

Two from Jane Barnes:

You Wanted

A slave so I left you
You wanted a love
But you were married
You wanted me forever

I was obsessed with
Another. You wanted
A friend you could kiss
I wanted a love to

Adore me. You wanted
A mother, a sister, a
Brother. I wanted an
Other. I wanted a passion

It was out of fashion. I
Called for relief. I prayed
For quiet. When I stopped
Wanting—the perfect diet

Paul, short by an inch

Dark smart found music
Manuscripts in Paris
Diabetic, sometimes ate
Cakes. Talkish, perfectionist

Polite in bed. I left him
For a girl. Nothing at all
In my head. Musicians both,
I fell harder for poetry.



Thief on a Wall

By Nikki Viveca

You treated my identity
like I was a clumsy thief atop a wall
that borders a forbidden garden

watching for the wobble
that would cause me to fall

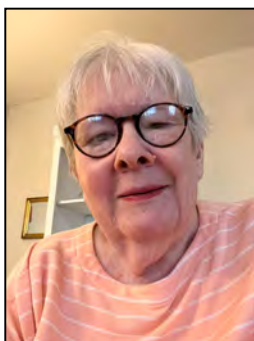
either down to the street where you might catch me
lead me back, lesson learned

or else
crashing to the forbidden side
where my fate would no longer be your concern
and you could walk away
sad for the loss
of your chance to be the hero
in whose arms I was saved.

If only you knew
how solid my brick road is
how certain my feet
how wide my view

how small you look from up here
as you crouch
eager for me to slip.

Nikki Viveca is a slam poet and comedian who lives and works on Wurundjeri land in Melbourne, Australia.



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

Editor's Note

The theme of this issue is "Relationships." Readers were asked: "What is your ideal relationship 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."

Peg and I have been in a relationship for 30 years and have been legally married for almost 22 years (thanks, Massachusetts, for being the first U.S. state to allow this). When we met, I had been happily solo for several years. I was not dating, and I was not looking. I was enjoying being in a primary relationship with myself for the first time in my life, and I was not interested in giving that up. Peg and I ended up forming a relationship that I jokingly describe as poly: I have two primary relationships—one shared with Peg and one with just myself. We have a lot of autonomy. We socialize together, and separately. We travel together, and separately. It works for us.

In this issue we will witness a multitude of perspectives on relationships expressed through words and through visual art. You'll also find reflections on the new show *Heated Rivalry*, and more.

Please consider submitting your own writing or art for a future issue. Remember: If you rarely (or never) see people like yourself represented in print, your voice is especially important. When you lift up your voice, someone, somewhere will FINALLY see their own experiences reflected, perhaps for the first time. We are a global publication, and we'd love to hear from you.

Enjoy!

Robyn

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

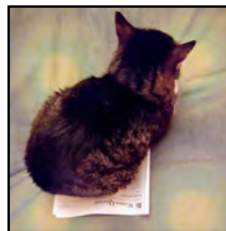


Photo by Cyprienne

Upcoming in *Bi Women Quarterly* Call for submissions

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.**

Fall 2026: Out at Work?

Whether to disclose our bi+ identities, and—if yes—how best to do so, are questions we must address throughout our careers every time we change jobs, coworkers, or supervisors. Does your workplace have an LGBTQIA+ employee group or support LGBTQIA+ people in other ways? Has that changed recently? We invite you to share your decisions and experiences—both good and tough—about being out at work. **Submit by August 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.

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Open position—
perhaps you?

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Boston-area women
and nonbinary people:
Join our group:
[groups.google.com/g/
biwomenboston](https://groups.google.com/g/biwomenboston)

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: AJ Dolman and Bi+ Canada

Interview by Robyn Ochs

Robyn Ochs: AJ, thanks so much for agreeing to this interview. Please tell us about yourself.

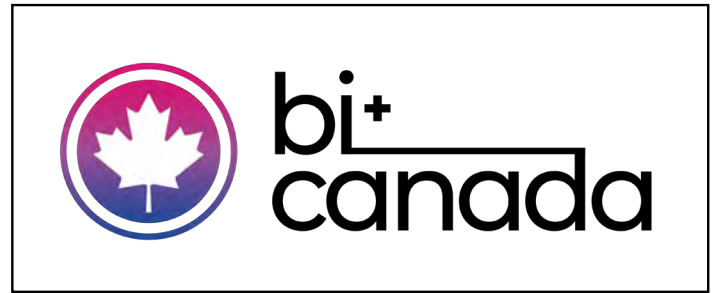
AJ Dolman: Thanks for inviting me, Robyn.

I was born in Barrie, Ontario, the first in my family to be born in Canada after my parents immigrated from the Netherlands with my two sisters. My parents were part of the wave of young people who had grown up in the Second World War and feared German rearmament. I was largely raised on a hog farm, half an hour outside the small town of Wingham, Ontario, in the region that Alice Munro wrote about in many of her short stories. But the bottom fell out of the hog market a few years after my parents bought the farm, so they spent most of my childhood like so many of the farmers around us: trying simultaneously to sell their farm and find ways to make it financially viable. Eventually, they did manage to sell, and we moved to Pincher Creek, Alberta, when I was a teenager.

While growing up on the farm I had become fascinated with other people's lives and stories, and even more so when my parents bought and started operating a motel in Pincher Creek, at the town's only stoplighted intersection. After earning a bachelor's degree at the University of Victoria, I became a professional writer and editor. I've lived in Canada's capital, Ottawa, since 2000. In my creative life, I write mostly poetry and fiction, and I've been fortunate to have been published a fair bit, although these days, I spend a significant amount of my writing energy on the bimonthly Bi+ Canada newsletter.

RO: Would you please share a bit about your identity journey? How did you get to bi? What caused you to first start questioning your identity/sexuality?

AJ: I actually came out as lesbian in my 20s, before ultimately settling into my bisexual identity more comfortably later on. I knew I was attracted to girls by the time I hit puberty, but aligning that with sometimes being attracted to boys was a long journey for me. First, I didn't know that was something a person could do or be, so I just thought I was miswired or confused throughout my teens. For me, attraction to men is rarer than attraction to women or nonbinary people, so I could sort of write it off as something not very relevant for me. Even after I knew what bisexuality was and that bisexual was something people could be, I found that, with so much bias against bi+ people and identities, it was simpler, and certainly more understandable to others, if I described myself as monosexual. "Lesbian" was a clear absolute, and therefore something people took at face value, for the most part, and wouldn't follow up with heaps of intrusive questions and judgment. The label became rather impossible to maintain, though, after I met and ultimately fell in love with my now



husband. I am particularly fortunate to be married to a fellow bisexual, as we can understand each other in that way.

In the end, for a variety of reasons, my mother was one of the last people I came out to, years after I was married. I was already around 40. My first book—a collection of short stories that included characters of many different orientations—was about to launch, and I didn't want to avoid talking about my sexuality as part of the discussion and media promotion around the book. When I told her, she asked a few questions, and then, satisfied that my announcement wasn't a preamble to saying I was getting divorced, she shocked me by saying, "Me too," and showing me pictures of her girlfriends from the late 1940s. She was over 80 by the time we had that talk, and she had never been able to describe herself openly before. A lot of my bi+ community organizing is with her memory in mind. No one should have to hide such a fundamental part of themselves.

RO: Too many people think we choose to identify as bi because it's easier. That may be the case for some people in some circumstances, but for many of us, a monosexual identity would be simpler and easier for others to understand. And I love the story about your mother!

AJ, you and I had a long conversation a couple of years ago when you were exploring the possibility of forming a national bi+ organization in Canada. What made you decide there was a need for such an organization? What kinds of discussions did you have with other bi+ folks across Canada?

AJ: That conversation was so inspiring and helpful, Robyn. Thank you again for that. I had actually set my sights much smaller. At first, I just wanted to connect with my local bi+ community here in Ottawa, and realized that besides dating apps and self-help groups, there was nowhere for doing so. I'd had the privilege of being invited to read at Toronto's Bi+ Arts Festival the previous year, and the feeling of being in a room of creative, brilliant bi+ artists and attendees was something I wanted to reproduce. It was the first time I had felt truly myself and at ease in a queer space, and I wanted to make that happen for other people, too. I wanted to create a space where bi+ people of all types and backgrounds could just be in community. I started a local bi+ crafting group, which quickly

became popular. We moved it online during the pandemic and merged it with a similar group in Toronto that had started up after we did.

It was through conversations I had in these groups that I realized how little support there was in Canada for the bi+ community, and how abandoned bi+ people felt by the broader community, in both straight and queer spaces. There is little research available on bi+ people in Canada to date, aside from census data that tells us we make up more than half the LGBTQ+ spectrum. And there is no support or infrastructure available to us that is specifically by or for us. Nationally and regionally, broad 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations are often focused on “general” support and defense for the entire alphabet, without taking into consideration the specific needs of and obstacles for the bi+ community. When, a few years ago, the federal government released a much welcome national strategy to support the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, it included no specifics for the bi+ community, even though—extrapolating from international data—we have, among other concerns, the highest rates of poverty, poor mental and physical health outcomes, domestic violence, and sexual assault of all orientations.

Most frustrating to me was that when the government announced a national fund to accompany the strategy, there wasn't a single bi+-specific organization eligible to receive and apply for any of that funding, because there wasn't a single registered not-for-profit working directly for our benefit in Canada. When I started asking around in the bi+ community, both via the crafting and writing communities and the wider 2SLGBTQIA+ organizing community, whether there was interest in creating a national bi+ organization to help solve this, the response was overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic.

RO: Would you please provide an update on your progress?

AJ: Absolutely! Bi+ Canada incorporated last summer as a national not-for-profit organization whose mission is to use community building, education, and outreach to advocate for bi+ people in Canada to have access to the support and informed resources we need to flourish.

We are growing quickly, and the response from the bi+ community in Canada has been amazing. We had our first booth at Ottawa's Capital Pride in August, and it was beyond rewarding to see people nudge their friends and say, “Look, a place for you!” or to come bounding over saying, “That's me!” We had preteens to folks well into their senior years come up to us, all so grateful to see themselves reflected at last. We are still just starting out, but already we have had new members say, essentially, “If only an organization like this had existed before, it would have saved me so much grief and loneliness.”

We are the first registered national bi+ organization in the country, and there is so much work to do, but one thing we want to make sure of is that we don't leave anyone behind, regardless of age, class, labels, race, religion, background, or

anything else. I think it is crucial that, this time, when the tide rises against hate and exclusion, we don't get crushed under the pressure to divide and segregate within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, but instead, lift everyone up together. Alongside our trans members and siblings, bi+ people were victims of respectability politics in the previous era, but we are a majority within the community. I believe we can not only lead the way again, but this time empower each other and the whole breadth of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community fully, so we can move forward together.

I encourage anyone who would like to join us to follow us on socials (we are everywhere except X), donate if able, and sign up for our newsletter at bipluscanada@gmail.com.

Robyn Ochs is a global speaker and has been Editor of Bi Women Quarterly since 2009.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Bi-Canada-61573544130300/>

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Bi+ Canada booth at Capital Pride 2025 in Ottawa

Queerness and Disability are My Guide

By Jaxx Davis

Last August, my partner and I celebrated the 15-year anniversary of our first date together. We met in 2010 on a site called OkCupid. She had this gorgeous personality and mind that just bled off her profile page. It pulled me in, and we hit it off instantly.

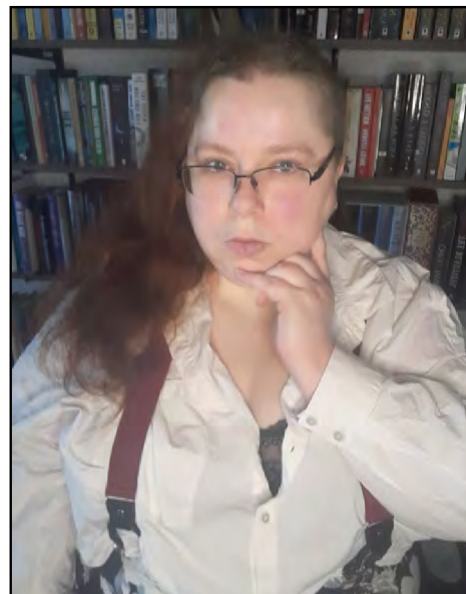
Our relationship has always been queer. I am not talking just about the rainbow spectrum of our identities, although we are both trans and definitely not straight. I am talking queer as in not being able to or wanting to fit into society's expectations of us or of our relationship, whether that involves how we interact, the timeline of our relationship (like when we marry), or if we want to have children. We guide our relationship by our wants and what is best for us. Having a relationship built on needs and wants, and not on demands, has been very healing and it seeps into everything about our relationship.

Society has clear assumptions about how relationships look and how things like intimacy, communication, and understanding have to work—even though we don't all have the same needs. These assumptions can be very harmful, especially when prejudices are at their root. Although ideas around relationships are slowly changing, societal expectations are hard to shake. Relationships that break those barriers are still seen as not normal, and participants in those relationships need to be willing to be okay with it. We definitely were, but I have to admit it was a process.

My partner and I had to unlearn a lot of biases and learn how to prioritize each other. A lot of that came down to consistent and ongoing communication, especially about the things we wanted and needed in a relationship. My partner and I are different people and we have different needs. She needs a lot more alone time than I do, while I crave more together time, in part because I am bedbound with severe ME and spend little time overall connecting to people outside of online spaces. We communicate and adjust accordingly to whoever's needs take precedence at the moment. I get time together and she gets ample alone time. That type of consideration for each other is actually a form of intimacy. Intimacy is not just physical; it is in the little things. They are acts of love.

One of the most important forms of intimacy in our relationship is access intimacy. Access intimacy is a term first coined by Mia Mingus, a queer disabled woman of color. Access intimacy is not just about disability—it's connected to queerness as well. Access or a lack thereof is also about who fits into society and who does not. It is one of those terms that shows how closely interwoven disability and queer politics are.

For us, access intimacy is how we love. From the beginning, my partner was very quick to understand my access needs. She let me set the pace and rest when I needed to. Honestly, she



was nicer to me than I was to myself. I'm now more disabled than when we started dating, and she has become my carer. Although I have more pressing needs, we try to make as much space as we can for her access needs as someone who is also disabled. We have ongoing conversations about our access needs because they can change.

Fifteen years into the relationship, we are still going strong. It is because of love for sure—I love my partner to bits—but having a relationship that moved beyond societal expectations and allowed us to do our own thing is a huge part of it. We focus on what we want in our relationship and it works. I have come to realize that I need this, this type of love that she and our relationship offers. If we ever break up (and I hope we never break up) I know I will no longer settle for a relationship without access intimacy, or one that isn't queer4queer. Those things might not be a requirement for anyone else, but they are for me. It is what works for me. I would need my next partner, whatever their gender might be, to also be queer and to not erase my bi-ness to make me more palatable. I need them too to love me *with* my disabilities, not despite them. I need to be with someone who sees my whole disabled queer self.

But I want this relationship to be with her. I want her. So I hope this formula will never break for us. I hope her face is the last face that I see when I die. That my last words will be that I love her. This relationship with her has become my home. I will never want anything less.

Jaxx Davis (they/them) is a queer and disabled activist, artist, and writer from the Netherlands. Bedridden with severe ME, they write and create from their bed, creating simple but raw works about their life and the world.

Inheriting Loraine Hutchins

By Bailey Merlin

I never met Loraine Hutchins in the way people usually mean when they talk about meeting someone. We never shared a table, never argued politics in the same room, never built something side by side in real time. And yet, my work as a writer, an organizer, and a bisexual woman who refuses to disappear has been shaped by her insistence that we matter.

That is the strange and powerful thing about movement elders. You can arrive late and still be changed by them.

I came to Loraine's work the way many of us do: through books that had already been passed down or found in storage lockers, essays that felt uncannily current despite being written decades earlier, and stories told by people who assumed (correctly, by the way) that we needed to know where we came from. Her writing did not feel historical. It felt current. It named patterns I was still living inside.

Loraine Hutchins was not interested in making bisexuality palatable, and that's what makes me love her even though we never really met.

She understood early on that bisexual people—especially bisexual women—were being asked to solve everyone else's discomfort. We are expected to explain ourselves endlessly, to perform stability, to choose sides when it would make things easier for others. She rejected that framing outright. To her, bisexual people were not a phase, a bridge, or a footnote. We were (and are) a political reality.

And she organized accordingly.

Loraine was a consummate child of the 1960s. She attended Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. She worked with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. She was proud to say she had an FBI record. Before bisexuality became the center of her public work, she organized around housing justice in Washington, D.C., helping tenants form a cooperative that would later become a model supported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Long before she was known as a bi activist, she was already practicing a politics rooted in collective survival.

That context matters. Loraine did not come to bisexual organizing as a single-issue project. She came to it understanding that justice is always interconnected: racial justice, economic justice, sexual freedom, disability justice, and public health. Bisexuality was never separate from the rest of her politics. It was a lens through which power, erasure, and *possibility* became clearer.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, bisexual organizing was fragile and diffuse, held together by newsletters, phone calls, conferences, and people willing to travel between cities to see one another. It



was not glamorous work (though some would argue that it still isn't). It was relational, slow, and often exhausting. But it grew. By the mid-1980s, bisexual people were not only forming social and support groups; they were organizing politically, building national networks, and insisting on decentralized models that resisted rigid hierarchy while still demanding leadership.

Loraine wrote about this tension directly in her 1995 essay in "Our Leaders, Our Selves" in *Bisexual Politics: Theories, Queries, & Visions*. When I first read it, I had the feeling that I was reading something I had written myself. Her analysis of leadership, accountability, and coalition politics felt less like history and more like a mirror. She challenged bisexual communities to take leadership seriously without reproducing the power structures that harm us elsewhere, and she warned that an unexamined distaste for leadership could hold the movement back.

She also wrote—and lived—through the AIDS crisis, when bisexual people were simultaneously central to care work and erased from public narratives. Bisexual activists helped create safer sex curricula and AIDS care systems even as public health institutions and gay and lesbian movements often ignored and/or blamed them. Loraine did not look away from that contradiction. She named it.

In 1991, she co-edited, with fellow bicon Lani Ka'ahumanu, *Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual People Speak Out*, a collection that remains foundational not because it resolves bisexuality into something neat, but because it refuses to. The book made space for contradiction, anger, joy, eroticism, theory, and lived experience. It treated bisexual people as thinkers and narrators of our own lives.

The decision to trust bi people with our own complexity is one I return to in my own work.

When I talk to other bi+ organizers now, one of the things that comes up again and again is how small the community can feel once you're inside the work. The names repeat. The same people appear across decades of organizing, writing, mentoring, and showing up. Loraine Hutchins is one of those names.

When she died on November 19, 2025, the loss landed heavily for me. When I found out, I was literally in the middle of preparing an episode for *Bisexual Killjoy*, rereading her writing on leadership and movement-building, underlining sentences I wanted to return to. I had been imagining questions I might ask her someday, perhaps even at Creating Change 2026. And then, suddenly, there was no someday.

I grieved not just the person, but the conversation that would never happen.

And then I realized something else. During the pandemic, I had been on a Zoom event titled "[Listen to your Bi+ Elders](#)," organized by the Los Angeles Bi+ Task Force. Loraine was there. I didn't speak to her directly. I didn't yet know how much her work would shape mine. But I saw her. I heard her voice. I was in her presence, even briefly. That memory has stayed with me, especially now.

Loraine believed deeply in younger people. She believed that each generation would inherit the work with fewer apologies and more language. She was honest about the fatigue of organizing (the way battles repeat, the way progress can stall or reverse), but she did not mistake exhaustion for failure. She understood that memory itself is a form of resistance.

That belief is part of what I carry forward.

Bi+ women are still navigating the same myths, the same suspicions, the same pressure to be legible on someone else's terms. We are still oversexualized, erased, blamed, or treated as incoherent. The landscape has changed, but the structure of the problem has not. Loraine's life reminds us that progress is not linear and that nothing we have is guaranteed unless we remember how it was fought for.

This is why archives matter. This is why telling the story matters. This is why naming our elders matters.

Even those of us who never met Loraine are part of her legacy. Every time we insist on nuance. Every time we refuse to simplify bisexual lives for the comfort of others. Every time we build spaces where people are not asked to split themselves



in half, we are practicing the politics she articulated so clearly.

There is a particular responsibility that comes with inheriting a movement rather than founding one. It is not nostalgia. It is stewardship.

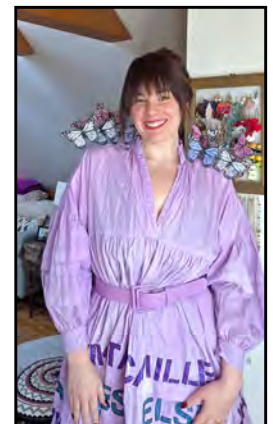
Loraine Hutchins did not ask to be remembered politely. She asked us to take ourselves seriously. To organize with integrity. To question authority, including our own. To refuse erasure even when compliance would be easier.

I did not get to meet her in the way I wanted to. But my work exists in conversation with hers. And that means I carry it forward. Not as tribute, but as continuation.

May her memory continue to challenge us. May it continue to complicate us. May it continue to make room.

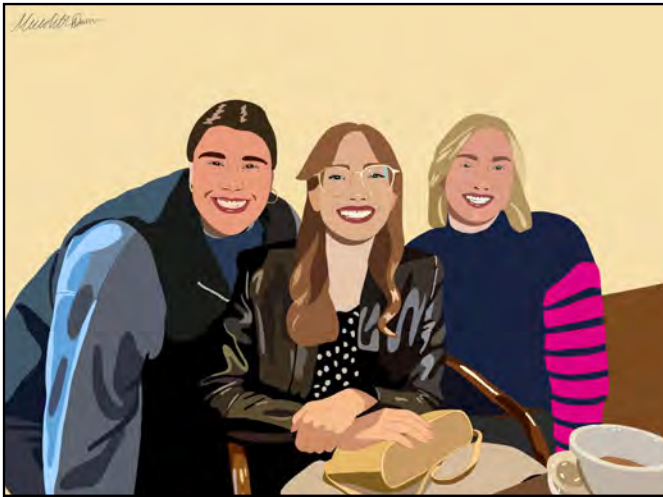
Loraine Hutchins's work lives on.

Bailey Merlin (shelher) identifies as a bisexual menace. She lives in the U.S., and is the co-host of the Bisexual Killjoy podcast, board member at the Bisexual Resource Center, founder of the international bi+ writers' collective, the Bi+ Book Gang, and author of A Lot of People Live in This House. She also really loves opossums.



Right Where I Belong

By Meredith Dunn



Artist’s Statement: This digital art piece reflects my current ideal relationship structure: single, and sustained by friendship. The women beside me are friends I met just last year, yet they quickly became essential—chosen family who offer care, laughter, and deep emotional intimacy without romance. At this moment in my life, I am not seeking a romantic partner; I am grounded and fulfilled by the platonic relationships that sustain me. This work honors friendship as a complete and meaningful form of love, not a placeholder for something else.

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

Triangle

By Zsófia Hajnal

I won't change the way I love you
For love, you are a prism too
More deflected than absorbed
This love meets someone multifold

In this way, you are a bridge
And although triangles make us twitch
This kind of love might never fledge
Would there not be another edge

soldered love

By Ann Tweedy

i've heard it in songs: *all roads lead to where i stand*
and in all kinds of music still, your lips' refrain
i know where this is heading as though everything held
close
did not enter the same void, as though there were degrees
of fragile and we happened upon the smallest and most
breakable

when your lips touched my stomach for the first time—
and when they touch it every new time—
the muscles of that cradle arch up and curve
my slightly sunken plane when you turn from me,
your eyes iron, unwilling, the child locked
out in a rainstorm cries on the doorstep
because you deny yourself that bit of shame

i don't know where this *i* began or where the void begins
and *i* or *we* end. i only know how to stand in the
now of your hot skin, of your grainy, soldered love
and look out on a world that falls apart or holds together
however much i let myself believe in the raveled stitch of dream

Ann Tweedy's first full-length book, The Body's Alphabet (Headmistress Press), earned a Bisexual Book Award and was a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award. Ann also has published three chapbooks: Beleaguered Oases, White Out, and A Registry of Survival. She has been nominated for three Pushcart Prizes and five Best of the Net Awards. A law professor by day, Ann has devoted her career to serving Native Tribes. She recently moved from South Dakota to Mississippi in the U.S., although she still lives in South Dakota part-time. Read more at www.anntweedy.com.



Zsófia Hajnal is a poet and economist based in Budapest, Hungary, and the author of the book Unfulfilled: Poems of Love, Longing, and Hope. Her poems also appear in What We Hold On To: Poems of Coping, Connection, and Carrying On and the forthcoming "My Sweet Mother" anthology.



I Call Myself a “Relationship Nerd”

(words rising from my recent breakup journey)

By Zi

I call myself a relationship nerd.

There are 179 photos in an album on my phone titled 亲密关系 (*intimate relationships*). Screenshots from Instagram posts, diagrams from pop psychology articles, notes from books, tools from relationship experts. I have spent years learning how to love better.

Non-violent communication. Relationship anarchy. Poly structures. Attachment styles. Boundaries and negotiations. Needs and requests. Consent. Repair. Green and red flags.

I felt steady in my learnings—through fuckups and repairs, heartbreaks and hopes. I thought I was building something sustainable: a polycule, a chosen family, a way of relating rooted in care.

Until one day, someone I loved (still love) told me my communication was “not with care,” “too business-like.”

In that moment, my body collapsed. My identity seemed to leave me entirely—curling inward, fetal. I remember screaming voicelessly inside: *How can this be happening? I know how to do relationships.* CRISIS CRISIS CRISIS! Not enough learning here to regulate my system...

Before that conversation, all I wanted was to hold her hands and hug her after months apart. WHY didn't I start with that?

Instead, I slipped into defense—pointing out details, clarifying intentions—while every word I spoke came from hurt, from a quiet internal cry of STOP. That conversation became our ending.

It felt unfinished. In five years of practicing relationship anarchy, this was one ending I couldn't make sense of. I hadn't spoken my gratitude, or named the moments I cherished, or asked whether something else—slower, softer, less defined—could exist beyond dating.

Questions followed me for weeks. Was this grief speaking, or love refusing to disappear? Was I afraid of letting go, or genuinely wanting to transform care into something that didn't constrain either of us?

I gave myself time.

My queer platonic partner listened—then listened again—offering hugs, reflections, and gentle I-told-you-sos. Another partner cooked my favorite meal the day after the breakup and let me cry until my body emptied. I wrapped myself in blankets, filled notebooks with half-formed sentences, and learned how to sit with vulnerability instead of fixing it.

Eventually, I chose to reach out again.

Friends warned me I might get hurt. They were right to worry. But I knew I wanted to speak—honestly—from where I was.

If my heart cracked again, at least I would know I hadn't abandoned myself.

We met. Nothing dramatic happened. We exchanged small life updates. I named how that last conversation had landed for me. I heard how our intentions had misaligned. She was answering questions left hanging from before our last meeting, unaware that they had once felt like another blow. We laughed at some jokes. We ate dinner.

I left without clarity about what, if anything, would follow. But I felt relief. Our last interaction no longer felt like an emotional identity crisis.

I call myself a relationship nerd for this moment.

Not because I said the right things.

Not because the connection was repaired or redefined.

But because I chose not to disappear from myself.

Love is messy. No amount of learning, theory, or relational language has ever truly shielded me from pain. I knew how to name needs and boundaries—and still my body folded when care felt questioned. Still, my heart cracked when something ended without softness.

I reached out to stay aligned with who I am. I am someone who loves with curiosity and tenderness—and who now knows that love does not have to shrink to survive endings. Love can change shape. Love can be held without possession.

Love is messy.

And for now, choosing love—even without resolution—is the most honest practice I have.



Zi is a Chinese migrant, queer relationship nerd, social worker, and community organizer based in Naarm/Melbourne, Australia. She hopes we all act on love.

Opening My Eyes

By Francesca Garau

The nurse's station phone is ringing. The unit is quiet this morning. Most of the residents are sitting in the lounge area, sipping tea and listening to Ella Fitzgerald's Christmas songs. I pick up the phone while I am smiling at Jane, a 98-year-old lady pacing the corridor with her Zimmer frame. The call is coming from the care home reception desk.

"Just to let you know, the ambulance people are here to pick up Mary for her appointment," an Eastern-European-accented voice informs me.

"Thank you, Malina."

A few minutes later, a short woman with a buzz cut and glasses walks onto the floor. I guide her to room 40, where Mary is sitting in her wheelchair, wearing a hat and a coat, ready for her cardiology appointment.

I smile at her. "So, my colleague is escorting you today. I'll see you in a few hours. Okay, Mary?"

Mary nods, her eyes tired after a restless night, and my colleague pushes her wheelchair towards the lift. The ambulance woman stays behind to collect the list of medications from the nurse in charge, then she goes towards the door.

"Are you OK with the code there?" I ask.

She smiles at me. "Actually, I am not, I'm trapped, I'm afraid. Not that I'm complaining, being trapped in a place where the girls are pretty..."

Now she is smirking at me.

For a few seconds, I don't know what to say, and I feel myself blushing like I'm some teenager on her first crush.

"So what is it?"

I wake up from my stupor. "Pardon?"

"The code? What is it? Oh, three six seven one!"

The door opens.

"Well, thank you..." she says, winking and checking my badge, "Claudia."

I stand there for a few seconds more until she disappears in the lift.

During my break, I check my phone. "I can't wait to see you at the airport tomorrow!", my mum had texted me a few minutes ago.

"Me too, Mum. My flight is arriving at 6:30."

My suitcase is almost ready, and today is my last shift before

my annual leave. This year, I took Christmas off to spend it with my mum. I try to do this every other year, but working as a health care assistant means that you are expected to work on bank holidays, so it is not always possible to get time off for Christmas.

That night in bed, I thought again about the ambulance woman. *Why did I blush? She was just joking, wasn't she? Was she flirting with me? No, impossible. Anyway, I'm not into girls like that. Am I?*

My mother is waiting at the airport. She hugs and kisses me on both cheeks as soon as she sees me. We spend the hour-long drive to our town catching up and listening to the car radio. Traffic is not too bad, but it's starting to rain. When we get home, the kitchen is warm, and there are a few covered pots on the stove. Mum has cooked like it's already Christmas Day, and we enjoy food together, planning for the week ahead.

That night, I lie awake in my childhood bedroom, band posters still on the walls. I'm still thinking about the ambulance woman. I can't even remember her face, but the feelings her words gave me are still there. *I cannot be a lesbian*, I say to myself, *I've always dated guys: Marco, Christian, Alex, David... I even introduced David to my mum last year! Well, if I had known how it was going to end, I wouldn't have bothered.* With my eyes closed, I drift back to high school: There was a girl I used to admire from afar, I loved her style...and that uni friend... I was so jealous of her boyfriend...

I open my eyes, get out of bed, put the light on, and start looking for my old diaries. I'm sure they are under the bed somewhere. I retrieve a large blue box and open it: Inside, there are ten or eleven diaries. I start reading them until I find her name. One entry is just this: "This morning I saw Jessica at the school bus stop. Her hair is so cool. She looks very pretty." I continue to read, and her name keeps popping up on the pages. After a few hours, I decided to go back to sleep. While falling asleep, my last conscious thought is: Can I have feelings for boys and girls in the same way?

The following morning, my mum is having tea at the kitchen table. She smiles at me but notices that I look quite tired.

"Everything okay, honey?"

I nod, putting the kettle on.

Mum sips on her tea. "You know who I saw the other day at the grocery store?"

She does not wait for me to reply. "Christian! You were so cute together!"

I sigh, knowing where this conversation is going.

“Mum, please. We were 18, and we broke up because we went to different universities. It wasn’t really a mature relationship, was it? Besides, I’m figuring out stuff at the moment, and I don’t want to date any guy, especially not an ex from high school!”

“Figuring out stuff? Are you NB?”

I give her a surprised look. “How do you know about being nonbinary?”

My mum shrugs, “Oh, Ludovica identifies as nonbinary.”

“Who?”

“Carla’s child. They’re helping me at the salon on Saturdays.”

Carla is one of our neighbors. I vaguely remember her having a little kid with curly hair and freckles.

“I see... well, I’m starting to think that I... last night, I...” I hesitate.

Am I... bi? Even if I’m not dating anyone? Does it count? Do

relationships define your identity?

Mum puts down her mug.

“Honey, it’s okay if you’re not ready. You don’t have to tell me anything if you don’t want to.”

I am quiet for a while, then I say, “Thank you.” My mum smiles and starts sipping her tea again.

Finally, my tea is ready, and we sit together in a comfortable silence. Because it is true: I don’t have to tell anyone anything if I’m not ready. I don’t have to date anyone if I’m not ready.

I’m not sure if I am bi, but I’m sure about the fact that, even if I were, relationships don’t define me or my sexuality—I do. I sip my tea, finally at peace.

Francesca Garau is Italian, currently living in England. Writing has always been one of her biggest passions.

“in which way is a bi woman like a vodka lemonade?”

By Sandy Swain

single
and drunk
and and babbling
the hot married
bartender collects the empties
lipsticked and spit stained and i
i want to crawl onto the tray to be
rinsed clean and power dried polished
and shined i want to be looked up and down
as something to be drunk from and stared at and stared at
kept warm and fogged up by your breath lips mouth tongue
teeth and passed around a giggly group of friends double strawed by
a couple on a first date coy smiles and glances or or held in your hand
and complimented on my shape and weight and fragility and rarity and and
stowed away in the back of the car whilst she’s driven home safely and rolling
before hitting the floor



Sandy Swain is a writer from Kent, U.K., filling the intersection between mental health, bisexuality, and musical theater with absurdist poetry and playwriting.

Why the ‘Bi Women End Up With Men’ Stereotype Misses the Point

By Pamela Vallejos Chavez

“*Bi women always end up with men.*” It’s a dismissal I’ve heard countless times, deployed as evidence that bisexuality isn’t queer or doesn’t exist. But this stereotype isn’t wrong because bi women don’t partner with men; it’s wrong because it interprets a structural outcome as a personal preference. Women’s bisexuality is not inherently male-centric. What this stereotype actually reveals is the power of heteropatriarchy, compulsory heterosexuality, and biphobia working together to funnel bi women toward men—and then it blames us for arriving at the destination we were pushed toward.

Primed for the Heterosexual Script

From the moment we are gendered—whether in the womb, in our first interactions with family members, or with strangers—we are set on a heterosexual path. Comments like “That baby boy is gonna be a stud,” or casual predictions that baby boys and baby girls will date in the future prime us from the start. We live in a heteronormative society and, for a lot of bi people, this script feels accessible because we do have that attraction to different genders. We can see ourselves fitting, at least partially, within the heteronormative standard.

But fitting partially means other attractions get pushed to the side. Our attraction to people of the same gender becomes harder to recognize when we can already check the boxes of what’s expected. The heteronormative path does more than offer us a route—it tries to block our view of other roads entirely.

Why Bi Women “End Up With Men”

That is where the pervasive stereotype about bi women always ending up with men comes from. What I’ve found in my conversations with other bi people is that this isn’t about some inevitable preference or natural gravitational pull. It’s structural.

Bisexual women feel attraction toward men, yes. But society is constructed in such a way that it promotes, enforces, and makes compulsory the search for a male mate. Of course it seems like a lot of bi women are with men—it’s literally easier. The heterosexual path is paved, lit, and lined with signposts. Meanwhile, our way of relating to women is often obscured. It’s difficult to identify and differentiate admiration from attraction. That’s why falling in love with your best friend is such a canonical experience for sapphic women—we’re not taught to recognize our own desire when it’s directed at women. We are taught desire through a male gaze and socialized to seek male validation.

The Questioning Cascade

What I’ve learned from my conversations with other bi people is that coming into their bisexuality and exploring same-gender relationships—or exploring dynamics outside the heteronormative standard—has allowed them to question the impositions of heteronormativity: find a mate, marry, reproduce.

And following that script can be harmful. You can find yourself in a relationship that isn’t actually safe or healthy or nurturing, just because you felt like you had to follow the script.

This questioning doesn’t only happen when we pursue same-gender relationships. It can also emerge when we challenge the dynamics within our relationships with men—refusing to play out gendered scripts, rejecting the relationship escalator, or reimagining what partnership means outside of compulsory monogamy. This is bisexuality’s disruptive potential: once we start questioning any part of the predetermined path, the whole structure becomes visible. We can finally ask ourselves: “What do I actually want? What serves me? What feels nurturing rather than compulsory?”

Beyond Romance

When we speak about bisexuality, we often frame it through our relationships—sexual or romantic—with people of other genders. But I believe the conversation needs to expand beyond romantic partnership. Friendships are key. Being single can mean being complete when you have friends, family (chosen or biological), and community that sustain you.

In the end, whether we end up in a relationship with a man, woman, or nonbinary person, it should be because we want to share our life with that person, because we feel nurtured, because we feel safe, and because they feel like home. Not because a script written before we were born told us that’s what we’re supposed to do.

Pamela Vallejos Chavez (shelher/ella) is a communications strategist, bi+ activist, and gender researcher based in Lima, Peru. She is co-founder of Orgullo Bi, Peru’s first bi+ collective, and founder of Soy Bisexual, a Spanish language bi+ educational platform.



Pamela with sign that says in Spanish “I am bisexual and my rights should not depend on the gender of my partner.” Marcha para la Igualdad, Lima, Peru, 2015.

The Comma & The Period

For Sam

By Jennifer Davidson

It wasn't even a full sentence later
but the moment expanded
and the distance between us
expanded
and the universe turned
and we turned
away from each other
and no amount of run-on could bring us back
to the start.

It was a contextual error, and I said it anyway
the wooly words rolling across the air like tumbleweeds
picking up dust, increasing in size
stopping short of sticking to you
they hung there, embarrassed
refusing to be digested
until with a small breath,
you moved them out of your way
and went on.

Now I don't know how to finish
and you are already done.
I'm a parenthetical thought
and you're punctuation.

Jennifer Davidson is a writer, designer, and entrepreneur living in Monterey, California in the U.S. with her two dogs and partner. She likes to do two impossible things before breakfast every day.



My Body is a Home for All My Lovers

By Nix Carlson

I've hollowed myself out. All this loving, all this missing, all this holding. Rebuilt a whole commune where my organs used to live, muscles sore from renovation. A city for all of my people—where the lights stay on and there is no cold. Grew a home tucked beneath my ribs. There's never too much of them.

I've sculpted my sternum into a two-story townhome for the doctor. Etched our names on the front door. I constructed shelves on every wall to hold her sapphic romances. We'll stuff throw pillows with fights. Hang wind chimes of laughter on the front porch. I'll take the xiphoid process. Fashion it into a wedding band—warm with her kiss. Wrap your curls around my ribs and keep you there until auburn fades gray.

For the tenor, I've scooped out my liver with a melon baller. I kept the remnants—saved in the icebox for the day his fails. Fashioned my fat into a pillow, ready to hold his buzzing head. The walls are painted as blue as him. We'll turn it sunshine yellow. Tuck a secret restaurant in the back, five stars carved into the table. A standing reservation. Always stocked with Bacardi. I'll sip from whatever cup he gives me.

I've made my intestines into a labyrinth for the hobbyist to explore. Stuffed raw emeralds and rubies into my duodenum. Follow the road to the right—his handpicked magic, electric vibrations. Wander the chaos. Catalog memes. We can sit together, rifle through the humors. If he finds my center, I've erected a warehouse for Roman-coded parties with the lights pulsing low. I'll be the guest of honor.

My lungs are dedicated to lovers I've evicted from my life with an exhale. Short, staccato. Aching, legato. Their memories grow like lichen through the alveoli. Headstones crackle beneath my bones. I visit now and again, bring snow-frozen lilies. Thank them for the love they gave, the care they withheld.

I've cleansed myself of everything but love. Offered what was once hollow as a home.

Beams of blood, load-bearing ribs, and all my lovers.

Nix Carlson (she/they) is a queer, polyamorous, and neurodivergent poet and sign language interpreter based in Lexington, Kentucky, with strong ties to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the U.S. Their work has appeared or is forthcoming in Wildscape, Voicemail Poems, Orange Rose, Vellichor Literary, Broken Stone Review, Coming Up Short, Eunoia Review, and The Page Gallery, among others. You can find them on Instagram at @bynixec.

Harvest

By Durdaneh Malik

I wake up. My eyes dart up to the ceiling fan, adorned with patterns too intricate to fit in with the sterile, soulless dorm room. I lay still, with my vision locked like this for a while. Before I turn to my side in my barely conscious state, I close my eyes again and think: Who will I see beside me today, on this pillow that is—and has remained for years—empty?

Will I see the person who reminds me of the fragrance of lilies, the one who exiled me so permanently from the world of everyday people? Will I see the docile youth, absolutely indistinguishable from a woman, who I devotedly wrap into a delicate, bridal *saree* in the throes of my daydreams? Will it be the sage-prince who emerged out of scripture to tell me that God is in the small human mercies? Or will it be, instead, the woman I desired relentlessly despite our obvious workplace rift? Or a friend I cannot claim, or that one queer acquaintance who I don't really speak to but haven't stopped thinking about since our first meeting?

This futile, semi-regular morning ritual is a weird confluence of past hauntings and feeble future hopes. I'll admit that this list of mine is long; however, that is not the aspect I want to emphasize. The only takeaway intended from the above is simply that there *is* a list. 2025 was an abysmal year for the world as a collective, and I will second that on a personal note, too. This year forced me to cram five whole lifetimes inside its 365 days—but, looking back, I can only say I am grateful to have gone through the ordeal. Throughout this journey, one of the many undiscovered parts of myself I finally had the courage to encounter was my polyamory—and I am writing this as a pioneering attempt at embracing it in its entirety, without shame.

I am painfully aware of the fact that for a South Asian woman in her late 20s—who is continuing her bachelorhood, has been queer for as long as she can remember, will decidedly never marry, will remain childfree, and will likely never have the heart to come out to her non-secular brown family—the implications of truly unbridled self-discovery are as enlightening as they are heavy. I seek only to acknowledge this load so that someone somewhere may find a parallel in their story and perhaps find some relief as they continue on their own path, carrying their own load.

The expectation of viewing one steady romantic partnership as the ultimate prize is certainly not a new concept, and it is unlikely to go out of style anytime soon. Every time our *desi* mothers dressed us up as brides for play-pretend weddings in our toddler years, we were being silently fine-tuned to it. And then there is the media storm fanning the flames: with forlorn music beckoning an ex back to bed, internet hacks on how to become the divine counterpart to your crush, and of course, a barrage of promotional videos of the umpteenth

romance drama or tragicomedy film about star-crossed lovers, who quite literally seem to move mountains and jolt the universe into action in the face of any worldly circumstance that might threaten their union. The bottom line is, you will hardly pass through life without being infected by the allure of the utopian ideal: the perfect heteronormative, monogamous, lifelong silhouette of true love. I am honestly talking to myself as I reflect on that last point: *You will hardly pass through life immune to it.* On a more extreme, rather existential note, I have often come across discourse on the internet about purposelessness and the obsession with romantic success going hand in hand in the modern era. Love, they say, replaces God when a disillusioned generation cannot be sold on Paradise and divine virtue anymore.

Through the eyes of someone raised in the East however, cultural, religious, and social norms blend together to create the pervasive demand for the whole nine yards: marriage, kids, and to be a pet of your in-laws. Quadruple the pressure applies if you are assigned female at birth. I remember becoming exhausted with this concept very early on in life. By 15, I already knew I was never going to have kids. I have this silly memory of a conversation at school—a few of the girls were waxing lyrical about their dream partner during recess, asking each other what they imagined would happen when they reached marriageable ages. When it was my turn in the rotation, I shrugged and flatly told them that I was confident I would boast at least two divorces before my 30s were over. They nodded along and said I gave off that vibe. Now, more than 10 years later, I find myself looking back to that sardonic, younger Durdaneh and chuckling—half because she was right about so much, and half because, for all her cynicism, she still failed pathetically in her attempts to escape being human.

During the spring of 2025, I found myself battling two evils at once. On the one hand was my personal anguish—I was at a crossroads between choosing to give my entire being to this enormous love I felt for someone I could not be with and walking away and starting over. On the other hand was the mayhem around the globe. I saw and heard things so senselessly violent I could not properly sleep or stop weeping for weeks, and lived through a brutal and bloody regime change that made me fearful of death for the first time in 11 years. And in the midst of all of this, worsening relationships with my family made it impossible to truly find any respite. All I would do after waking up each day was ruminate about annihilation till my mind went numb. Around this tumultuous time, I met someone.

All I knew of this person when we crossed paths was that they were widely reviled. In the unforgiving social scape of gossiping aunts and persistently irked, patriarchal figures, they were a nail that awkwardly stood out from a plank. Even so, a reasonably elevated standing on the social ladder meant that, much to their dismay, the unofficial purity council often had to simply

leave them be. We met through a mutual friend who was also going through a tough time, and I learnt then that they were devoted to more than one partner romantically. One or two polite exchanges turned into prolonged discussions about the weight of existence, about the humane duty we bear toward one another, about God and whether that Being truly loves Creation, about friendship, and about the pain and beauty of it all. I realized, while listening to their uncommonly beautiful love stories with each of their partners, how much an adjective can sound like a prayer when someone takes up the impossible task of conveying their adoration for another. Six weeks after meeting them, I found myself taking a ride through my city on a warm spring evening listening to Sleep Token's "Emergence," aching to be engulfed within the gentle cocoon of their arms. For the first time ever, I discovered two bodies instead of just one, kneeling at that mysterious altar where I was to offer the worship of my heart and happiness. There was no dissonance there, as there had been in so many instances in the past. There was only being.

My life has, time and time again, placed me in peculiar positions through which I have only survived by adapting and evolving in equally peculiar ways. Now at square one of my journey to fully understand all the ways in which I experience romantic intimacy, I have opened myself up to dating for the first time ever (in the conventional sense of the term, at least). And a side note to that: It amazes me now how criminally unexplored I left my own queerness when I was living under the invisible influence of the norms I thought I had long transcended.

I will end this with a similar ritual to what I described at the beginning. Lying on my couch, I stare into the alabaster ceiling. It is the last slow evening before the weekend ends—I close my eyes to take a nap. Before drifting off to sleep, I envision a future me holding hands with a friend I had fallen for slowly over the course of the last five years. On the kitchen counter, I see a large arrangement of roses. It is from my paramour, who, at long last, is returning from their business trip to some obscure town in Italy—the roses are a premature gift to celebrate the reunion. My phone starts buzzing to life in my bedroom, and I answer it, delighted to hear the laughter of the woman I have called "wife" even before she shed her dead name three years ago. My life is a constellation of connections—incomparable, irrefutable, and each as precious as the other. I am loved; my heart is full and spilling over.

Durdaneh Malik is a graduate student pursuing a PhD in biology and currently resides in upstate New York in the U.S. She loves locking in to bass-heavy darksynth music, because it's honestly hilarious to imagine finding oneself in the middle of a club, studying. When she isn't at the center of a fresh bout of unravelling, she can actually be pretty decent company.

Bisexual Problems

By KimtheBwordpoet

I'm not good at conveying my needs
Since that would display a weakness for romanticism
But that doesn't mean I don't have feelings for you

What I want from this relationship is complicated to both me
and you
But don't ever forget that I do want to pursue a separate
relationship with him
It doesn't mean I'm greedy or confused; I just need a woman
and a man in my life

I ask that you not use me to satisfy some curiosity and enhance
your sex life with some man
Because I would never use you as a stimulant for my man
I want you for you and just for me; not to share with the other
part of me

Complication is all I rule out—simplicity and affection will
be a given
As long as you can handle being my number one woman while
he's my number one man
Sharing but not sharing is my philosophy; threesomes are not
allowed

Open your mind to a new version of monogamy
Where you and he are both the stars
And I am the link keeping our chain of passions together

KimtheBwordpoet is a bi poet and writer from Cleveland, Ohio in the U.S. She runs Bisexual Initiative of Ohio—an up-and-coming organization for bisexual and bansexual Ohioans, and is a member of Alpha Zeta Gamma Sorority—a bisexual woman's non-collegiate sorority.



Free Love

By Kailey Peckford

Recently, a favorite content creator of mine posted something incredibly stigmatizing about polyamory. The post implied that all men who engage in polyamory are automatically suspect.

When she was gently called out for it in the comments, she defended her actions, denying that polyphobia existed since, unlike sexual orientations, polyamory is (according to her) a choice. As a sexual health and violence prevention educator, and more personally, as a pansexual polyamorous woman in a relationship with a man, I was deeply upset by this post, more so than I'd expected myself to be. Since then, I've been considering the deep roots of the stigma towards polyamory, its overlap with biphobia, and what a future would look like where people are free to engage in any consensual relational form.

Non-monogamous relationships (an umbrella term to describe any relationship involving more than two people) are not new, although polyamory, as it is currently conceptualized in North America, is a little more recent. Monogamy has historically played a critical role in capitalism as it creates clear lines to indicate how wealth will be passed on through the family line—a history that is also largely patrilineal. Polyamory threatens that line, which may be disturbing to those that benefit from it. Today, stigma toward polyamorous relationships implies that these relationships are exploitative and can cause harm.

As a pansexual woman, I can understand where some of the rhetoric against non-monogamy comes from. I've existed in the world of online dating, and been propositioned by couples in open relationships hoping to use me as a sex object to spice up their sex lives. I would argue that rather than this being a symptom of non-monogamy, it is a symptom of a culture that sexually objectifies women more broadly, thus creating the circumstances for these propositions to seem “normal” to the people asking. To be clear, I have nothing against a threesome, or anyone who feels a little turned on by the idea of being treated as a sex object—the problem here is the lack of mutuality and respect, and a power dynamic that can complicate negotiations of consent.

So, is polyamory a choice? Many poly advocates have argued that some people are more oriented towards non-monogamy than others, and that monogamy is both uncomfortable and unrealistic for them, implying that polyamory is less of a choice and more of a relational orientation. Others argue that it is, in fact, a choice, but one with impact, and one that does no harm and thus should not be limited.

So what about polyphobia?

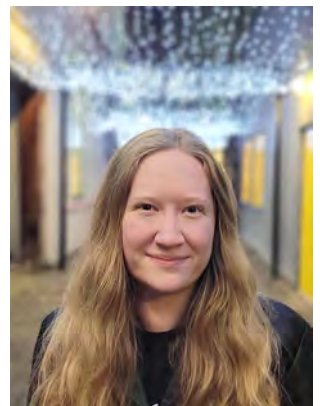
The phrase polyphobia means literally a fear of polyamory. Certainly, this does exist. There is an immense stigma toward polyamorous people—that we are over-sexual, uncommitted, and not really in “serious” relationships. This stigma is reflected

structurally as well. Polyamorous people, in most countries, cannot legally marry more than one partner. Does this compare to other “phobias” such as transphobia or homophobia? I don't actually think it's useful to compare the severity of stigma in this context. Fighting against polyphobia doesn't discount the immense harm perpetrated against trans folks, racialized folks, disabled folks, and others facing disproportionate systemic oppression. In fact, queer folks are more likely than heterosexual people to engage in non-monogamy, so fighting for equity for all of these groups at once is perhaps the most obvious way to reach a future where all consensual relationships and ways of loving are simply normal.

So, what does this have to do with biphobia? Let's backtrack, for a moment, to where we started. The content creator in question argued that polyamory is a choice, and people could just choose *not* to be in that kind of relationship. Sound familiar, bi and pan friends? People have long been disturbed by bisexual people's attraction to more than one gender, with stigma stemming both from within and outside the queer community. Like polyamorous people, bisexual people are stigmatized as overly sexual, uncommitted (e.g. more likely to cheat) and often assumed not to be in “serious” relationships when dating someone of the same sex (read: “It's just a phase”). The reality is, though, that this type of attraction and the relationships that stem from it are natural, normal, and beautiful. They don't harm anyone, or have any real bearing on people who aren't involved in the relationship. The same can be said for polyamory.

Can exploitation happen in polyamorous relationships? Absolutely. It can happen in any relationship. As an educator, I spend a lot of time teaching adults about healthy relational and sexual communication, and these skills are necessary (although sometimes lacking) in all forms of relationships. The problem isn't the relationship structure. So, let's stop shaming folks for the way they love (are we seriously not over that yet?) and start learning together how to build healthy relationships based on strong communication.

Kailey Peckford, MA lives in Alberta, Canada, began research in the field of gender-based violence in 2017, and has been working in sexual violence prevention education since 2023. Kailey has worked in multiple post-secondary institutions facilitating training and workshops for students, staff, and faculty on topics ranging from supporting survivors of sexual violence to taking accountability for harm. In 2025, Kailey founded [For Better Consent Education](#) to offer violence prevention and sex education in her community.



Love II

By Rachel Brook

quite a pair
but both paired already
we'd be friends—
with beautiful, bountiful benefits—
but not more

you wanted consideration and care
yet with love at home your line was firmly drawn—
you didn't want (for) any more

long before I loved you I feared it.
I made love my mortal enemy—
the death-knell of casual—
taboo, off limits, not allowed
I told myself I couldn't
shouldn't
wouldn't

as I grew toward loving you
countless songs called out my fear
and the feelings coming into bloom
but I put the *pin back in the grenade*

I felt the possibility blossoming
and I thought my love not a flower
but a weed to be stamped out.

once I loved you and knew it would hold fast like bindweed
I grew again, toward acceptance
yet still I buried those ripening petals
thinking they would never be matched
and that I need not ever show you—
what if I loved you and never said it

but within you a tender shoot was growing too
and you were brave enough to let me see
love found both of us, again, and you dared speak its name
in that moment I was a vine wrapped tight around you

and finally, I allowed my feelings to grow roots, bed in, and
bud like spring

now that I love you without hindrance or hesitation
I find it sad I ever tried to squash it down

now we tend this garden together
still sometimes afraid
yet season by season each waters the other
and yes,
I would do anything to extend the life of this rose

Rachel "Rach" Brook (she/they) is an award-winning writer of personal essays, poetry, and marketing copy, based in London, U.K. You can find their work in the City Lit anthology Between the Lines, Penstricken, Thorn & Bloom Magazine, and on Substack (@rachbwrites).



Most Treasured Relationship of Them All

By Anna Kochetkova

Almost three years ago, I sat in my therapist's office asking her: "What do you think my relationship is with relationships?" She smiled. She reminded me that sometimes, when a wounded part within is addressed (and maybe even healed), other parts may sort themselves out. She said that sometimes when we are focusing on something else, many other areas of our life shift as well. She also hinted that I was, arguably, in one of the most important relationships already—a loving relationship with myself for the first time. And I was still learning how to navigate this.

As a child, I parented my parents. I carved and shaped and forced my body and mind to fit into a community I wasn't a part of. And as an adult, I desperately wanted to assimilate and integrate myself into the foreign country I now call home. In other words, I have been pretty cruel to myself, like a toxic and immature girlfriend. I needed a break from all the unhealthy relationships I was holding on to, from work to friendships and one-night stands, starving, over-exercising, and over-explaining myself. I didn't know at the time that my relationships with others and most importantly, myself, had been unhealthy, immature, surface-level, and devoid of nurturance. I never knew any other type.

I know better now.

Turns out, my relationship with myself is my most treasured one.

Surviving a traumatic childhood and migrating overseas as a young adult were big events in my life. They created a container for me, in which I could fall apart and germinate. I spent years in the darkness of my own pain, trying to figure out who I was and whether I had any ownership of that person. People around me didn't seem to understand my existential angst, so I assumed everyone (but me!) knew how this life worked. I felt like a dried leaf thrown around by the gusts of wind, dragged along the concrete floor and colliding into objects, without agency, aimless, and homeless in the sense of lacking a relationship with myself and the world—the two didn't even seem to coexist.

In my early 30s, I came out to myself as bisexual and my world was a whirlpool. It contributed to my identity crisis but also offered a glimpse of clarity—I felt that I could really weave a relationship out of this one aspect of my humanity. I held onto it—marching in Sydney Mardi Gras, writing books and articles and hosting queer events. My sexuality offered me a relationship with myself and the world.

I created an online community called @biandprejudice on Instagram which helped me gather like-minded queer folk around myself, enabling peer support, kind human connections, and the exchange of shared experiences. I created Bi & Prejudice because I felt like the only bisexual on the planet. Very quickly, I discovered that not only am I not alone, but most of my queer community are also bi+.

Eventually, my bisexuality became boring, or deeply uninteresting, to me at least. It seemed nonchalant and a matter of fact—no longer the center of my life or the pinnacle of who I am. I started focusing on other aspects of my identity and personality, like my dream of building a tiny house, my slow move into the Australian wilderness, learning how to grow and make my own tea and tinctures and salves, and thinking about going back to school (at 40!). Somehow, my sexuality just stopped mattering as much. Of course, it matters! And I continue correcting everyone who calls me straight (which happens often!) but I don't feel the butterflies of excitement and anxiety. I am bisexual, and it isn't that interesting after all.

Turns out, many different parts create one whole—I am not my childhood trauma, I am not my sexuality, I am not my relationships. All these things shape who I am, but no single part tells the whole story.

So, what is my relationship with relationships? For the first time in my life (as I am inching into my fourth decade), I am starting to get a glimpse. I have a handful of beautiful friendships where I feel seen (and not stressed!). I love solitude and being alone, often thinking or talking out loud to myself (and not feeling that something is wrong with me). I don't really care about romantic escapades and I focus on nurturing my body and mind with orgasms, good food, morning forest walks, and meaningful connections with friends. I reconnected with my family, cut off relationships that didn't serve me anymore, and started to really love watching wrinkles decorate my face and chest. I look forward to living this life as Me, whoever she is. I want to spend every living moment learning Myself, and discovering everything there is about my human.

Turns out, my relationship with myself is it.

*Anna Kochetkova is a Russian-born Australian author and poetess, and a passionate bi+ activist based in rural northern NSW, Australia. Anna is the author of *Bi & Prejudice, one person's story connecting the dots of identity and sexuality across years, continents, and cultures*, and the creator of the @biandprejudice Instagram space, which helps celebrate multisexual attraction and human diversity as well as @sydbiclub Sydney community-led events and gathering for all multisexual and queer humans.*



Postmenopause Memory and the Relationship I'm Learning To Keep

By Rusty Alexandra Ferrel

Postmenopause didn't take my intelligence.

It took my speed.

It started small. A word refusing to arrive. A thought evaporating mid-sentence. The familiar walk into a room with no idea why I was there. Nothing dramatic—just enough to make me feel, for a moment, like the floor had shifted under my feet.

What surprised me wasn't the lapse.

It was the shame.

I'm someone who has always lived in my mind—curious, articulate, quick. I didn't expect menopause to ask me to renegotiate my relationship with my own cognition. I also didn't expect how relational that renegotiation would be.

Because memory lapses don't happen in isolation. They happen in conversation. In intimacy. In front of people we love.

I remember one night standing in a kitchen, mid-story, and the word I needed simply vanished. I could feel it hovering somewhere behind my forehead, just out of reach. I stopped. I stared at the counter like it could hand me the missing syllable. I felt my face heat with that old, automatic panic: Hurry up, be sharp, don't be weird.

Someone I love looked at me and said, calmly, "Take your time."

That sentence did more for my nervous system than any productivity hack I've ever tried.

For those of us who live outside straight, linear life scripts—bi, queer, fluid, complicated—the relationship to self is often already under revision. Many of us are used to being questioned. Misread. Erased. Asked to prove coherence. Menopause can poke that tender spot: If my mind stutters, will I be dismissed even faster? Will I become less credible? Less desirable? Less myself?

Here's what I've had to learn: Postmenopausal memory changes are not moral failure. They're physiology. Estrogen isn't just about reproduction; for decades, it supported verbal memory, attention, processing speed, and sleep architecture. When estrogen drops after menopause, the brain doesn't collapse. It rewires. The rewiring can feel like static—especially if you're also dealing with disrupted sleep, chronic stress, or high cortisol. Those things alone can wreck recall.

So I stopped treating my brain like an employee who'd better get it together.

I started treating it like a living system.

That shift changed my relationships.

I speak more slowly now without apologizing.

I pause without stuffing the silence full of shame.

I say, "I lost the word," instead of pretending I didn't.

And something else happened: The people worth keeping didn't flinch.

They waited.

The relationships that survive this transition aren't built on performance. They're built on patience. Not patience as pity—patience as respect.

I also got more practical, because the postmenopausal body responds to practical care. Protein. Movement. Rhythmic walking. Strength training. Hydration. Fewer blood sugar spikes. Less multitasking. More single-task focus. A steadier sleep routine when possible. Not perfection—support.

This isn't about crossword puzzles.

It's about lowering stress signals so the brain can access what it already knows.

What I've lost in quick recall, I've gained in discernment. I listen more closely. I interrupt less. I'm less interested in winning conversational points and more interested in meaning. My brain no longer wants to be rushed. It wants to be respected.

And that has forced a deeper question—one that's painfully relevant to bi+ lives:

Can I love myself without requiring constant proof?

Because many of us learned early that being quick, clever, and articulate was a form of protection. Menopause removes that armor. Not to punish us—but to ask something else.

Slowness. Depth. Truth.

I'm building a new relationship with my mind now. One that values integration over speed, meaning over trivia, connection over performance. It's a relationship that refuses the cultural lie that speed equals worth.

Postmenopausal memory lapses are not the end of intimacy.

They're an invitation—to build relationships sturdy enough to hold silence, patience, and change.

Including the relationship with myself.

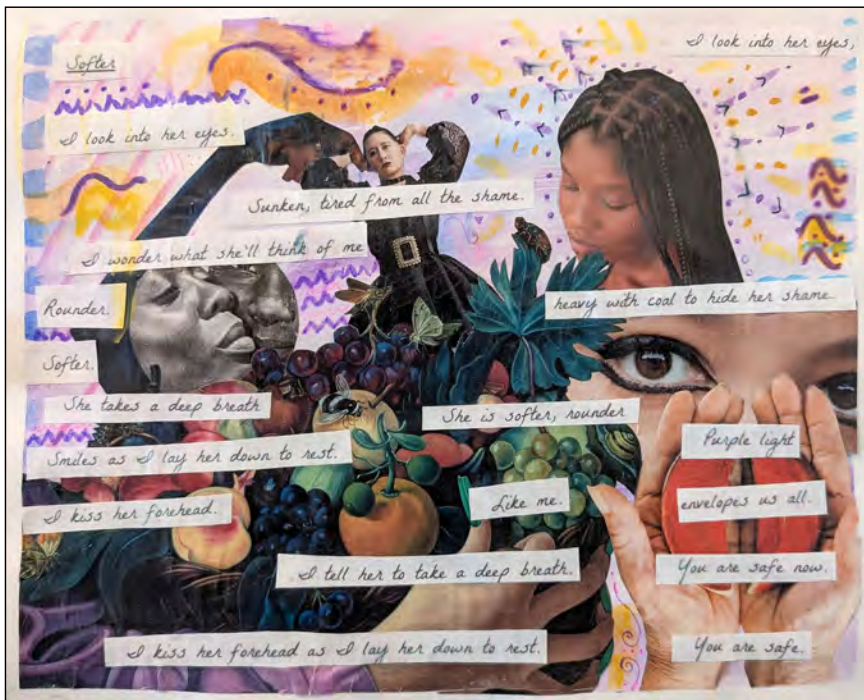
That one matters most.

And I'm not abandoning her just because she takes her time finding the words.

Rusty Alexandra Ferrel is a nonbinary, pansexual, sexually fluid writer and author based in Austin, Texas, in the U.S. She writes personal and cultural essays on postmenopausal vitality, embodied strength, and visibility—refusing shame and insisting on real-life, body-based truth.

Softer

By Chloe



Artist's Statement: "Softer" is a piece inspired by the relationship I have built with my inner child. In reconnecting with them, I was able to discover my queerness and step into a version of myself I am proud of, and that helps other queer youth love and accept themselves all throughout their lifetimes. Mixed Media 11x14.

Chloe is a queer educator who lives in California, in the U.S. When they are not attempting to influence young minds to "be the change they wish to see in the world," they are working on ways to build and bring together the queer community through art.

Family Blues

By Charlotte Poitras



Artist's Statement: Cyanotype made from jewelry given to me by family, lovers, and friends. Each object marks a specific relationship.

Charlotte Poitras is a queer neurodivergent artist-entrepreneur based in Montréal, Canada. Her practice is autobiographical or documentary, spanning literature, theatre, visual arts, and audiovisual work, with over 100 publications. Her mission is to listen to the world and transmit the murmurs that society has failed to hear.

My Muse, My Sun

By Emily Robyn Clark

Moving onto my lap,
your body blooms

I feel powerless
floating
on a great ocean
under you, the sun.

When we lie naked,
my fingers search
for ports of call.

Every exploration begins with a question
and you murmur, "yes"

It's pure revelation,
this skin—

I wear darkness on my sleeve
like rhythmic night,
peyote in the crescent deep,
I steal kisses and hope you swear to me alone:

I'm your holiday forever.

Emily Robyn Clark is an award-winning poet and filmmaker, and the author of Morning Comes Roaring Down the Mountain (2025) and Art Triumphant (2017). Her poetry has appeared in numerous publications, and she has performed her work across the United States. A passionate feminist and advocate for human rights and social justice, she currently resides in Tallahassee, Florida, in the U.S.



I Want a Queer Love

By Madison King

“It sounds like you want a lesbian relationship with a man,” a friend said jokingly after I shared the qualities I look for in, what they assume, is a singular male partner. The sentence stayed with me for the rest of the evening. “A lesbian relationship with a man”—What does that even mean? This one phrase had so many implications, and I didn’t like any of them. In that moment I was being told that the qualities I listed could only be found in a female partner and that I expected too much from the men I dated. And maybe my expectations are too high, but at least they’re equal. As a bisexual woman, where every flavor of person is on the menu, I won’t change what qualities I’m seeking in a person simply because of what gender they are. I refuse to allow gender roles and gender expectations to be an authority over the dynamic of my romantic relationships. Essentially, I want a queer love. A love that is not always inherently queer because of people who create it, but a love that is queer through its determination to reject the gender status quo.

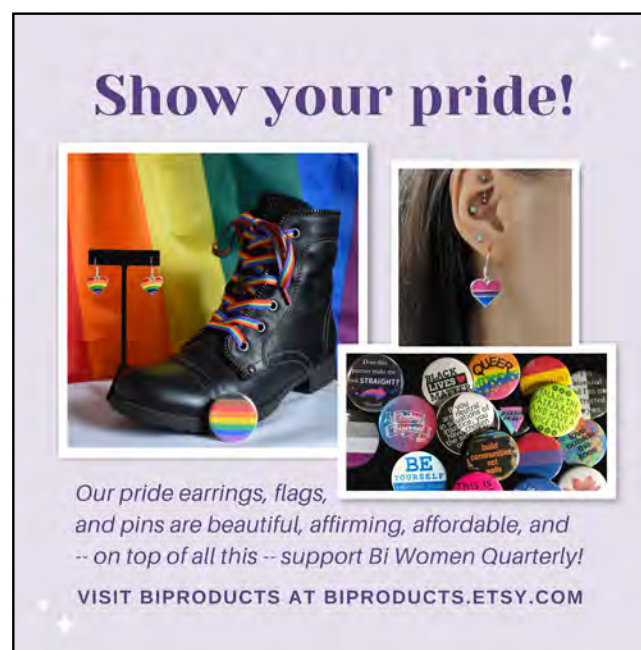
Here are the current qualities I want in a romantic partner: emotionally intelligent, strong communication skills, values companionship and collaboration, requires no parenting, ambitious in any capacity, nice smile, is politically aligned in a manner that respects and adores women and every other marginalized community, dark hair, willing to approach money equitably, completes household chores without being asked, respects my bisexuality, points out hot people in public, will read my favorite books, always respects my consent, never feels entitled to sex, remembers our anniversary, can find me a thoughtful gift without being spoon-fed ideas, does not want kids and really believes that I don’t want kids despite my uterus ownership, wants to travel, makes an effort with my friends and family, does not yell, respects my space, celebrates my wins and consoles my losses, knows their love language and attachment style and how they show up in a romantic context, is relatively kinky, validates my feelings, open to polyamory, if when practicing polyamory supports me when I date men/AMAB people and doesn’t sexualize when I date women/AFAB people, remembers things I say, can admit when they are wrong, apologizes when it’s needed, is honest, airs out their relationship grievances in a kind, calm, timely manner, loves kissing, doesn’t mind when I stop shaving, knows how much I love my birthday and celebrates accordingly, respects that I’m a homebody, doesn’t vape, understands I’m sensitive, respects that I don’t drink, inspires a love founded on friendship, makes me laugh and thinks I’m funny, knows that romantic relationships take emotional work and vulnerability, and is willing put in that effort, understands that love is a choice and actively keeps choosing me, etc.

This list isn’t set in stone but I believe it clearly captures the kind of people I view as potential partners. It also shows my expectations don’t change based on gender. However, having equal expectations is only one side of it; a queer love is also about

the roles each partner takes on within a romantic connection. Meaning, I want to give my boyfriend my sweatshirt if he’s cold. I want my femme girlfriend to pick me up for a date because being driven feels romantic to me. I want to respect my boyfriend when he doesn’t want to have sex and not take it personally because his consent matters just as much as mine. I want to pay for dinner when on a date with my masc girlfriend and bake her cookies when we get home, where I take out the trash because it just grosses her out. I don’t want to be told a male partner isn’t interested on the sole basis that I’m more actively pursuing him. If gender expectations had a place in my relationships, I couldn’t be the kind of partner I want to be, and a queer love gives me that freedom.

On the other hand, sometimes traditional gender roles can feel genuine and authentic to a partnership. I want to pick up and drive my femme girlfriend, because I never wear heels and she can’t go anywhere in anything else. Sometimes, I want my boyfriend to take over and make all the decisions because I’m an eldest daughter and don’t want to be in charge of one more thing. But what matters is that it’s a choice between my partner(s) and me; we decide if and how we participate in those roles rather than blindly accepting the rules of heteronormativity (which can still weasel their way into same-gender relationships). A queer love allows gender roles to be an optional thing that can be picked up, played with, and put down without consequence. I hope that by cultivating this kind of a queer love, I won’t be expected to excuse my partner(s)’ behavior because of their gender, or to limit how I care for my partner(s) because of mine.

Madison King, MA (she/hers) lives in the Boston area of the U.S. and has a master’s degree in Gender, Sexuality, and Culture from University College Dublin in Ireland.



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What OCD Taught Me About Love

By Ruth Boon

For two seconds when I woke up each morning, I wouldn't think about it; there were two seconds of perfect bliss before the intrusive thoughts kicked in. Even when I awoke at three in the morning to do one of my nighttime toilet trips, the thoughts would swirl like oil behind my eyelids. I'd sit on the loo, underwear around my ankles, large sighs of exhaustion escaping my chest. *Please just shut up*, I would think, *just go away, leave me alone*. The more I'd ask for my intrusive thoughts to leave, the more deeply embedded they would become.

OCD is a complex mental health disorder composed of distressing obsessions (generally in the form of intrusive thoughts) and compulsions (usually enacted to "alleviate" the intrusive thoughts). People can have OCD about lots of things. A few common themes include: religion and spirituality, sensorimotor fixations, health, sexuality, pedophilia, harm, and relationships. OCD generally works by attacking things that you value.

My biggest OCD theme centers around romantic relationships. Sometimes this is referred to as Relationship OCD, or ROCD. Instead of having obsessive thoughts and compulsions telling me I need to clean a kitchen counter or my entire family will die, I have obsessive thoughts about whether or not I love my partner. At their worst, these thoughts flicker into my consciousness continuously, a constant voice screaming sharply in my head. I also have repetitive compulsions that I use to "check" the validity of my love. These compulsions come in many forms:

Seeking validation from others, including my partner:

I might lie in bed with my partner and ask him exactly to describe how love feels to him, attempting to align this with my own emotions.

Physical body scanning: When kissing my partner, I may physically check whether I "feel in love" or am sexually aroused by my partner.

Neutralizing unwanted thoughts: If I had a thought that my partner was unhelpful, I might repeatedly make a list of all the ways he is helpful.

Comparing emotions: I may compare the feelings I have for my partner with those of previous relationships or experiences.

Avoidance: I have had periods where I would avoid anything that reminded me of love or relationships (like songs or TV shows) because they would trigger an anxiety spiral.

Sometimes these compulsions are so strong that they overpower the intrusive thoughts. Sometimes the intrusive thoughts are so loud that I completely disassociate. Maybe this doesn't sound that bad. Maybe you're thinking, that's a walk in the

park compared to somebody obsessing over whether they are going to die. And yes, perhaps it seems that way, but when a person experiences a bad bout of OCD, the level of distress felt is immense. For me, the idea that I couldn't feel or experience true love, the one thing that united all of humanity, absolutely ruined me.

I have had OCD about men, women, and nonbinary people alike. It wasn't until 2021, when I met my current partner that I knew I needed help. Meeting "Henry" was like stepping into a cool, blue lake on a hot summer's day. Henry is a very calm person, always willing to listen to others and take the time to understand people. When we first started dating, and I was constantly in fits of tears and anxiety, Henry didn't run away or shame me for my mental health; instead, he read up on it. He learned not to give in to my reassurance-seeking compulsions. He gave me the space to be open and truly honest about my thoughts and feelings.

Previously, I have had partners who weren't so generous with their compassion. Some of their behaviors reinforced many of the compulsions that I still live with today. I've had partners who would quiz me about my dreams, who would check to see if my pupils dilated when I looked at them to see if I was "really in love." I've had partners who would obsess over my sexual history and insist I tell them everyone that I'd slept with. During the height of one of my worst OCD spirals, I was fired from my waitressing job. The last thing my manager said to me was: "You're not well. I can tell you're not well." My partner at the time didn't seem to mind that I got fired; in fact, he seemed partially pleased that he could now have me to himself, despite the fact that in actuality, I was a shell of my true self.

When I met Henry, I had been so used to being manipulated that when he said, "I really like you." in my kitchen one day, I reacted poorly. I pulled away, replying, "Why are you saying that?!" So not only was I struggling with intrusive thoughts, but I also struggled to understand what a "normal" relationship looked like, furthering my confusion about what love felt like. All of this was made even more stressful by the fact that, as well as being bisexual and having OCD, I also realized that I was non-monogamous. I never cheated on any of my partners, but I realized that in many of my previous relationships I had been suppressing a part of myself that is loving, affectionate, and driven by human connection. It was only when I met Henry that I could be completely transparent about being queer, sexually liberated, and non-monogamous.

Having Relationship OCD means I have spent considerable time thinking about love and what it means. Though this is sometimes unhelpful, it has also brought some good. One of the conclusions I always come back to is that love should be rooted in friendship and mutual trust. I have never been with anyone who makes me feel so comfortable being my full self. I have never been with somebody whom I can laugh and

be silly with in the way I can with Henry. With Henry, I have absolutely nothing to hide. And partly, I have OCD to thank for that. One of the compulsions I have struggled with is feeling the need to confess when I had a thought or feeling about somebody else. I was confused. I couldn't tell whether I was overanalyzing my feelings as a symptom of anxiety or processing a very real understanding of my own relationship orientation.

Henry listened to me without judgment. Because he'd researched Relationship OCD, he knew when to ask empathetic questions and when to notice OCD-like compulsions and not give in to reassurance. Don't get me wrong, Henry wasn't psychic. Sometimes I couldn't tell the difference between an intrusive thought and a regular thought—but being with someone who listened to me and let me express myself without judgment was incredible. Not only this, but Henry is thoughtful, creative, funny, and interesting. Together, we love long walks to delicious sandwich shops, going to post-punk gigs, and reading next to each other in bed.

These days, my intrusive thoughts are much quieter. Sometimes they come back, but mostly they are accompanied by the feeling of loving somebody and knowing that someone who knows me and understands me loves me back. Feeling understood is a true privilege of existence and one that I hope everyone gets to experience at least once in their lives. The mutual respect my partner and I share feels fluffy, soft, and comforting, like a silky orange cat nestled in my lap. Maybe to some, that sounds overly practical or unromantic, but to me, there's nothing more magical than sitting opposite my partner, eating giant vegan sandwiches and chatting about absolutely anything that comes to our minds. I love being with someone who allows me to fully be myself and who supports my lifelong endeavor to comprehend the complexities of love and relationships. Now, when I wake up at three in the morning to pee, I am no longer consumed with doubts and intrusive thoughts. With a soft-focus mind, I drift to the toilet of the little flat that Henry and I rent, I sit on the loo, and then I climb back in bed with my wonderful partner and give him a massive cuddle.

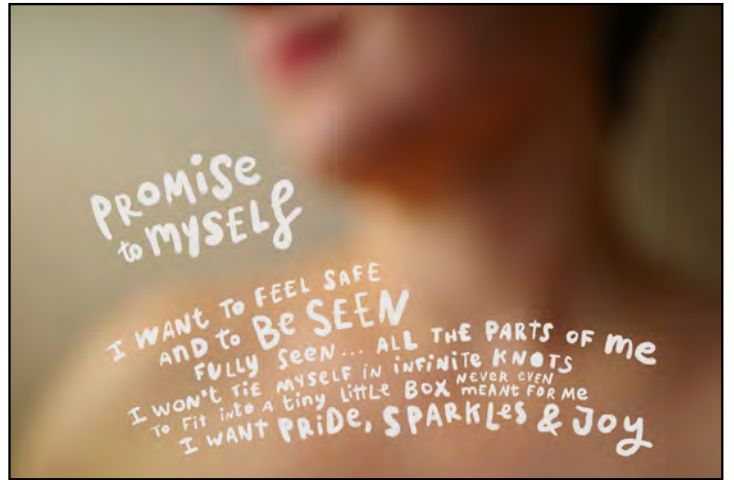


Ruth Boon is a writer living in South East London, U.K. interested in sexuality, relationships, and politics. She's contributed poems to various publications, including Horizon Magazine, the San Mei Gallery's "Goodbye Scarecrow" pamphlet and Away with Words. Her short story, "Any Day Now," published in Ragaire Literary Magazine, was nominated for the Pushcart Prize. She

has written articles and essays for How To publication and Salty magazine and is the proud captain of a queer-centered, mixed-gender football club.

Promise to myself

By Camille



Artist's Statement: "Promise to myself" is a hand-lettered manifesto over a self-portrait—my own set of vows, to keep close to my heart as I continue to evolve and grow in my relationships.

Camille is a designer and illustrator living in Japan.

My Ideal Relationship

By Lisa Bannon

My ideal relationship is one in which all facets of myself are seen and appreciated. I have always felt that girlfriends and boyfriends, wives and husbands, and all other people in relationships should ideally appreciate and see all aspects of their partners.

In the past, this has not always been true for me. I have been in relationships with women and men and, when I was young, girls and boys, who appreciated only one aspect of me. These relationships were, however, not my ideal.

I would also ideally like any woman or man I might date in the future to have her or his mind open to the possibility of a polyamorous relationship. I know it is an untrue stereotype that all bisexual people cannot be or do not want to be monogamous, but some bisexual people, including me, personally do feel that way. So ideally when someone dates me, I would want them to be willing to be polyamorous.

Most of all, my ideal relationship would be based on the idea that all women and men deserve to be treated equally, and that a wife and husband (or partners in any other kind of relationship, for that matter) should keep that firmly in mind and treat dreams of hers and his as equally important.

Lisa Bannon is an autistic bisexual woman who lives in Pennsylvania, in the U.S.

On Reconnecting With My Own Queerness Through Writing

By Lisa-Viktoria Niederberger

When I let new acquaintances know that I am bi+, people are rarely surprised. Even though I am in a long-term relationship with a man and have spent most of my life with men, somehow they still know.

My love for women, and my contact with them, has mostly been quieter, more private. I'm almost 40 and have been thinking a lot about past relationship decisions, many of them bittersweet, even though I know there's no point in crying over the past.

When I came out as bi+ to my mother in my early 20s, it wasn't out of a need to come out, but because I was in an acute love crisis and wanted to talk to someone. My mother had already asked me several times what was going on because I was acting weird, so I told her that I had met two people, that I found both of them very interesting, and maybe I was even in love with both of them. One of them was a man, the other a woman. And my mother advised me to choose the man, saying something along the lines of, "Your life is already so difficult"—I had just dropped out of university, had no idea what I wanted to do with my life, and had been diagnosed with depression—"don't make it even harder for yourself." I found that strange even then, although I know it was a poorly worded way of trying to protect me from anti-queer discrimination.

Of course, neither my mother nor I knew at the time that this would be one of the biggest mistakes of my life, that the relationship (of course I chose the man, compulsory heterosexuality is a thing!) would destroy me, whereas I still think about the woman often, even now. If there is "the one that got away" in my life, it is certainly her. I have been in love with other women since then, but never like that. I kissed them, slept with them, found them beautiful and fascinating, and filled hundreds of diary pages with thoughts of them, especially because so often I didn't know whether I wanted to be friends with them, be like them, be with them, or all of the above. It still overwhelms me sometimes.

I can read men like books. They come easily to me, so easily that they sometimes bore me. But women, they are unreadable to me. I often feel this crackling between me and another woman. I often get close to new acquaintances, and when our thighs and shoulders touch, I smell perfume and hair and body—it's hard for me to maintain my composure, and I often fail miserably.

I've been with men for 25 years, coordinating shared households, finances, futures, value systems; while women I mostly adore from afar, writing them awkward messages, kissing them tentatively and very occasionally in coffee shop corners and less tentatively in hotel room beds far away from home. With men, I'm an adult; with women, I'm still a teenager. I've hardly had the opportunity to be anything else. In real life, at least; on paper, it looks different. Because I am a writer, and my characters are everything I am not (yet).

In my latest books and texts, I repeatedly feature same-sex couples. In 2024, I featured a family with two dads in a children's book. And in 2025, I wrote a short story in which two married women try to survive in a world where the climate catastrophe is already well advanced—which won a prestigious Austrian literary prize. All of this makes me very happy. What irritates me, however, is how clearly my characters are perceived by readers as either gay or lesbian, as if bisexuality were not an option at all. It seems not to exist. It makes me sad and angry, until I remember how invisible bisexuality is in my life too. I'm not someone who puts blue-purple-pink hearts in their Instagram bio, and my Pride pin is so discreet that it often goes unnoticed. I'm in a relationship with a man, so people usually assume I'm straight until I tell them otherwise—then they say they knew all along.

People often thank me for the queer representation in my books, telling me I'm such a good ally. Sometimes I don't even correct them. But probably not for much longer. Because writing these stories and queer characters helped me to reconnect with a part of myself that is not buried, forgotten or denied, but nevertheless hadn't played any role whatsoever in my everyday life for a long time, being in a long-term closed relationship. Sometimes I even forget that I am bi+. That's a terrible thing, considering how many of my queer siblings don't have that option. Being bi+ comes with many privileges, especially when—like me—you pass as straight. I don't have to worry about showing my love for my partner in public. I don't have to leave my wedding ring at home on holiday in some countries, like my gay friend does, or pretend my husband is my brother. When I've kissed women in public, I've been stared at, cheered on, filmed, and sexualized—all of which is terribly intrusive and a form of violence—but I've never really been in danger because I also love women. I see that now.

I've developed a new, more open and activist approach to my own queerness over the last few years through all the literature I've written. It's almost as if I had to write it all down, live it out on paper, to truly realize that it's true for me too. That even after years at the side of men, I still find other genders just as interesting. That it's a valid part of me.

I live in Austria, a country that is still relatively safe in global terms, with okay-ish gay rights, but even here you can feel the shift to the right, a return to conservative values, to the heterosexual nuclear family. Even here, in the heart of the EU, there are queer hate crimes. Even here, my gay friends are in danger every day, and I am not, only because of the invisibility cloak of appearing straight. But I can't, I've finally decided, I can't go on like this. I can't continue to act like a bystander when I'm also affected. I can't just enjoy queer parties, love gay fan fiction and *Heartstopper*, but then retreat into invisibility as soon as it comes to me or things get difficult. I think every glance at the daily newspaper and the internet shows that taking a stand and standing up for who you are and what you believe in is more important than ever. Especially if, like me, you are a white, middle-class woman with a backpack full of privileges. I'm sorry it took me so long.

My debut novel will be published in spring 2026. In it, my protagonist—Lahea—is in an open relationship with her two male partners and also has a sexual encounter with a woman. In this book there can be no more doubt about the identity of my characters. And when people ask me why I chose to write about this type of relationship, I will tell them. Happily. Publicly. It is time.

Lisa-Viktoria Niederberger is a writer and cultural scientist from Austria. Her debut novel, "Lahea," a queer speculative fiction, will be published there in spring 2026.



Loving You is E+Z

By Emma Camps



Emma Camps is a disabled queer multimedia artist based in Savannah, Georgia, from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Wheeling, West Virginia, in the U.S. Emma's work is influenced by experiences in the Appalachian region, as a mixed-Asian American growing up in a multicultural family. They enjoy the challenge of using unexpected materials in mixed-media collage work, often including found objects, print packaging, illustration, and typographical elements. Their works embody the aesthetic influences of their life, including traditional Chinese and Taiwanese art, western Chinoiserie, American pop culture, and the natural world.

Artist's Statement: This piece is a digital photomontage created from photographs taken by and of the artist and their partner, featuring prominently their initials. This simple phrase holds great meaning to the artist, someone well acquainted with being "hard" or "too complicated" to love. Every element of this piece represents a part of their relationship over the course of almost four years together, and the color scheme is derived from a shared pride in bi+ identity. The interwoven textures of live oak trees with Spanish moss, a tender kiss, a moment of mourning, a beloved sleeping terrier puppy, saved sidewalk musings, and lunchtime love notes form the knit of a shared life together, embody tangible unconditional love.

Additional Information: When I met my current romantic partner, I had so many expectations of what I thought my ideal and most compatible love might be like. After a previous terrible relationship, I was convinced I could only ever be truly seen and accepted by a woman or another trans-identifying person. But as cliché as it sounds, love really does find you when you least expect it.

We found each other, became friends, then roommates out of convenience, and stepped onto a path of undeniable connection that neither of us expected. Little did we know how much we had to share, including being bisexual. I've known since I was a teen, and he was questioning when we met, but confirmed his suspicions as I slowly let down my walls and allowed him to see me as I really am. Every time I thought my non-conforming gender would be a dealbreaker, too much, or too mannish, he never cared and only loved me deeper for my complexities.

Though I am comforted and held by our shared experiences, I am also grateful for our differences and willingness to meet in the middle. We may be different races, different faiths, different abilities, different genders, but when you love someone, all of those differing identities become opportunities. We are blessed to have so many opportunities to know one another deeper, celebrate together, mourn together, and to further contextualize our individual points of view through a shared lens. That is what makes up our shared fabric, love, and its many opportunities for growth.

The Bi+ Community Discusses *Heated Rivalry*

By Nicola Koper

The six-part Canadian series *Heated Rivalry* has become an unexpected world-wide hit, ranking among the most popular shows in numerous countries. The show depicts the lust and then love between two male hockey players, who navigate feelings, family dynamics, and social roles as their relationship develops. One of them, Ilya (Connor Storrie), is bisexual, with references to this identity made throughout the story.

The popularity of the show has resulted in a significant amount of social commentary—for example, the immense popularity of the story among “straight” women has been attributed to the fact that consent and equality are central to the relationship dynamics between leads Shane (Hudson Williams) and Ilya. However, there has been little public discussion of Ilya’s bisexuality. Noël Sertel refers to *Heated Rivalry* as “[A love letter to bisexuals](#)” (Bisexual Resource Center), pointing out that Ilya’s sexuality is never questioned or criticized. I wanted to learn more, so *BWQ* and I reached out to bi+ folks through social media for reflections on the show.

Responses were generally positive and expressed that *Heated Rivalry* is a welcome source of bi+ representation. Many respondents commented on the show’s high-quality character development, acting, and cinematography. This was often tempered by disappointment that Ilya’s sexuality is never named in the show (although it is in some of the books the series is based on), and that social references generally describe the show as “gay,” contributing to bi erasure. But some respondents had much more insight. So below, I share a few excerpts of the comments submitted. It’s clear that while the show isn’t perfect, it has been a source of joy and representation for queer folks that is much appreciated at a difficult time in our history.



I adore the portrayal of Ilya! He’s so unapologetically bisexual, even in the moment of coming out to Shane’s parents, who, based on their hesitation about his orientation, may be a [little] biphobic ... I like that the slowburn timeline depicts Ilya hooking up with many women in the same time period as Shane, casually communicating that bisexuality doesn’t morph or go away when we’re interested in one partner of a particular gender.

*I was worried about the “evil bisexual” trope at first because when you first meet Ilya, unless you’re paying attention to every micro-expression on your first watch ... it’s not immediately obvious that his “a**hole” demeanor is a facade. But his character development is excellent, the conversation during sex scenes making it so clear that he is in fact a gentle, considerate person and lover—and he is just as much involved in the feelings/yearning as Shane. —@Cookingwithclaire*

I think this show has MAJOR potential for showcasing male bisexuality as a valid identity ... Quite frankly, the biggest obstacle for bi representation in the show isn’t the show itself, but every news article and meme calling this a “gay” hockey show ... I would like to see more people call out PinkNews, Outsports, and other media organizations that are erasing Ilya’s bi identity. —Laura D.

I think Ilya’s portrayal is well done and respectful. I grew up hearing that “bisexuals just swing both ways to get more sex,” and I don’t feel like that was the case with the show. It’s complicated of course—Ilya appears straight to everyone he’s not out to, and therefore others (such as his teammates, and Shane’s parents) see him as a typical hetero guy doing things that typical hetero guys do, such as making out with women at clubs—but I get the sense Ilya isn’t written as bi just to have more options. His sexuality makes sense within the storyline and isn’t a gimmick. I feel that the tension it introduces into Ilya and Shane’s relationship is also well done and realistic. —Mandi, Canada

...As a die-hard sports fan, I REALLY hope the show makes straight people ... know that queer people (esp. again queer men) 100% exist as athletes, and I hope that queer athletes will feel more comfortable coming out. I also hope that monosexuals will be more open to dating and being committed partners with bi+ folks.

...I couldn’t help but feel that Ilya’s bi-ness also manifests itself in a certain kind of relationship anarchy. He clearly loves, is attracted to, and dedicated in his own way to Svetlana While Shane might not be happy with it, Ilya seems to feel very natural about having multiple loves/lovers ... and doesn’t see it as a competition between the two. To him, and seemingly to Svetlana, they can have a loving and sexual supportive connection and it doesn’t take away anything from Ilya’s devotion to Shane. —A. Lopez, New York, U.S.

*I love the characters of Ilya and Shane. They feel like full-fledged people. Being bisexual is one (important) part of who Ilya is, but he is also Russian, an immigrant, a son, a brother, a smoker, an amazing pro hockey player, and a s***....*
—Emma, Massachusetts, U.S.

It's not often that I get to watch people like me who have been involved with both men and women on screen, but I believe that visibility in the media is improving. My only criticism is that we never heard the word "bisexual," which is so often treated as a dirty word by straight and queer communities alike. I think that naming Ilya's orientation out loud would have helped normalize it.

My favorite thing about the bi representation in this show was how normal everyone acted about it. Svetlana understood Ilya's bisexuality when she left him alone with Sasha to "catch up," and Shane's parents simply nodded whenever Shane explained that "Ilya likes both." It was refreshing for me to see a bisexual character on screen that doesn't have to deal with the tired negative stereotypes that we're "just confused" when we're dating or "picking a side" when we partner up. I am hopeful that when people who aren't bisexual watch Ilya, they will see a person who is capable of loving others regardless of their gender.
—Chelsea B.

I was pretty worried when I read that the show's writer-director Jacob Tierney was quoted as saying, "the baked-in audience for this is women. It's wine moms. They love this stuff...."

The comment feels fetishistic, exploiting queer male bodies for a (straight-implied) female audience. However, after watching the first episode, I was relieved to see that the show felt instead like it actually was for queer men, and unabashedly so.
—Lauren B., Ontario, Canada

What I hope for the legacy of Heated Rivalry is to allow men and male-presenting people to feel safer about exploring their own sexualities. Having a lead male character be bi in a popular TV show is exciting and can open more doors for queer characters beyond just "gay." Normalizing the bi experience can remove fear and rigidity from straight vs gay, and open discussions.

It's rare to find queer stories that not only allow the characters to have a happy ending but also don't frame the conflict as only about being in the closet. Heated Rivalry threads the needle of complex angst and queer joy.

—Taylor R.

Nicola Koper is an academic at the University of Northern British Columbia in British Columbia, Canada, and is active in supporting queer communities within and outside of the University.



It's late December and I miss the California strawberries I had when I forgot everything is temporary

By Allison Phillips

the rot of wanting it too much sweet
California strawberries sick on my bared teeth
no I've made them afraid leave the room ocean salt
water heaved on the floor fish I didn't eat squirming
 suffocating tail thud thud on the floor like an aching heart
while they pretend to sleep huddled in the next
room afraid I'll follow telling me
 I look
so scary
 uncovered and funny I used to think that feeling
scary would make me feel powerful told I am frightening red
berries crushed between my fragile hands fish drying on the floor
but I am ugly with it I thought I was being
 careful please
 please

Allison Phillips (she/her) is a dual MA/MFA candidate in Creative Writing, Editing, and Publishing. Her work is concerned with place in relation to nature and the ocean, and femininity. She is featured in several journals, including As Alive Journal, By the Beach, t'ART Press's Between Queer Teeth anthology, and more. She lives in Huntsville, Texas in the U.S. with her two cats.

RESEARCH CORNER:

Judith and Olga: Finding Bisexual Women's Relationships in the Archives

By *Samantha Pious*

Judith Teixeira, who wrote love poetry to women and men in the Roaring Twenties, is the first bisexual woman poet to publish in Portugal—the first we know of, at least. “We” are, of course, the ones who know.

When I translated a selection of Judith Teixeira's poems several years ago, I was surprised to find how little “we” actually did know. Thanks to Maria Jorge (assisted by Luis Manuel Gaspar), some basic facts had been established. Judith's birth year, once mistaken as 1888, was corrected to 1880. In 1907, she sued her own mother in order to be acknowledged as the legitimate daughter of both her parents. Her first marriage, to one Jaime Levy Azancot, ended in 1913. The following year, she married a lawyer, Álvaro Virgílio de Franco Teixeira. The rest of the timeline is devoted to her publications. From 1927 to 1959, there is silence—no record of her existence, literary or otherwise, after the rise to power of the Portuguese National Dictatorship. Finally, there is her date of death, with dutiful notation that she died without husband, children, or will and testament.

What was her childhood like? What kind of education did she receive? When did her first marriage begin? Was her second marriage a happy one? How did she survive for thirty years under a totalitarian regime? Who were the women she loved?

It was only in September of 2025, after my translations were published, that I began looking. The timing could not have been more serendipitous: I was on my very first visit to the island of Lesvos, giving a workshop on vintage sapphic poets for a women's festival. Afternoons were hot enough, even in autumn, that it was best to respect the siesta and spend the hours between one and four o'clock resting indoors. So I was sitting on the bed in a vacation studio, entering search terms in the online system of Portuguese archives, when I found an entry for Judith's divorce—not from her first husband, Jaime Levy Azancot, who was already known to have ended their marriage, but from her second husband, Álvaro Teixeira. I kept searching. There were entries for Judith's lawsuit against her mother, for her first marriage and her first divorce, for a lawsuit against her second husband. There were property inventories for both her husbands, taken after their deaths. None of these items, except her first marriage certificate, seemed to have been digitized. I would have to visit the archive in person.

In mid-October, after two weeks' vacation in Germany and two weeks researching another poet in Paris, I touched down in Lisbon. The documents were even better than I had let myself hope. Letters, some enclosed and others transcribed in the trial records, painted a vivid picture of a childhood spent in poverty and an unhappy second marriage. The inventories detailed the lavishness of her husbands' wealth. The depositions of maids and chauffeurs not only specified the duration of her affair and

the means of elopement—they also revealed that Judith was involved with at least two people at once, a man and a woman. The man, Álvaro, is old news. The woman, whose identity I discuss at greater length in a new online exhibit at OutHistory, lived openly in Lisbon and in Paris as a lesbian. Her name was Olga de Moraes Sarmento. Another woman in Judith's letters, Julia de Moraes Sarmento, would have been Olga's mother or perhaps her sister; without baptism certificates or a complete family tree, I have not yet been able to determine the nature of their relationship.

The only love letters I have found so far are a few of Álvaro's to Judith, from a later period. Without letters written by Olga, Julia, or Judith herself, I can only speculate as to their polyamorous configuration. Were Álvaro, Judith, and Olga a triad? Did they form a V, with Judith at the center? Was Julia merely chaperoning Olga, or was she, too, making love to Álvaro and/or Judith? Did the four of them form an N, a V, or an arrow? Can we assume they were not an incestuous full quad?

Portuguese-speaking literary scholars have been aware of Judith Teixeira since the 1970s. Much ink has been spilled on her poems—they are transgressive, subversive, acts of resistance. She has been compared, predictably and vaguely, to Sappho and Baudelaire. But there has been no serious effort at assembling her biography. Why did her relationship with Olga de Moraes Sarmento remain undiscovered until now? How could her two marriages have drawn so much speculation but so little research?

Ah, but “we” cannot be certain of her bisexuality. After all, a woman who was married not once but *twice*, each time to a man considerably younger than herself, must have been attracted to men. Never mind that other women, past and present, have reported experiencing attraction to more than one gender over the course of their lives. Never mind that some of Judith Teixeira's most passionate love poems are addressed to women, or that in the vast majority, the addressee's gender is left ambiguous—no easy feat in a Romance language like Portuguese, in which all articles and most nouns and adjectives are clearly marked by their endings as masculine or feminine.

Those marriage certificates are incontrovertible. Never mind that divorce had only just been introduced into the Portuguese legal system when her first husband chose to take advantage of the law. Never mind that by 1923, fascism in Portugal was already on the rise. The first print run of Judith Teixeira's first book was seized and destroyed by the city government at the urging of a fascist student group, specifically because she was a woman writing love poems to women. Never mind that under the National Dictatorship, which lasted from 1926 to 1974, it was nearly impossible for single women of a certain age to find work or earn a living. Many would have stayed in loveless marriages just to survive.

In any case, it is not the woman but the poetry that interests “us.” If Judith Teixeira is truly to enter the canons of world literature, she deserves a pedestal as lofty as Baudelaire’s. Her sapphic contemporaries—Renée Vivien, Natalie Clifford Barney, Amy Lowell, Gertrude Stein, Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, Angelina Weld Grimké, Georgia Douglass Johnson, Marie-Madeleine, H.D., Gabriela Mistral, Djuna Barnes, Marina Tsvetaeva, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Lucía Sánchez Saornil, Elsa Gidlow—do not merit comparison.

2026 is the centennial year of the third and last poetry collection Judith Teixeira published in her lifetime. Perhaps if Judith were a man, if she were not bisexual, there would already be an announcement for a centennial biography. But resources are limited. For scholars without a tenured position or a university affiliation, writing a successful grant proposal most often means sticking to the usual suspects. It is virtually impossible for researchers without advanced degrees to secure funding.

As bisexual women, *we* need money—fellowships, stipends, subventions. Lesbians could use money, too. In my dreams, there is a Library of World Sapphic Literature, with an endowment large enough to fund research—*our* research—into bi and lesbian poets and writers of the past. *We* are the ones who will find our ancestors. *We* will turn the crumbling pages gently, whispering their names and the names of their lovers.

Olga. Judith.

Samantha Pious is a poet, translator, editor, and researcher. She has translated a selection of Judith Teixeira’s poetry as Cactus Flowers (Headmistress Press, 2025). Related translations include Renée Vivien, A Crown of Violets (2015, revised 2017), and Natalie Clifford Barney, Selected Poems (2025). You can find her new exhibit, “Judith Teixeira (1880–1959): A Bisexual Woman Poet of the Roaring Twenties,” at OutHistory: <https://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/judi>



Judith Teixeira’s third and last published poetry collection, Núa (Nude), 2nd edition (Lisbon, 1926), side by side with Cactus Flowers, the first selection of her poetry to appear in English translation in the United States.

Space Between Visits

By Danni Wallace



Artist’s Statement: This is a free-verse text piece made from two-layered pages, stitched together by hand. The top layer is printed on tracing paper, allowing the text to hover and overlap rather than settle in a single place. The stitching holds the layers in relation while leaving space between them.

Because I am autistic, I often find adult friendships difficult to navigate. This work responds to a new friendship where that difficulty falls away; the figure pictured is my friend.

Some of the language remains partially hidden, mirroring the way relationships unfold through time.

Size: 210 × 297 mm.

Danni Wallace is an artist and educator based in Worcester, in the U.K., where they work with primary school children. Their artistic practice is centered around printmaking and watercolor.

Against the Hierarchy: Centering Friendship in Bi+ Women's Relational Lives

By Zori Paul

As someone who was aware of being attracted to multiple gender identities at a young age, I never daydreamed about my wedding or future husband/partner like I know other girls in my friend group did. But as a '90s kid who watched too much TV, shows like *Living Single* with Queen Latifah, Kim Fields, Kim Coles, Erika Alexander, John Henton, and Terrence C. Carson showed a future that I looked forward to having as an adult. *Living Single* allowed me to daydream of growing up and living in community with my friends, essentially having an endless sleepover with them where we supported each other, navigated life, and made important decisions together. I also think of the original *Full House* series similarly, imagining a future where I could imagine living with my closest friends and platonically co-parenting our kids together, where our friendship was equally as important and centered as any romantic relationships in our lives.

In many Western cultures, “friendship” is often positioned in a way that reminds me of how many people view bisexuality. Both are often undervalued and overlooked, and can challenge our binary understandings of intimacy. Bisexuality is an identity often associated with fluidity and expansiveness that can go beyond not only the gender binary, but also against the assumption of a default hierarchy of relationships—the idea that romantic relationships are more important than non-romantic relationships. When intentionally incorporated into one's identity, bisexuality could decenter romantic relationships as the ideal form of relationship we were all told to strive towards.

A queer platonic relationship, or QPR, is a deeply committed, emotional, and intimate relationship that fits neither within the categories of “romantic” nor “just friends.” QPRs are relationships that, though platonic, involve a greater level of intentionality, intimacy, and commitment than “traditional” friendships. Similar to bisexuality, QPRs, as one form of queer kinship, disrupt binaries and the compulsory scripts around attraction and relationships, where the larger cisheteronormative society often forces a “one side or the other” perspective.

Just as bisexuality challenges monosexism—the belief that people can only be attracted to one gender—queer platonic relationships push back against compulsory romance or the assumption that romantic partnership should be everyone's primary or ultimate bond. QPRs dismiss narratives that reinforce systems of patriarchy and heteronormativity, while also providing an alternative way of forming and sustaining meaningful relationships. Though QPRs are more often found in research focusing on asexual and/or aromantic individuals, recent research focusing on bi+ identities highlights the importance of affirming relationships in the lives of bi+ folks.

In a 2017 study, researcher Samantha R. DeCapua examined bi+

women's experiences with binegativity—stereotypes, stigmas, and negative beliefs towards those identifying as bisexual+—in romantic relationships with either men or women. The 10 predominantly white bisexual women reported binegative experiences that aligned with common stereotypes regarding the bi+ community and bi+ women from their romantic partners, regardless of gender. However the bi+ women with partners who were men also encountered objectification and hypersexualization from their partners. Binegative experiences were also found to influence participants with regard to how they pursued and perceived relationships; leading many to internalize binegativity due to preemptively preparing for binegativity even before getting into a relationship. This can have negative impacts on bi+ women's psychological well-being and perception of their bisexuality. A potential limitation of this study, however, is it does not explore other forms of relationships—specifically meaningful platonic ones—that these bi+ women might have, and how those may protect these women's sense of self and confidence regarding their bisexuality.

In a study published in 2024, researchers Allison E. Cipriano and Kathryn J. Holland sought to understand the nature and perceived impacts of bisexual and other plurisexual (pansexual, queer, fluid, etc.) women's bipositive experiences to better understand how bipositivity—positive thoughts and feelings about being bi+—could be better fostered. Twenty-five plurisexual predominantly white cisgender women were interviewed, focusing on how their understanding and meaning-making of bipositive experiences fostered bi+ affirming bonds in their lives. Not only did this study align with previous studies on the positive impacts of having a romantic relationship with a partner who affirmed their plurisexual identities, but it also highlighted the influence of affirmation from platonic sources. Plurisexual women reported positivity when they bonded with other plurisexual women, as well as experiencing acceptance and affirmation from monosexual allies.

The researchers also found that having access to reliable and safe queer spaces and engaging in media representations of plurisexuality also fostered bipositivity. This study shows the bipositive effects that friendship with others, both those who identify as bi+ and those who don't, can be important to positive psychological outcomes for plurisexual women. Participants highlighted not only the importance of disclosing their plurisexual identity to others, but also the importance of finding and building community across sexual identities. Though this study focuses more on behaviors that affirm relationships than the previously mentioned study, it does not go into the depth of the bonds these women experience within their friendships, or the direct impacts of these relationships on experiences of binegativity in other forms of relationships.

Although there has been previous research on bi+ women and friendship, there has been little research in the last decade that revisits the topic from a bipoisitive perspective and focuses on bi+ folks who seek alternative forms of relationships beyond monogamous romantic relationships. However, broader queer research has already begun to rethink intimacy and move away from heteronormativity in romantic relationships, and to focus on other relational perspectives, such as relationship anarchy, a philosophy that rejects default hierarchies and scripts in relationships and encourages people to define relationships through mutual consent, autonomy, and intentional care, rather than social norms. Though not all friendships may lead to queerplatonic relationships, thinking beyond romantic relationships and rearranging how we think of the worth and importance of some relationships over others allows bi+ women the opportunity to practice comfort and support with relational fluidity, offering stability and bipoisitivity amid marginalization/microaggressions in dating/romantic relationships.

To think back to the 1990 Bisexual Manifesto, if “bisexuality is a whole, fluid identity,” why wouldn’t that fluidity apply to our relationship structures as well?

Zori Paul, PhD, LPC, NCC is a U.S.-based licensed professional counselor, counselor educator, and researcher. Her research focuses on the well-being of those with multiple marginalized identities, specifically bisexual+ women of color.



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Tree Hugger

By Robyn Ochs



Artist’s statement: I came upon these trees embracing while on a stroll in Sydney, Australia with my friend, Jean. My first thought was: “What an interesting relationship!” Seems fitting for inclusion in this issue.

Among many things, Robyn Ochs is editor of this publication.

CALENDAR



Digital brunch, July 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:

- Saturday, March 14
- Saturday, April 4
- Sunday, May 3
- Saturday, June 6

Please join us! Info/RSVP: BWQEvents@gmail.com
(Note: Dates are subject to change.)

Bi+ World Conference

On 28, 29, and 30 July 2026, Bi+ Nederland and Bi+ Equal will host the Bi+ World Conference in Amsterdam.



<https://biplusworldconference.org/>

Bi+ World Meetup May 22

Join us at the 17th Bi+ World Meetup on Friday, May 22nd 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>

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. (See our calls for writing on page 2.)

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