse. I work to normalize the idea of identities like mine, making peace with the fact that some straight people will never quite understand.

And the ones who don't really know me, or perhaps don't really associate the nuances of queerness beyond the mainstream rainbow, just pass on by. The puns on my t-shirts fall under the radar. My tri-colored ring somehow is assumed to be "patriotic," (I understand the blue, but purple and pink? Huh...). Most of the time I'll just walk on by and roll my eyes.

With that said, let me bring you back to the table, and the women surrounding me. I haven't seen their social media profiles, but there's something telling me that they may fall into the "non-supportive" category of my classifications, or at best neutral. But for the moment, that's okay—I'm perfectly content chewing my bread thoughtfully, wondering when my manicotti (or whatever I ordered; apparently, that's a missing detail) will manifest in front of me.

At some point, the conversation focuses on an expecting acquaintance. And as I hear the direction the conversation is going, I feel the familiar creeping of dread settle in.

Pregnant people.

The phrase is said in a mocking tone, with air quotes and high-pitched voices out like full frontal nudity. And soon the table just erupts. Here we go, I think to myself.

It starts with an attack on the inclusive term now being used within OB/GYN care contexts, rather than defaulting to "woman"; as a mother myself, this is a change I happily welcome in honor of our genderfluid peers. The conversation continues to meander and takes on a rudely familiar tone: queer people are encroaching on every aspect of society, and they need to leave everyone else alone. I glance at my friend, hoping to catch her eye and signal a budding desire to infiltrate on behalf of the broader LGBTQ+ community. But unfortunately, that's not what happened.

Because she's sitting there, nodding her head. And then I see her mouth move, and I hear words fall out. And my heart just drops.

The conversation may not necessarily be targeting bi+ women specifically, but an attack on any queer identity is an attack on us all. And as an ally, she should know better. Right?

It suddenly occurs to me that most people at this table wouldn't recognize that I belong to the LGBTQ+ community. I'm sitting here in a very hetero-presenting (albeit ugly) dress, talking about how my husband does laundry more efficiently than me, and agreeing with everyone that men are just so lovingly frustrating sometimes. I guess for straight people, these are all

markers they look for. I now understand there are no allies at this table. Not for me, not for other queer folks, not for the beautiful diversity of the LGBTQ+ community collectively.

In this space, they see their tablemates merely as women with husbands—who cares what they think, who they know, where they lie on the political spectrum? We're all obviously straight here, so these words can't do any harm. They don't see the grays between black and white, and they don't understand the nuances that exist on the plain defined by collective understanding of "straight" and "gay." They just don't realize that people like me exist. Or perhaps they conveniently forget, as my companion apparently did that day.

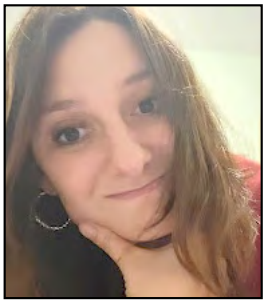
And she called herself an ally, I think to myself, a checkpoint for me and an open gate to safety.

I think about this experience quite often, and I frequently wonder if any other so-called allies exist in my life. These people are separate from the ones who truly stand for us—the "accomplices," as they may be called. And this unfortunately isn't the first time someone has inadvertently shown their true colors, or perhaps a version of their reality previously hidden from my gaze.

We live in a world in which people mask for the sake of others. Sadly, I've witnessed many "allies" fall into this trap; they'll be seemingly sympathetic in spaces where queer people are visible but shelve our existence the minute we fade into the background. On the contrary, I have learned to keep the accomplices close; they not only can recognize this dilemma, but they transcend upon it. I'm lucky to know some incredible accomplices, friends and advocates who empower all of us to exist boldly. I promise they exist, lining the track with inspirational signs and cheering loudly. They laugh, cry, and rage with us; they sit and let us speak, but they will also speak when we feel the need to sit. And most importantly, they dive deep below the sea of people-pleasers and swim against the current when the tide rises. And they savor every stroke.

Back in the depths of my memory, our plates finally arrive. The conversation pivots yet again, moving abruptly. Many of these women will probably forget what has just occurred; but I certainly won't have that luxury. But in the meantime, I may as well enjoy the free meal. I pick up my fork and take a bite.

Author's Note: Some identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals referenced in this narrative.



Erica V lives in the Philadelphia area of Pennsylvania in the U.S. with her husband, son, and two cats. In addition to spending time with her family, she puts her soul into creative outlets, including floral crafting, mixed-media art, and writing.

Fish Food for the Soul

By Hiliary Hamilton

You have become
the shadow at my shoulder

As a pond,
I lie in wait for a stone
to send ripples down my spine

Just one passer-by whispering secrets and sins
to freshly baked bread

A welcome weekly ritual
I live for
telling me I'm not alone

Silent shudders
awaken my resolve
as each morsel is fed to the obliviously grateful fish

Hiliary Hamilton is a poet living in Ohio, U.S. with her family and fur babies. She has published two poetry chapbooks, This Cannibal's Urn: Musings of an Anxiety-Ridden Insomniac *(Alien Buddha Press 2024) and* I Dream in Her Voice *(Alien Buddha Press 2025). Hamilton has also been published in numerous anthologies and blog posts through* The North Meridian Review *and* Alien Buddha Press.

Florence and Birdie Remember Summer in 1936

By Melissa Kulig

Artist Statement:

In my mixed media art pieces I strive to bring back voices of women who are no longer on this earth. I encourage viewers to remember their own family members and friends who have passed. Old photos capture tiny moments of life, and often there is joy. I believe it is imperative to hold people and joy in our memories. This collage/mixed media piece is a good picture of friends as allies.

Each artwork is made with acrylic paint, collage, colored pencil, and sometimes found objects. There are limitless combinations of these materials, and I'm able to remain flexible in how each work is created.

Melissa Kulig (BFA, Emmanuel College; MFA, Art Institute of Boston under Lesley University) is a retired art teacher living near Boston, Massachusetts, in the U.S. She has taught art in after-school programs around Boston, at Brookline Adult Education, at The Eliot School in Jamaica Plain, at the New Art Center in Newton, and at Newton Community Education. She was an adjunct drawing professor at the Boston Architectural College. Melissa now lives and works in a small loft at The Waltham Watch Factory. She currently exhibits as a guest artist at Three Stones Gallery in Concord.

Forty Responses to Telling People I'm Bisexual

By Kathryn Welch

I knew it!
(I didn't know it at all)
How liberating to say it out loud
What does it feel like to say it out loud?
Thanks for letting us know you better
I'm super proud of you
There is no part of this that isn't perfect
Authentic AF

Woohoo!!!
Congratulations!
This is amazing and wonderful
Welcome to the community
[rainbow emojis]
[coloured hearts emojis]
[A video clip of Pete Gardner singing *Gettin' Bi* on *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*]

Happy that you're wanting to share that with me
New things can be scary so I'm glad you can trust us
What a wonderful thing to have uncovered about yourself
Unsurprisingly, I am crying
This makes me so happy

I'm really happy that you're happy
I'm so pleased you told me
Thank you so much for sharing this with me
I hope you are feeling good

I love you
Do you still fancy me?
I love you and am so proud of you
I hope it goes without saying that this changes nothing
Here's to joy and freedom and being exactly who you are

As we're here, me too!
I've always been attracted to women, I just hadn't been brave enough to admit it.
I feel a lovely chat coming on.

Wondering if you've got all you need
If you ever need to talk about things I can do a listening
Wondering how long you've been carrying that, and how that was
Who else have you told?
I hope everyone you have shared it with has been warm and understanding

I think it is wonderful
I'm so happy for you
I feel very lucky to be your friend.

Kathryn Welch lives in Scotland, U.K., and came out as bisexual as her 40th birthday present to herself. She sometimes writes to explore big experiences and feelings, and to continue to find her way into owning and celebrating queerness.

In Memory: Lou Hoffman

The Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.) is mourning the unexpected loss of our matriarch Lou Hoffman who died of natural causes on October 6, 2025. She was 67 years old.

Lou was a steady and long-serving member of our community for decades. Lou began working with the Bisexual Connection around 1990, co-founded the BECAUSE conference in 1992, served in leadership positions with the Bisexual Organizing Project (BOP), and BiNet USA, and helped organize the 8th International Conference on Bisexuality in 2004. She attended the inaugural White House by-invitation-only Bisexual Roundtable in 2013.

Lou was always willing to share her gifts and talents to nurture our bi+ community and will be sorely missed.

—Submitted by Dr. Marge Charmoli, her friend and co-organizer

Love Unbound: A Letter To My Closeted Self

By Alexandra Rae

You feel it first at seven, this fluttering of feelings you cannot explain. Two girls, both older than you, play with you and your friend at the park. One of them has an undercut and a silver ring on each finger; the other wears their straight black hair in a messy half-up, half-down style and claims to be sixteen. You won't remember her name or how you ended up crossing the jungle gym with her or what her face looked like, except for the bejeweled septum piercing peeking out from her pale nostrils, gleaming in the midafternoon sunlight. Your friend wandering off to find boys to play with, the tattoos you thought were Sharpie drawings on each of the girls' arms, the one with black hair holding you under her t-shirt so you wouldn't fall off the rope hammock some other teenagers kept pushing, a bra the color of carnations, the warmth of her breasts against your face: what you do remember. She called the one with the undercut her girlfriend, but you heard girl / friend. You didn't know closing the space between these words was possible. As your friend's mom drives you home, away from the park, away from the hammock, you see the girls kiss at the top of the wooden castle, two princesses rewriting their fairytale. Something in you stirs. You want. You wait.

Gay: a word you learn young. And to not be it. You will hear the boys at school stick it like a shiv into each other. To be gay is to be a fag; to be a fag is to be weak; to be weak is to be a pussy; to be a pussy is to be a bitch; to be a bitch is to be a girl. And even the girls fear being gay, gathering themselves between the rows of the locker room, forming a panopticon of flesh and white underwear to look for wandering eyes. What they reject is not femininity but masculinity, and gazing at breasts or thigh gaps was an act of masculinity; of gayness. You learn their code and teach yourself to do the same, to watch out for girls looking at your naked body. It becomes harder to do with your eyes always on your own feet, not wanting to look up for too long.

You start to form crushes on any boy with brunette hair in middle school. Your panic over something being wrong with you fades away. Johnathan would do.

You will cover your walls in One Direction posters and smother your lips in red lip gloss to practice kissing Louis Tomlinson in your diary. You will wear a different scarf every day and become known for beating the boys in kickball at recess, a neon-leopard tail flying in the Tennessee wind as you reach home base. You will be made fun of for reading so much and not care. At night, you will dream of the *Twilight* wedding scene, making all your free throws at the next game, British boys, a bra the color of carnations.

Not quite fourteen, and now you know what sex is. Health class covers the hetero version of things (because what else was there to assume?) and gives everyone pamphlets on changing bodies, hygiene tips, and what intercourse is. You started your period almost five years ago, so you skip right to the section on "Intercourse 101." A series of medical diagrams shows what happens when the bee truly pollinates the flower. You are the flower meant to be broken into. A part of you fears it; a part of you wants it, this breaking. You place the pamphlet on the desk and accept the candy bowl being passed around the class. It is Friday. You have a sleepover at Lily's tonight. You choose a cherry lollipop and watch the clock on the wall. When the bell rings, you smile at Johnathan before you leave.

Friday night is pizza, Pepsi, jumping on Lily's trampoline, petting the golden retrievers, braiding hair, lesbian porn. A girl you know from math class brings up the pamphlet and starts making fun of the way the vagina looks on its glossy pages. You laughed with everyone else. Then real-life vaginas are the subject of discussion, non-glossiness and all. The way they look is gross, the way they smell is gross, the way they will one day cry blood is gross. You pull your oversized t-shirt over your knees, hoping no one can see the outline of the pad you're wearing underneath your thin flannel pants. Lily grabs her iPad and you are relieved, thinking she's going to start queuing up music videos to watch like you usually do at her house. Her glasses reflect the screen glowing beneath her, and it's here she looks like an evil wizard to you, her mischievous smile growing wider as she brews up something in her cauldron that makes you feel sick. She tells everyone to come sit by her. When she turns the iPad around to face the group, she is already laughing. From the YouTube search bar, you see *girls kissing girls* typed in. Between everyone's snickers and ohmygodwhataretheydoingthat'ssogay, you hear wet smacks and fake moans. Lily turns the screen to type something else in. When it's flipped around again, a real vagina is in front of you. Another girl's hand appears and disappears inside it. The girls at the sleepover are hysterical now, screaming *WHAT THE FUCK? LESBIANS ARE SO WEIRD! EW!* Lily thinks she hears her mom coming downstairs and exits the video right before she comes. The girls have to cover their mouths to hold back their laughter, and you are so so quiet.

You liked the way boys rubbed your back when they hugged you. You also liked the way girls held your hand on crosswalks, at the mall, school dances: gentle, but firm. You start to realize, but do not accept, the possibility of wanting both.

You see a girl in the bookstore with long auburn hair you wish you could touch and immediately leave. You see a boy with the most incredible smile make your coffee and are too afraid to say anything other than *Thank you.* A girl at Walmart, testing out liquid eyeliners on her hand. She buys the same one as you. Boy, cross-country team. Girl, red light in your hometown (you never see her again). Boys, many of them, pulling through the drive-thru at your job. Girls, many of them, pulling through the drive-thru at your job. On TV, sidewalks, your mind.

Repression is an art form. It's one you learn well.

Bisexuality: sexual or romantic attraction towards men and women, aka the beauty and curse of desiring both.

You think of bi things: bicycles, bilateral mastectomies, bikinis, bipeds, bilinguals, binaries, biannual meetings, bipartisan efforts, the bifocals your grandmother wears to sew, biology (your least favorite science class), bipolar disorder, biceps, Bible. You.

By the time you are eighteen, your closet is a fortress.

You say goodbye to your small hometown after high school. You flee to Pittsburgh, where you want to learn to be a writer. Pride flags hang proudly from every building on your urban campus. Still, nothing.

Queerness, your shiv; what you learn to conceal.

You hear it called a "phase," that it's not real, that it's for people who are confused. You apply this logic to yourself. The conclusion: you've been confused for a very long time. Too long to be a phase.

You think of saying something. Most of your friends are queer or women themselves: you know they'll love you for who you are. Why imprison yourself in this silence? You lie in bed, lie to yourself, lie to everyone around you. You tuck your knees to your chest and sob, answerless to the question of this shame, the origin of your hidden queerness.

You go on a few dates with men. This is good. You can be seen embracing this half of yourself while the rest of the world believes it is a whole.

Purple, Pink, Blue. Colors you loved at one point or another in your life. Just not all at once.

That summer in New York. All those late nights spent in underground queer clubs, glitter and chaos unfurling around you like a ribbon, like a gift. That's when you knew what you were wasn't a mistake.

You turn twenty-two. You look in the mirror and, finally, can say: My love is unbound, two-fold onto the world and the people in it. I am a bisexual woman. I have been, for a very long time. My queerness is not a shiv but a flower, learning to open on its own. It is as real as I am.

You are terrified, but you do it anyway.

I uncloset myself for myself. I'm doing it anyway.

Alexandra Rae is from Ohio in the U.S. She is a submissions reader for Narratively *and the editorial assistant for Brink Books.*

Chaperones

By Enjay DeGuzman

I forget how it comes up,
and I haven't planned it,
but I say something like
I'm bi.

Sitting on the hotel bed across from
this new friend and fellow chaperone
in a double room
in another country,
our high school charges
scattered down the hall,

my pounding heart surprises me.

I'm not not out.
But it's the first time
I say it so plainly
without hedging joking shirking

and without knowing
how my listener may react.

I feel too old for this.

I wait,
thighs bared in thin pajama shorts,
the hotel bedspread scratchy under them;
no bra.
The bedside lamps glow
weakly, and the bedsprings squeak.

Then she raises her eyebrows,
registers we're having
A Moment.

Oh,
yeah,
I mean,
if I'm drunk and another girl is hot,
it's on!

Enjay DeGuzman is a queer femme of Pennsylvania Dutch and Filipina descent living outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the U.S. Beyond her work as a writer and educator, she can often be found riding horses, winging her eyeliner, and looking at trees. Find her on Instagram @ enjaydeguzman.

AROUND THE WORLD: EUROPE

From Silence to Loudness: A Personal Perspective on the Bi+ Equal Conference and Founding General Meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, October 20-22, 2025

By Farnaz Abdoli

When I was 19, I already knew I was bi, but at that time I didn't have the words or knowledge to understand what it really meant. It was a truth I carried in silence, a secret that stayed hidden for years.

Eight years ago, things began to change. I started working with *Spectrum*—an anti-racist, intersectional feminist, trans, and gender diverse inclusive organization—as a graphic designer. One of my first projects was creating a handbook for journalists on reporting LGBTQ+ issues with an inclusive bi+ perspective. While designing the pages and editing the materials, I came across the term "bi+" in a way I had never seen before. It wasn't just a label; it was a framework, a community, a history. That handbook opened a huge window for me. Through that work, I began to recognize myself, to name the part of me that had been hidden, and slowly I found the courage to speak it out loud.

That's why being invited to the Bi+ Equal Conference and Founding General Meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, felt so meaningful. For eight years, I had worked with *Spectrum* mostly behind the scenes as a designer. But this time, I was not only preparing the graphics before the event—I was also there during the conference itself, with my camera, documenting sessions, managing communications, and being part of the team that told the story of the gathering. It meant moving from backstage to the front row. And beyond that, it meant being part of the founding general meeting that created the first pan-European bi+ umbrella organization.

It was my first time in such a space: rooms filled with bi+ activists, researchers, and community members from across Europe and beyond. To be honest, I felt both excited and a little overwhelmed. There was so much energy, knowledge, and solidarity in the air. I kept thinking back to my nineteen-year-old self, who didn't even know how to describe her own identity. If she could see me there, she wouldn't believe it.

The conference sessions covered many topics: racial inclusivity, bi+ visibility in the queer community, building inclusive healthcare, youth voices, and transnational organizing. Each one gave me something new to reflect on. I especially remember sitting in a workshop about how propaganda shapes public opinion, holding my camera as I tried to capture the faces of people determined to resist it. It was a reminder that my role as a designer and communicator is not only technical, it is political: the way we tell our stories matters.

There were also moments of joy. The queer walking tour through Vilnius, for example, gave me a sense of visibility in public space. Walking together, laughing, and seeing the city through rainbow-colored perspectives felt simple and beautiful, yet also powerful.

Conference participants celebrate the establishment of Bi+ Equal

For me, the most important part of the conference was not only what I learned, but what I felt. Being surrounded by bi+ people, listening to their stories, sharing meals and conversations, I realized that I was part of something much larger than myself or the few people I already knew. It was both comforting and inspiring.

And now, I want to be that accomplice for others. Just as *Spectrum* opened a window for me eight years ago, and just as Bi+ Equal opened a door for me in Vilnius, I want to keep creating openings—through my art, my writing, and my work in design and fashion. Because solidarity is not just about standing by someone; it is about standing with them, even when it is difficult.

As I left Vilnius, I carried with me the warmth of the people I met, the lessons from the workshops, and a renewed sense of responsibility. For me, this was not just a conference. It was a milestone—a reminder of how far I have come, and how far we can go together when we show up not only as allies, but as accomplices.

Credit: Augustas Didžgalvis

Farnaz Abdoli is an activist and multidisciplinary Iranian artist. Her activities in Iran led to conflicts the Iranian government. In 2013, when she was only 26 years old, Abdoli was selected by CNN as one of the ten most influential women of the year.

Martine, continued from page 1

Accompliceship also asks that I face my own privileges. I am white, European, and highly educated. I have access to academic and artistic spaces that many others do not. My autism, queerness, and ADHD often exclude me within those same spaces—but they do not erase my structural safety. I move between advantage and marginality constantly. That tension is not a flaw; it's the condition of my practice. The work is to notice where I hold the microphone, and to decide when to hand it over.

Quiet activism can be misread as comfort, or worse, as depoliticization. I've often worried about that. Because disability justice, as Mia Mingus and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha insist, is not just about care and creativity—it is about collective, often uncomfortable, resistance. My quiet activism does not replace the radical organizing of disabled comrades who block inaccessible buses or fight austerity in the streets; it intertwines with theirs. My art helps raise funds through *Japan Fans* for disability-rights initiatives: I design posters and websites for grassroots campaigns and offer rehearsal and workshop spaces to organizers who need a room. Sometimes I simply show up to document or translate their work, amplifying it beyond language barriers. Art is not a parallel lane to direct action—it is one of its support systems.

To create in this world is also to resist its economics. Neoliberalism has commodified rest, care, even attention. Art schools close, funding disappears, creative labor is devalued unless it sells. Under austerity, making art becomes a privilege of those who can afford time. I can—sometimes. And that means my responsibility increases. The machine that thrives on despair is not abstract; it is the network of austerity policies, the medical–industrial complex, the productivity cult that tells us we must monetize every breath. To sit at my piano or write this essay is not escapism. It is how I take ten minutes back from capitalism and give them to the community instead.

Intersectional feminism gives this work its compass. There is no feminism without trans liberation, without racial and disability justice, without ecological awareness. But intersectionality is not a decorative list; it's a practice of staying with contradiction. My feminism must hold the mess: that I am both a product of privilege and a target of ableism; that my vegan ethics sit uneasily within capitalist food systems; that I can love Indonesian cultures and still carry a colonial passport.

I try to navigate these contradictions through action: growing herbs and vegetables on my balcony rather than buying plastic-wrapped produce; mending clothes, knitting, refusing fast fashion; sharing vegan meals made from local ingredients; buying art supplies second-hand; teaching children to make music with found materials instead of imported instruments. These gestures are small, but they are refusals—ways of withdrawing my consent from exploitative systems while acknowledging that withdrawal alone cannot dismantle them.

Even within my community work, privilege complicates everything. "The workshops are free for those who cannot pay," I often say, but free is not simple. We use QR codes for anonymous donations to avoid forcing anyone to "out" themselves as poor. Still, inequality shows itself in who gives and who walks away. I remember a concert by Japanese musicians where older white visitors left smiling, but without scanning the code. When I gently confronted one of them, he replied that the performers "enjoyed themselves anyway." That sentence—the assumption that joy is payment—revealed everything. Accompliceship means noticing such moments, naming them, and changing the system so that joy never substitutes for justice.

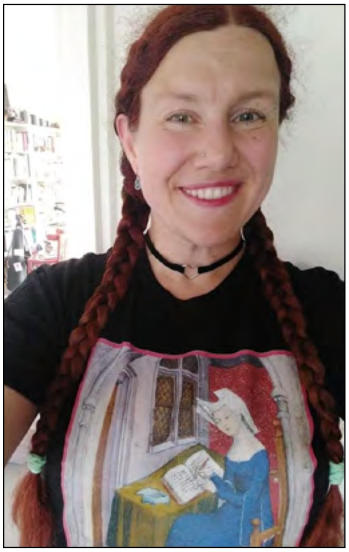
Through CEAL (the Center for Enthusiasts of Asian Languages) and through the dojo I dream of, I try to link art to collective change. The work is messy: budgets, translations, misunderstandings, burnout. But it also creates tiny infrastructures of care—sliding scales, shared meals, community archives. These are not aesthetic gestures; they are political logistics. They are how I keep art tethered to reality.

And yet, there are days when all this feels too small. The planet burns; fascism rises; policy strips away our safety nets. What can a song do against that? But I return to what Amie McNee said: "Making art is activism. The act of making art is inherently political." When I create, I remember that I still have agency. I can refuse despair. I can model care. And care, in a culture of cruelty, is radical.

We often underestimate the politics of gentleness. But gentleness is not the absence of struggle; it's a strategy for survival. It's how we refuse to replicate the violence we oppose. In every community project, in every classroom or dojo, I try to build spaces that embody the world I want—inclusive, patient, slow. My revolution is not about perfection. It's about persistence.

So, this is my accompliceship: imperfect, accountable, ongoing. I will keep writing, painting, composing, teaching. I will keep redistributing what I can and making room for those whose stories are still silenced. I will stay uncomfortable. Because art is not decoration—it is declaration.

I don't know if it's enough. But I know it's necessary.



Martine Mussies is an autistic academic and artistic researcher based in Utrecht, the Netherlands. A PhD candidate at Maastricht University, Martine explores identity and imagination in her dissertation, "The Cyborg Mermaid." Her work connects autism, art, and fandom through projects on King Alfred, mermaids, Asian Studies, and neurodiversity. Beyond academia, Martine is a musician, visual artist, and budoka. More at: www.martinemussies.nl.

The Road to Allyship

By Sally Goldner

Allyship is simply a form of human kindness. It says, "what can I do (and not do) that would be good for you?" Yet, despite this simplicity, it often seems hard to achieve in practice. In that light, what are the qualities needed to start achieving this kindness and what might be the blocks to getting there?

Good qualities for allies include:

Humility: No human can be the perfect ally because we don't automatically know everything about every group, or each individual and their situation. Yes, there's this wonderful modern technology called the internet that can give us some broad ideas—e.g., bi+ is a valid sexual/romantic orientation, using name in use is important for TGDNB (Trans, Gender Diverse, and Non-Binary) people—which can help. But it's okay to have the humility to not know something and admitting that to yourself is okay. So how to find out the information that will achieve allyship?

Listening as part of communication skills: I personally define listening as receiving information. This at least gets past the first and most basic level of "hearing words" (which often many people don't do at all or do well). It means effectively taking in and ensuring understanding of what the other party/ies want to achieve. It's also worth noting that listening, particularly in LGBTIQA+ communities, will need to accommodate neurodivergence and the varied and valid ways of interpreting information.

Being trauma-informed: Many people and communities needing allyship face, to varying degrees, a range of negative behaviors such as discrimination, vilification, and violence at both the group and individual levels. This can often result in feelings of rejection, abandonment, frustration, anger, etc. that in turn create trauma. Being trauma-informed is therefore important when building allyship and then moving higher to being an accomplice to ensure a real and deeper understanding is achieved.

What, therefore, might be blocks to developing these qualities? (Note, these are not excuses; it's about acknowledging them and then doing what needs to be done to enable moving beyond them.)

Ideas about leadership: Most of our ideas around leadership come from "male/masculine" perspectives: "take charge, get there and do it" (did you hear some sort of male football coach's voice saying that?). The idea that leadership involves doing what someone else wants can seem opposite to these perspectives. "Female/feminine" ideas involving empathy, compassion, and humility may initially seem to counter these ideas; of course, the truth is they both need to be put into practice with balance according to the circumstances.

"Busyness": Being an ally/accomplice and listening may take time. Often, busyness and impatience can get in the way when "busy" people want quick solutions. This sort of short-term and efficient thinking may also stop people from listening and communicating carefully.

Blocks/unconscious bias/simply not knowing: We all have these and again, that's okay so long as they only occur once at most for each block and people are willing to learn and overcome the block.

Overcoming the blocks: As a speaker and educator, I sometimes do a quick survey on whether people have received structured training in listening skills. With the obvious exception of counseling/similar professionals, one in twenty received such training prior to age 18 (school years for most people) and maybe five in 20 thereafter.

Blocks to listening include things like distractions (especially phones), busyness/impatience, and being time-poor. And one other big one; our own emotional blockages can stop us taking in and understanding another person's perspective. Emotions in themselves are not necessarily "bad"; it's when they damage others or stop us from achieving allyship and being an accomplice that they are a problem. Also "positive" emotions can block us from seeing another perspective and becoming better allies and accomplices. If something makes us "happy," it may be that we refuse to look at its downside/s.

A blockage to being open to being trauma-informed can be highly masculine ideas along the lines of "get over it" or "toughen up." Throw them out—enough said.

I would be the first to admit to experiencing these blocks in varying degrees at times. I have tried to commit to a value of curiosity – being open to learning— to overcome these blocks.

Ultimately, I believe that when we grow ourselves we can in turn be better leaders and allies.

Sally Goldner is a diversity educator, speaker, life coach, and emcee who started her professional life in accounting. She lives and works on Kulin lands, has been involved in Victoria's LGBTIQA+ communities for close to 30 years including being a founding member of Transgender Victoria. She currently serves on the committees of three organizations, Bi Plus Pride Victoria, Just.Equal Australia and Transfamily and presents 3CR's "Out of the Pan" podcast. She is also a participant in different aspects of professional wrestling and an occasional performer.

A Hundred Closets

By Aurora Jane Wells

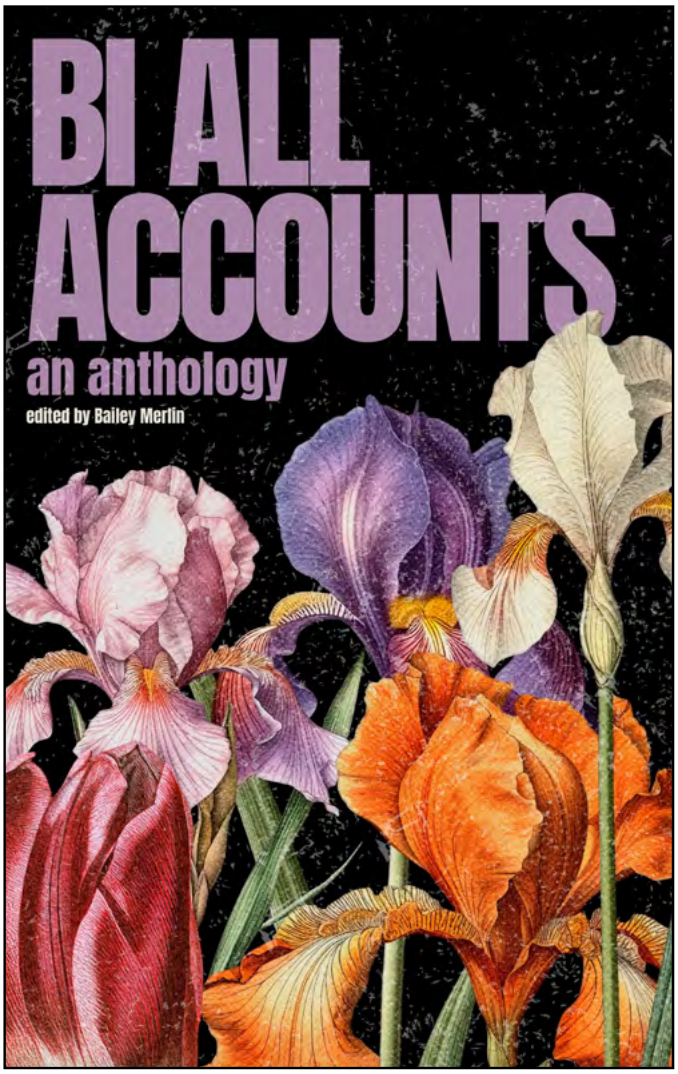
i walk these streets
my lover's hand in mine
at last, we are free of fear
i see many eyes on us
and in some of them, i see the door to a hundred closets
as i lift her hand to my lips
and kiss it gently, silently telling her how cherished she is
i see an old woman, sipping coffee on some old steps
and it is almost imperceptible, but she lights up
our eyes meet and there is a silent understanding
a group of modestly dressed women pass by
some avert their eyes, others willingly expose their disgust to us
at our betrayal of
what is to them
the sacred duty of womanhood
but one woman does neither
she watches wistfully, her baby in her arms
a slight smile on her face
the others don't notice or pretend not to

i lock eyes with a young man
at the edge of his family
and the edge of adulthood
many men have looked at us today
but from this one's eyes, lust is absent
all i detect is a silent "thank you"
and a hidden, frightened whisper
of "please, don't let them somehow know"
both looks that all of us know
and in the subtle language only we know
through my eyes, i say to him "i will look out for you, young one"
in these many understandings
it is unspoken but known, down to our cores
the one thing we have in common is not our bodies, but a pain that we all know
and all have dreamed of a world without
but that every time one of us fights back
forcefully blooms in the face of this world that doesn't want us to live
this act of resistance releases a signal to our kin
"you have permission to be"

Aurora Jane Wells is a bisexual feminist writer living in Ontario, Canada. Her writing is for the reader and its meaning is what it means to you. If it gives you pause or makes you feel seen, she has done her job. Instagram: @ajwells.writer

Review of *Bi All Accounts: An Anthology of Bi+ Voices*, Volume 1

By Allison Cipriano, PhD



Bailey Merlin's *Bi All Accounts: An Anthology of Bi+ Voices* is a warm, bright light of visibility in a world that feels increasingly cold, dark, and isolating for so many in our communities.

This work appeals to readers across a wide range of formats with its inclusion of fiction and non-fiction stories, poetry, visual artwork, and essays where the personal and academic are beautifully interwoven. Whether you want to more fully understand bi+ realities, are longing to feel represented, or are simply looking to engage with work about marginalized people that is complex and emotive, an enriching read is guaranteed.

The selected stories, poems, essays, and visual art pieces are individually and collectively compelling in their insistence on authentically representing bi+ experiences. This authenticity necessitates embracing and reflecting the fullness and nuance present in the lived realities of those who are attracted to people across multiple categories of gender (e.g., women, men, nonbinary people, agender people, genderfluid people, etc.), referred to as bi+ throughout. It requires that embrace to be unconstrained by desires to be viewed as respectable or easily comprehendible to those who are unwilling to support us exactly as we are, messy liminalities and all.

Together, the authors in this anthology expertly reflect the humor, fear, compassion, trauma, desire for connection, isolation, love, exhaustion at explaining the same basic things all the damn time, and defiance in the face of erasure, hatred, and violence that I have witnessed among bi+ people. In fact, just about every experience related to being bi+ that a community member has shared with me, across professional and personal contexts, is represented in the pages of this work. I found the continual depiction of the ways bi+ people internalize and become occupied by interpersonal and sociocultural messages of denial, questioning, invalidation, and erasure of their own identities to be painfully accurate in its portrayal of the psyches of many bi+ people. Of course, there are too many bi+ experiences represented worth noting to list here succinctly—that's the nature of writing about the bi+ community in a nutshell. Some stand out as important to name due to the rarity of work about them within this community, though, including the leveraging of anti-bisexual stigma in intimate partner violence; navigating compulsory heterosexuality and monosexuality; the perceived complexities of intersecting bisexuality, transness; polyamory and/or race and ethnicity; the courage and fear wrapped up in acting as bi+ representation and intervening in binegativity in real life; and the unbridled joy of being seen fully and met with support rather than dismissal, scorn, doubt, or accusations.

A major theme throughout is the quiet violence monosexual (single gender attracted) family members, friends, and partners continually impose on their bi+ loved ones. Presenting oneself authentically can at once mean being treated as a disturbance to the aesthetic of straight family weddings and as an attention-seeking imposter in Queer contexts. Bi+ people receive messages that they don't quite fit in, that there is something off about them that should be changed if they want to feel acceptance and belonging with others.

A related theme is the work bi+ people engage in to make themselves and their sexualities smaller to appease others, until they just can't anymore. One can only be treated as "too much" so many times before they internalize it and get to work erasing their own multitudes. However, this work—the work of holding ourselves back from correcting and explaining, of going along with assumptions made because it is easier for everyone else, of swallowing direct minimization of our lived experiences born out of misguided notions that erasure (invisibility forced on those begging to be seen) is privilege—wears on us over time. We don't avoid harm when we become our own erasers, and this book reminds us that we don't have to cut ourselves down

to fit into others' rigid bounds of acceptability.

In my research as a psychologist, I am currently focused on *bipositivity*: positive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward bisexuality, bisexual people, or other identities and people sharing multiple gender attractions (e.g., pansexual, queer). A common misconception about bipositivity is that it is only felt when discussing positive characteristics or experiences we have as bi+ people. On the contrary, bi+ people experience bipositivity most when their lived realities are reflected fully, including their challenges. To read *Bi All Accounts* is to feel the truth of our community—the weight of stigma, erasure, and violence alongside the essential respite felt in moments of understanding, support, and joy found through connection. This book is a shining example of bipositivity for our community. It has been added to my growing collection of texts contributing to bi+ visibility and positivity with which I proudly display in my office and encourage engagement.

Bi All Accounts is an invaluable resource for anyone wanting to gain a better understanding of bi+ people and is deserving of space on shelves devoted to LGBTQ+ texts everywhere.

Allison Cipriano, PhD (she/her), is a bisexual and queer woman and critical social psychologist who is currently an Assistant Professor and Program Director of Social Psychology at Ball State University in Indiana, in the U.S. She regularly teaches, conducts research, and writes about the lived realities of people with marginalized identities and/or experiences.

Review of *Bi the Way: I Love You*

By Lara Zielinsky

An anthology is often a mixed bag. However, with its tight "mission" of sharing stories about bi+ characters falling in love, *Bi the Way: I Love You* gets mostly good marks. All the stories (except one) were well-developed novellas. Characters identify in a wide variety of ways and the pairings are identified at the start with the nomenclature FF, FX, XX, FFM, MM, MF, etc., and the stories included content notices to allow a reader to select the type of story to read without surprises.

The majority of the stories feature bi+ persons who identify as female, non-binary leaning female, or genderfluid, again leaning into feminine energy. Except for one bi-awakening character in "The To-Screw List" by Julie Brydon, their identities are firmly established, even if some other characters are not supportive of that.

While many of the stories feature characters in the new adult range (18-25), as is typical of the romance genre in general, "Petty Roots" by Cozy DuBois and "Do It for the Plot" by Rochelle Wolf have characters whose lives could be considered well-established. Both also feature wonderfully drawn non-binary main characters: Eris and Blake in "Petty Roots," and Iris in "Do It for the Plot." "Good Things Come in Unexpected Packages" by Amelia Lascaux has my all-time favorite type of date: let's go out, talk books, and read.

All the stories, except for the short story teaser "Love on the Airwaves" by MK Owens, have complete romance arcs and well-conveyed sex on the page suited to the characters' personalities and burgeoning relationships. The teaser is tempting and well-written, but it is out of place with the other fully developed stories around it, so that's a little jarring.

All in all, I give it 4 out of 5 stars. Or 8 out of 9. (There are 9 total stories.)

Bi the Way: I Love You proceeds are destined for two charities: Bi Pride UK and Rainbow Railroad. The ebook is exclusively available through Amazon's Kindle bookstore worldwide, so search for it today!

Lara Zielinsky, she/her, bisexual, is a fiction author and editor, and lives in blue-for-now Central Florida in the U.S. She, her spouse, and her girlfriend chalk rainbows on pavements on the weekends wherever they go.

The Best Bi Erotica of the Year, Volume 2

By Lauren Taylor Bak

On Bisexual Awareness Day this year, September 23, 2025, I was really excited and proud to announce that my story "White Noise" was included in a fantastic anthology, The *Best Bi Erotica of the Year, Volume 2*, edited by Christian Pan. When I posted on social media about the book, some of my friends—particularly those who aren't bi+ but consider themselves allies—had questions.

What is bisexual erotica?

The category is surprisingly misunderstood. Most people outside the community would assume that bisexual erotica is all about threesomes and encounters with people of multiple genders—but it isn't. The short stories in this collection center bi+ characters, showcasing a diverse range of bisexual erotic experiences, which is not limited to threesomes (although there are, of course, some threesomes and moresomes).

The second story in the collection, "BBE-001" by Polly Liticat, for example, explores what it means to make erotica—or rather, porn—intended for a bisexual audience—the "bisexual gaze," as it were. Two queer couples, Adam & Gary and Elena & Cerise, fight stereotypes by recording the "most bisexual porno" anyone's ever made, complicated only by the fact that Elena and Adam used to be a couple. The drama!

Is this book really the "best of the year"?

The word "best" is very subjective, of course, but the stories in *The Best Bi Erotica of the Year, Volume 2* are definitely fantastic, and well worth reading.

For me as a writer (and a reader), the quality of "erotica" isn't always just about the sex. It's also about the feelings. My own story in the collection isn't that steamy, despite being first on the roster; it's a sweet sort of erotica that leans into the emotional aspects of finding love again and relearning how to navigate the world after the loss of a monogamous partner.

The other stories though? Hot as hell.

"Coming Back Home" by Sinclair Sexsmith is perhaps the hottest thing I have ever read. Femme domme Iris sends her submissive partner, trans man Jaime, on a "quest" to a gay bathhouse. The challenge? To experience sex with cis men in every possible configuration before he comes home. Jaime tells Iris all about his experience with three burly strangers while they make love.

The collection features characters of all genders experiencing explicit, erotic, bisexual adventures of all kinds! There's something for everybody to enjoy. From a dreamy three-way at ComicCon and roller-derby Sapphics to kinky role-playing and picking up strangers, the writers of *The Best Bi Erotica of the Year, Volume 2* have come up with a ton of queer scenarios that will definitely float your boat.

The eighteen new stories by talented writers from across the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia explore bisexuality in new and arousing ways, expanding upon and challenging how bi+ people are represented in literature.

The *Best Bi Erotica of the Year, Volume 2* was curated and edited by Christian Pan, a New York-based bisexual writer and activist. The cover photograph is by Jenna Citrus.

NOTE: These stories are intended for adults, as this anthology contains explicit scenes of sexual intimacy between consenting adults of various backgrounds and identities.

My totally unbiased rating: ****

Here's a teaser for my story, "White Noise," a sweet Sapphic erotic romance that defies bisexual tropes and stereotypes:

> When Morgan moved into a new apartment, she wasn't expecting to fall for Claire, the woman in 12C. And she really didn't expect to be lulled to sleep by the sound of Claire's husband snoring every night. But the building's paper-thin walls mean nothing stays private for long, and Morgan's crush on her hot neighbor may lead her right to the secret that keeps Claire awake at night.

Lauren Taylor Bak is an emerging author of short form erotica, erotic romance, and speculative (sci-fi, fantasy, horror, weird) smut. In another life, she obtained a PhD in English literature, and is sort of an expert on (a very small corner of) the subject. She's read all the classics and wished they contained more spice. She specializes in bitesize erotica, and yes—she takes requests! Find out more at https://laurentaylorbak.wordpress.com/ or follow her on Bluesky @laurentaylorbak.bsky.social.

RESEARCH CORNER

The 2025 International Bisexuality+ Research Conference

By Robyn Ochs

The 2025 International Bisexuality+ Research Conference took place on October 4th and 5th, 2025 on Zoom.

This year's conference was the fourth, and was organized by the Bisexual Research Group, a group of researchers, educators, and activists working to better understand the bisexual, pansexual, polysexual, plurisexual, queer, fluid, and unlabeled experience.

This free, two-day conference included panels and workshops covering a wide range of topics, including Bi+ Books; Bisexual Research in Brazil; Bisexuality and the Law; Bi+ Media; Masculinities; Privilege, Passing, and Discrimination; Bi+ Research Activism: Bridging Knowledge and Action; Bi+ Lives; and History.

Several of the speakers have appeared in BWQ's pages, including Ann Tweedy, Jantine van Lisdonk, Pamela Vallejos Chavez, Bailey Merlin, Jace Ríos Rivera, Nadja Arontschik, Nancy Marcus, and Maedbh Pierce.

I had the pleasure of speaking at the closing.

I attended the entire conference, and I recommend it. One of the conference's strengths is the range of its speakers. Hailing from numerous countries, speakers ranged from undergraduate students to tenured faculty members to seasoned professionals, and there was something for anyone interested in bisexual+ studies, whatever your field of interest.

Recordings of sessions from this and past years' sessions can be found on YouTube at @internationalbisexualityre2712.

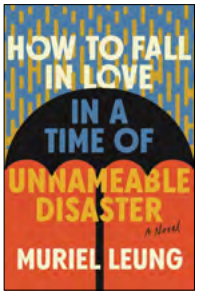
If you are interested in attending future conferences or in presenting your own work, you can find out more at https://www.bisexualresearch.com.

Robyn Ochs is a global speaker and editor of this publication.

2025 Bisexual Lammys Announced

The Lambda Literary Awards announced its 2025 Lammy Award winners on October 4, 2025. Here are the nominees and winners in the three bisexual categories:

BISEXUAL FICTION



Anyone's Ghost // *August Thompson.* Penguin Press
Greta & Valdin // *Rebecca K Reilly.* Avid Reader Press | Simon & Schuster
WINNER How to Fall in Love in a Time of Unnameable Disaster // *Muriel Leung.* W. W. Norton & Company
The Pairing: Special 1st Edition // *Casey McQuiston.* St. Martin's Griffin
We Were the Universe // *Kimberly King Parsons.* Alfred A. Knopf

BISEXUAL NONFICTION

Djuna: The Extraordinary Life of Djuna Barnes // *Jon Macy.* Street Noise Books
First Love: Essays on Friendship // *Lilly Dancyger.* The Dial Press
Simmering: A Kitchen Memoir // *Rebecca Orchant.* Unbound Edition Press
You Get What You Pay For // *Morgan Parker.* One World
WINNER You're Embarrassing Yourself // *Desiree Akhavan.* Random House

BISEXUAL POETRY

Good Dress // *Brittany Rogers.* Tin House
WINNER Interrogation Records // *Jeddie Sophronius.* Gaudy Boy
Return of the Chinese Femme // *Dorothy Chan.* Deep Vellum
The Endless Animal // *Nathan Mader.* fine. press
The Stuff of Hollywood // *Niki Herd.* Copper Canyon Press

A full list of all categories can be found at: https://lambdaliterary.org/2025/10/announcing-the-winners-of-the-2025-lammy-awards/

CALENDAR

Digital brunch, November 2025

A special invitation to our readers

EVERYWHERE:

Please join the Boston Bisexual Women's Network at one (or all) of our digital brunches. We are proud of our community of women (trans and cis) and nonbinary folks, and we would love to make connections across the country and globe. Grab your coffee or tea and some food while we chat about bi+ issues and other fun topics.

Digital brunches will be held on the following dates starting at 1 p.m. EDT/EST:

Sun., December 7
Sat., January 10
Sun., February 8

Please join us! Info/RSVP: BWQEvents@gmail.com.

(Note: Dates are subject to change. Check BiWomenBoston.org to confirm date.)

Bi+ Community summer picnic on Boston Common

2026 Bi+ World Meetups:
Feb. 6, May 22, Aug. 28, Nov. 20

Join us at the 17th Bi+ World Meetup on Friday, February 6th at 4 pm EST/ 10 pm CET. Bi+ people *everywhere* are invited to join us on Zoom. We'll use breakout rooms to give folks an opportunity to join each other in a friendly and free setting. The meeting is in English and is facilitated by Barbara Oud (the Netherlands) and Robyn Ochs (U.S.). Pre-registration is required.

Register at https://biplus.nl/biplus-world-meetup.

Metro-Boston Bi+ Women and Nonbinary Folks: Keep up with local events. Subscribe to our Google group: https://groups.google.com/g/biwomenboston

Check out BiWomenBoston.org for info about upcoming **in-person** events for women with bi+ (bi, pan, fluid, and other nonbinary) sexualities, sponsored by the Boston Bisexual Women's Network.

HOLD THE DATE: *Bi+ Netherlands and Bi+ Equal are organizing a* ***Bi+ World Conference*** *to be held in Amsterdam, Netherlands July 28-30, 2026. A website for this event will go live by March. Check https://biplus.nl/ for updates.*

***BWQ* offers FREE digital subscriptions to people of all genders and all orientations everywhere. Subscribe at BiWomenQuarterly.com.**