

OCTOBER
2019

ISSUE 1

UNBOUND



UNTITLED / ALITASHA
AHAMAD

About UnBound

ISSUE NO. 1/ OCT. 2019

Unbound is a fully online magazine created in 2019 by Ohio-based musician, writer, and creative Lashonda Love. This magazine seeks to create a space for feminine, nonbinary, and transgender voices and creative works as direct opposition to the frequent cis-male gatekeeping in professional creative communities.

The initial project can be found on [Daisie.com](https://daisie.com), with up-to-date submission calls and guidelines for current issues posted both on the Daisie project and on the UnBound Zine website at **unbound-zine.com**.

Any and all inquiries can currently be sent to the UnBound Team at **unboundzine@gmail.com** with the subject line "UnBound Zine".

*Works submitted without a title have all been left without identifying information aside from creators and their bios. All ownership of works and opinions shared here belong solely to the creators of that work.

About This Issue

I am so excited that you have your hands (or screens) on the first ever issue of **UnBound**. This project has been fueled by so many late nights and excited group chats that it's impossible not to feel the passion behind the works featured in the following pages.

When I first put out the call for collaborators on the Daisie app and through facebook, I had no idea I would receive submissions from so many places across the globe. We even reached the Daisie "featured" page, which expanded our reach and call to even more artists and creatives. That said, this premiere issue of the zine has absolutely no "theme". We didn't give content guidelines for submissions or ask that only writers submit, only photographers, etc. Collaborators were given full flexibility in what they submitted, how long it was, which platform they submitted through, etc. I just wanted voices to be heard and opinions expressed no matter how messy or imperfect they may be. I wanted this project to hit the ground running.

The following pages are unique, beautiful, painful, sassy, informative, and so much that words cannot express.

If you would like to be featured in a future issue of the zine, please visit **unbound-zine.com** or email **unboundzine@gmail.com**.

Lashonda Love
Creator/Editor/Publisher

Al Dilozenzo

THEY/THEM

Al Dilozenzo is an artist from Columbus, Ohio. They use a combination of traditional and digital media to explore mixed reality, UX/UI design, and social practice. Their most recent project is a series of immersive illustrations viewable in virtual reality.

Website: www.aldilorenzo.art
Email: aldilorenzoart@gmail.com







Alitasha Ahamad

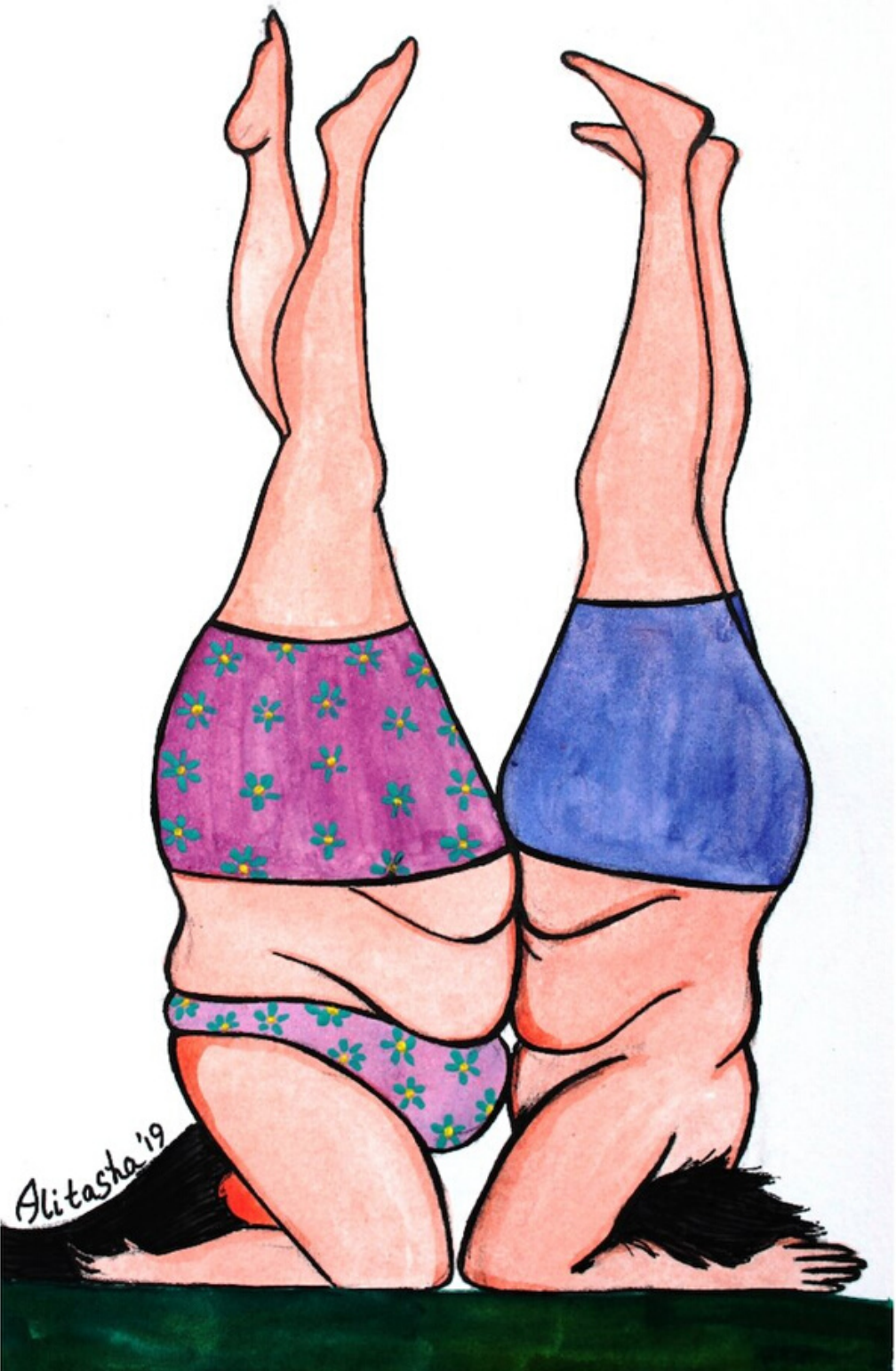
SHE/HER

Alitasha Ahamad is 25 years old and hails from Udaipur, India. She has Masters of Commerce in Business Administration and is a TEFL certified teacher. She is also a self-taught artist. Being a curvy woman of colour, she uses bold and beautiful shades, the female form in all of her glorious imperfections - her starry eyes often dominating her canvas. She believes in extending the gift of confidence and aims to create space for self reflection, self awareness, empowerment, and healing. Art is a weapon of storytelling to help people view things differently, understanding and practicing topics like Body Positivity, Sisterhood, Equality and celebrating imperfections.

In her free time she designs clothes, jewellery and other accessories.

For further details about Alitasha and her art , please visit her instagram page @alitasha_ahamad.





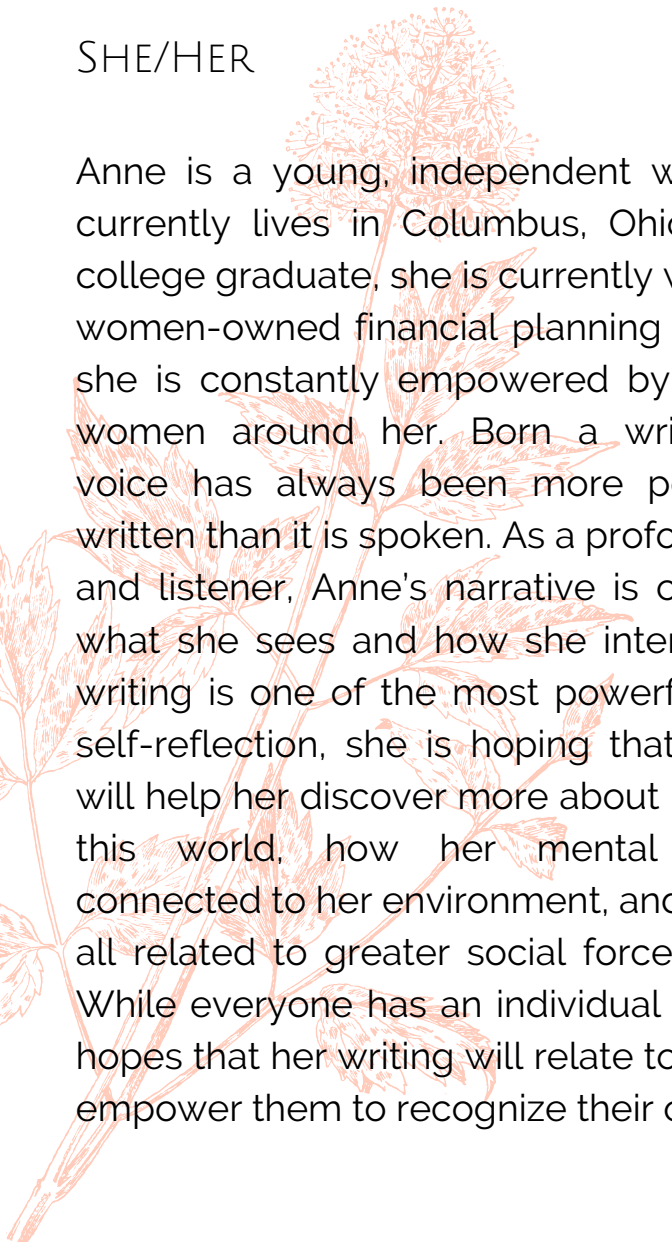
The Body Positivity movement means a lot to Alitasha, as she struggled a lot from what she describes as "being a chubby teenager" but now she knows that she doesn't have to fit a particular beauty standard to be accepted. She accepts and celebrates herself for who she is and encourages others to do the same.





Anne Mills

SHE/HER



Anne is a young, independent woman who currently lives in Columbus, Ohio. A recent college graduate, she is currently working at a women-owned financial planning firm, where she is constantly empowered by the strong women around her. Born a writer, Anne's voice has always been more powerful via written than it is spoken. As a profound thinker and listener, Anne's narrative is centered on what she sees and how she interprets it. As writing is one of the most powerful forms of self-reflection, she is hoping that her works will help her discover more about her place in this world, how her mental health is connected to her environment, and how this is all related to greater social forces at power. While everyone has an individual story, Anne hopes that her writing will relate to others and empower them to recognize their own voice.

A JOURNEY OF INDEPENDENCE

Doctor's Visits Are Easy

I am three years old. I am curious, wild, and even a little rambunctious. When my parents ask me to stop, I continue, and when I am instructed, I disobey. In most circumstances, I am my parents' worst nightmare, but surprisingly never at the doctor. While most kids my age cry and scream about getting those painful things called shots, I just sit there motionless and unaffected waiting for the sting to go away. Even now, I understand that some things are not worth getting worked up about. Yes, I have my crazy side, but I also choose my battles.

One of my most dominant personality traits, is my go with the flow nature. The biggest reason why I was so well behaved is not that I am desensitized or emotionless, it is because I have always known that the shot would be over quickly and that the pain would not last for more than a minute. This enduring anecdote really defines me and my ability to look at the big picture. Despite the wild side I had when I was a toddler, I have always been a relatively calm person. Stress never bothers me, and in fact, it motivates me. Temporary problems never bother me, because I know that I can eventually fix them. This attitude is important to my identity because allows me to be in control of my own happiness, independent of external factors.

I Want to Play Soccer

About four years later, it is the end of the summer before I turn 7, and I am deciding which activities I want to partake in this year. I think back to the previous year when I played both soccer and dance. I remember the anticipation I had sitting in my dad's car on the way to my first soccer practice. Growing up with two older brothers, I watched both of them play this fast and exciting sport and I could not help but long for the day that that would be me scoring goals on the field. And when that day finally came, it was everything that I had longed for and more; it was competitive, athletic, and I loved every minute of it. There was only one problem with this sport that I loved; not many young girls played soccer. Most girls my age danced, and I was no exception. When I was four years old, my mom enrolled me in the local dance academy, and at first I enjoyed the challenge of it. This all changed, however, when the instructors insisted that all of us wear on stage an unnerving amount of makeup and fry our hair with curling irons. The dance world was the epitome of girly-girl, and I felt like they were forcing me to be somebody that I was not. I did not understand why for performances they were trying to change us; I did not want to look like anyone other than myself. I had wanted to quit for so long, but I never knew that that was an option. I always thought it was mandatory, that every girl my age needed to be in dance classes. Now, however, sitting

at my kitchen table with my mom, I realized that this was not true. Moments later, I found myself saying "Mom, I want to quit dance. It isn't fun, and I like soccer more."

As a nineteen year old, I realize that my seven year old self understood a lot, but still not everything. I understood that it was strange in my community for girls to play soccer instead of dance, and thus that it took some courage to quit dance. I would not learn until later, however, that the reason this was so weird was because of something serious called gender norms and stereotypes. Nonetheless, I am proud of my seven year old self for staying true to myself. I am glad that I diverged from the norm and demonstrate that just because society leads certain people to do something, does not necessarily mean they should do it. I am conscious of my surroundings, but that does not always determine my actions. Instead, I independently decide what is the best for the happiness of myself and others.

What I See in the Mirror

I am almost a teenager now, and along with my new adolescence comes many tests and changes to my identity. Beginning around the time that I start middle school, I begin to think that physical appearances determine everything. Suddenly, I am noticing how people who are seen as more attractive are treated, and comparing that to how I am treated. The people that are "prettier" receive more attention and thus have more friends. I want so desperately to be one of them. Me, the person who was always satisfied with just being myself, now feel the need to change to gain the acceptance of others.

Ever since becoming a teenager, I have never thought that I looked normal. I am short, yet I am not super petite. I have athletic shoulders and legs, yet my feet and hands are tiny. Sometimes, I have my weight more in control than other times. There is hardly ever a person in the room that is paler than me, and my freckles are dispersed weirdly on my face. To me, this never added up to "skinny" and "pretty". Instead, I always thought that I was very awkward, and uglier than most people. When I looked in the mirror, I was never very nice to myself. I looked for the things to hate, and scrutinized every detail of myself. What I did not know was that I was too busy comparing my imperfections to others

because I wanted friends, to realize that I had my own beautiful features to love.

In elementary school, I always had a lot of good friends. Middle school, however, is much larger and I do not always see them and gradually are growing apart. Going to school is hard because, I essentially have to start over and make a completely new set of great friends. Making friends itself is not so hard, but making good friends, takes time and patience. To truly accomplish this, I need to put myself out there and be vulnerable, but because I want so badly to be accepted I do not allow myself to open up to others. This makes the two years that I am in middle school the two longest years of my life. I am alone, surrounded by people who I call my "friends," even though they did not really know anything about me.

I start high school, and I do not know it yet, but everything is about to change for the better. Some of my friends from middle school, I become really close to. One night, a bunch of us are sitting around chatting after watching a movie and somehow we land on the topic of body image. My good friend Lily, who has the body of model, suddenly says "I wish I wasn't so skinny. I would love to be fuller." Soon, everyone follows suit and describes their insecurities,

A Lesson of "Principal"

including myself. The more we talk about our so called imperfections, the more we realize how arbitrary they are. When you truly love someone, her appearance does not impact the way you see her. Because we are vulnerable with each other, we allow ourselves to heal and to realize our self-worth. This is the night that I start to love myself and feel comfortable in my own skin again.

Since that day, I have healed many of my wounds and my self-esteem has improved largely. I have discovered what confidence is--knowing that you are worthy of love regardless of appearance. Some days I do not like the way I look, but I know that like my image, that mentality is only temporary. My body is unique and healthy, which is all I have come to care about. I also know, that because my image is different than what is considered "beautiful", I am still worthy of love and acceptance. I love myself, and I know that I am loved. One of the most actualizing forms of independence is freely loving yourself, no matter what others think of you. Now, instead of looking for imperfections in the mirror, I look for the things I like the most about myself--inside and out.

It was only one note, but it was the most important one I have played. It was in Fletcher's Folk Tune and Fiddle Dance, an otherwise unforgettable piece. But since it was the first note I played after my heartbreaking rejection by the high school symphony's conductor, it was the note that eventually made me the leader that I am today.

I remember high fives and hugs among those who were selected to ascend to Symphony, our high school premier orchestra, that awful day at the end of my freshman year. But I was not one of them. Although I knew my audition had not gone well, one performance, I thought, could not possibly cancel months of hard work, improvement, and dedication.

Anderson's Symphony Orchestra is for serious musicians who are the crème of the crop. The conductor assigns everyone else to Philharmonic. Much to my dismay, I was one of these leftovers. However, the conductor threw me a bone: He selected me to sit first chair viola. I was in charge of a ragged group of nine violists, except I did not want to or know how to be their leader. I still came back that next August. It was a new year and I was ready to prove myself. Or at least show Mr. Welch, who also conducts the Philharmonic, that he was terribly wrong when he exiled me to the lesser group.

Facing someone who has made you feel like you are not good enough is hard. Facing him when he expects you to lead is even harder. As I studied Folk Tune that hot, muggy day, I had an overwhelming feeling that I was going to fail and prove Mr. Welch right; that I did not deserve a place in Symphony. Normally the whole process of learning new music excites me, but not this day. In the first rehearsal we sight read, and as principal chair of the violas in Philharmonic, the conductor expected me to understand what I was playing, even if I had never seen the music before. I felt a heavy group of butterflies forming in the pit of my stomach--the same leaden feeling I had when I earlier failed to find my name in the list of those fortunate enough to make Symphony. I took a deep breath as I remembered what Mr. Welch had said to me when he took me aside before that first practice: "I need you to be a leader, Anne."

As I struggled to control my conflicting emotions, I heard it. A miniscule, dynamic change from the end of the first violins' solo was my clue. "We have to play here! Now!" I said to myself. Sure enough, I was right, although I was the only viola who was. After a few screeches and rocky measures, my section caught on to my lead. Not every note was perfect, but with each measure we played a little

louder and with more precision, a sign of growing confidence.

By the time we reached the final note, I was proud of my violas, and I was proud of myself. I focused on what really mattered, making sure no one in my section was left behind. In that moment, I realized that I had the ability and confidence to lead others. Shepherding the Philharmonic violas was challenging, and it was also incredibly rewarding. Sure, I am no Mozart, but in guiding my section, I learned more about resiliency and self-confidence than any other experience in my life. Because of it, I am strong and I am a leader.

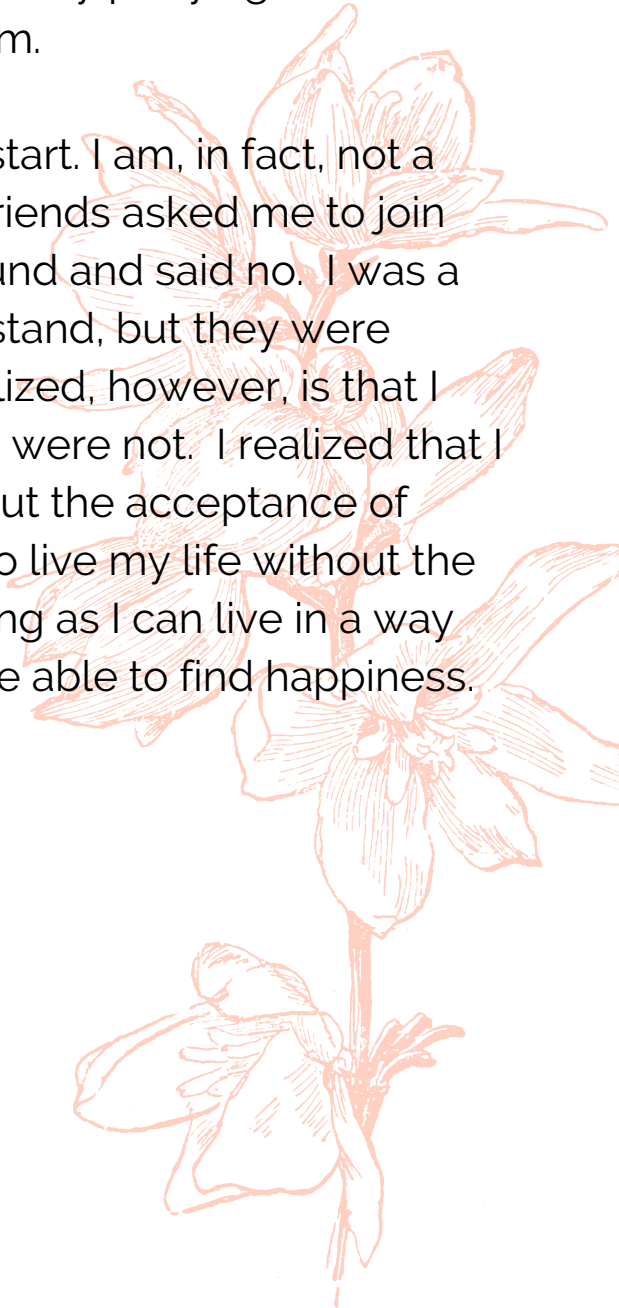
New Environment, Same Attitudes

College is a tempting time for everyone, and I never actually thought that I would be put to test my morals. In high school, my friends and I generally had the same interests, none of which involved partying. As an introverted person, parties are definitely not my ideal social gathering. I had always associated partying in college with the bad, students gone wild characters I had seen in movies. At the same time, I never really tried this scene and I was curious to see what I was missing.

Upon coming to college, I falsely thought that I could avoid any temptations to abandon my values. Almost immediately, I found myself standing in the room of a pregame with a couple cases of beer, handles of liquor, and a bunch of eager looking freshmen. I was unsure of what to do: should I stay? Will these people still want to be my friends if I leave? All of a sudden, I felt like the same demons I struggled to battle during middle school had returned for a rematch. I needed to feel accepted by these strangers, my classmates. Internally I went over all the roads I could take, and the consequences of each. I could stay true to my values, leave, and possibly be rejected as a friend. Or I could abandon everything I have

ever thought, follow my new friends' lead, and possibly make poor decisions. In an effort to my internal crisis some piece of mind, I ultimately made the choice to try partying out for a night and find out who I am really am.

As it turns out, I was right from the start. I am, in fact, not a party person. Soon after, my new friends asked me to join them at a party and I stood my ground and said no. I was a little worried they would not understand, but they were completely okay with it. What I realized, however, is that I would have been okay, even if they were not. I realized that I am strong enough to operate without the acceptance of others. I am independent enough to live my life without the constant presence of friends. As long as I can live in a way that allows me to be myself, I will be able to find happiness.



Ember Bennett

THEY/THEM

Ember Bennett is a 22 year old Ohioan, living in Columbus, OH. They like to casually take pictures to communicate and share things they find beautiful, and bring some permanence to their mortal point of view. This untitled series is from a trip to Franklin Park Conservatory in the midst of a snowy February.









Kaj Jensen

THEY/THEM

Kaj is a trans, genderqueer person who recently completed the Master's of Creative Writing program at University of Brighton. They write personal narrative essays, speculative fiction, poetry, and video games in addition to creating audio essays. They prefer to travel at human powered speeds, walking and cycling whenever possible. When Kaj isn't writing or doing research, they can often be found spying on birds and sneaking up on wild edible plants.

Find them @SpeedOfHuman on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

THERE'S A MONSTER AT THE END OF THIS SUMMER

The first time I became aware of my body hair was the summer between second and third grade. My cousins were visiting the Midwestern beef cattle farm I lived on. After a long day of running amok, playing in our acre-large garden, and climbing towering pines, it was time for a bath. My younger sister, my oldest female cousin, and I were all put in the bath together. My mother supervised, legs crossed as she perched on the closed toilet.

In the midst of our splashing around my mother noticed that I had started to grow a faint shadow of pubic hair in that "v" between my hipbones. She grabbed my arm, dragging me, dripping, out of the bath.

"You're too old to be taking baths with anyone," she hissed while thrusting an old off-white towel at me, its coarse fibers rough against my skin. I had no idea what was going on. I felt deeply ashamed.

Later that summer, or perhaps it was the following one, my mother noticed that I had a similar fuzz of brown hair beginning to sprout from the crevice where my arm met my torso. We were getting ready to go on one of our weekly trips to the swimming pool, and she refused to allow me to go unless I shaved my armpits. I had no idea how to complete this task and no guidance was offered. All I knew is that I wanted to go to the swimming pool.

It was rare to get to be around any other kids in the summertime. We lived twenty minutes from the town where I attended school and fifteen minutes from the pool. I attended swimming lessons at this pool since I was old enough to walk and I relished the feeling of floating in the pool with all the sounds muffled and the momentary weightlessness of flying off the diving board. So I took the plastic, disposable Bic razor my mother thrust into my small hands and pressed it against the tiny collection of hairs in my armpit. In downward strokes, over and over, I removed the apparently offensive hairs while staring into the mirror hanging over the sink.

During the ride in our minivan, my cheeks burned every time I felt the itchiness in my armpits. In the florescent light of the pool's changing room, I was suddenly very aware of my body, aware that other people would look at it and judge it. I hoped nobody would notice me as I took off my clothes and put them in the locker. I was sure that everyone could tell I was hideous and hairy - that I missed one or two of those small brown hairs while shaving and everyone would be disgusted. When I dove into the pool, the chlorine stung my razor burn.

I was careful to keep my arms down. I avoided tossing the beach ball with the other kids in the shallow end. I hugged my beach towel around me when I got out, wearing it draped over my shoulders, but failing to disappear in its bright colors.

* * *

The first time I shaved my legs was almost a year after I started my period. All of the other girls in my fifth grade class had started shaving their legs, although few of them had to carry around the conspicuously loud "feminine napkins" with them to the bathroom for a week each month. They had gleaming legs below the hems of their shorts, while mine were still covered in a fine down of barely visible hair. The other girls had grown-up legs and prepubescent bodies, and I felt backwards with my hairy legs and a monthly cycle. When I asked my mother for permission to start shaving my legs she said, inexplicably, that I was too young.

I waited a day or two, then took one of those disposable Bic razors from the bag in the cupboard above the toilet. I was terrified of leaving a long scrape up my shin like my mom had.

I tried not to press too hard with the dull blade. It took forever. The fine hairs refused to be easily severed from the follicle. I was more and more nervous the longer it took, sure my mother would realize what I was doing, rush in to stop me, and force me to go to school with the embarrassment of half-shaved legs.

Miraculously, that didn't happen.

At school, when Nicole (one of the popular and athletic girls with the gleaming shins) pointed out that the back of my leg was still hairy, I tried to sound nonchalant when I said I must have missed a spot. I hoped no one noticed the red that flooded my face. I had no idea you were supposed to shave the back of your calves too.

* * *

More than a dozen years later, I was starting my second semester of grad school. I had just separated from my husband and simultaneously came out as queer. I had also stopped shaving my body hair in the midst of it all. My brother got married that summer.

His wedding was held on a golf course that hosts an annual tournament sponsored by a Midwestern tractor manufacturer, and the day before the ceremony, the groom and his groomsmen played eighteen holes there while the

bridal party, myself included, got mani-pedis. My sister was visibly embarrassed by my hairy legs, apologizing loudly on my behalf to the woman doing my pedicure in the salon located in a hotel that proudly offers "upscale accommodations for discriminating guests." Outside of the Starbucks we went to afterwards to get coffee, my mother pointed out that, while it may be acceptable in some other places, women with hairy armpits were unacceptable in America. "You're going to shave before tomorrow, right," she decreed.

That evening I dutifully removed all the hair from the lower half of my legs and my armpits in the hotel shower while drinking a beer. The brown bottle sat in the place where the soap should be as I drug the razor over my legs and armpits. My roller derby teammate, Laura, who had come with me as my plus one, reminded me that at least we were getting special vegetarian entrees at the wedding dinner. Plus, there was a hosted bar.

* * *

It's five years later, and my sister is getting married. About a year ago, sifting through the junk mail and bills I'd paid online, I found a thick brown textured envelope. I opened it to find a card decorated with bows of pink ribbon on the top and bottom asking me to be her maid of honor. It made my stomach lurch.

In the months prior to receiving that card, I had taken my first tentative steps toward coming out as genderqueer. I asked my queer friends to please use they/them pronouns for me, despite struggling with feelings of being not trans enough to make such a request.

My sister had no idea what was happening. I was heartsick over how disconnected we are. There had been a time when she would crawl into bed with me, sad and scared and lonely after my parents' divorce. I'd reassure her the best I could and try to make her feel better. I wanted her to feel loved and cared for, despite a stark lack of those feelings in my life. Probably because of the lack of them.

During the summer family vacation after I received that card, the first time I had seen my siblings in over a year, I told my sister that I could not wear the tulip pink bridesmaid dress she had picked out. Before I could suggest alternatives or say much else, she shrugged her shoulders and said, "You don't have to be in the wedding."

She had said it in a tone that implied there was nothing more to say. I wanted to tell her that I already had a bow tie in that exact shade of pink, and show her the pictures I had specifically downloaded onto my phone of bridal parties that included people in tuxes. I didn't.

In order to prepare my family for the not-bridesmaid dress wearing, not-female presenting or identifying, genderqueer me, I wrote a coming out letter. I sent it to my mother and sister for initial approval, saying that I wanted to let family know so that it wouldn't be a surprise or detract from my sister's big day. My mother's response, reiterated by my sister, was that unless I shaved all my body hair and presented as a female, I was not welcome at the wedding.

This summer, while my sister walks down the aisle, I'll be sitting a whole continent away, all my body hair intact, including the new hairs that have begun sprouting on my chin and the hints of sideburns yet to fully come into their own. I'll be swimming in rivers that have nude beaches instead of the chlorine filled pools that populated my childhood. I won't have to worry about which bathing suit I am supposed to use to cover my genderqueer body parts, and no one will care about the hair in my armpits, or anywhere else. I'll be missing out on one of the most important days in my sister's life. But no one will feel embarrassed or ashamed.

Heather Johnson

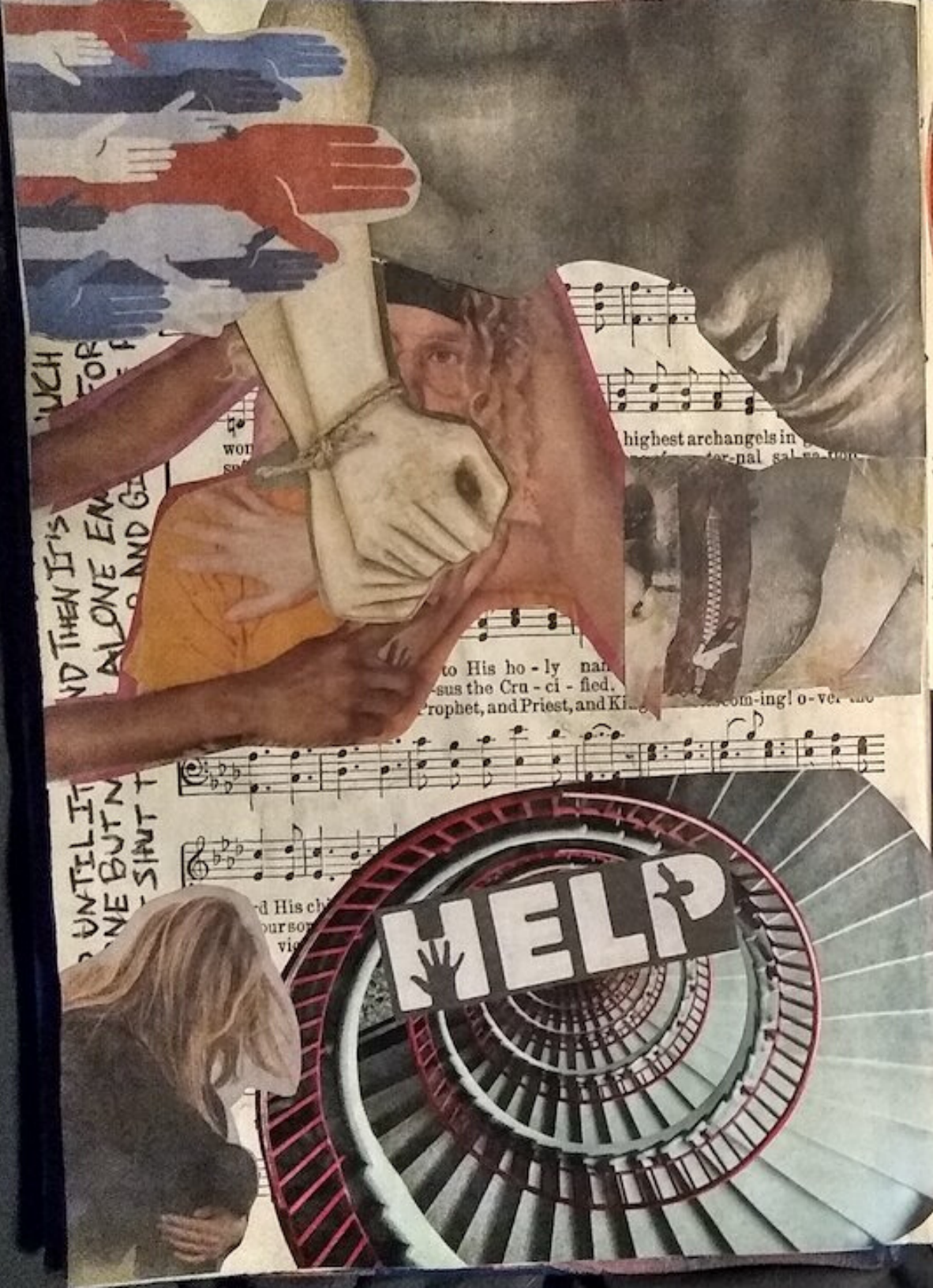
SHE/HER

20-something queer-do.

Born and raised West Coast (US) kid raising hell
in the Bible Belt.

Create.
Destroy.
Do crime.
Smoke.
Sleep.
Repeat.



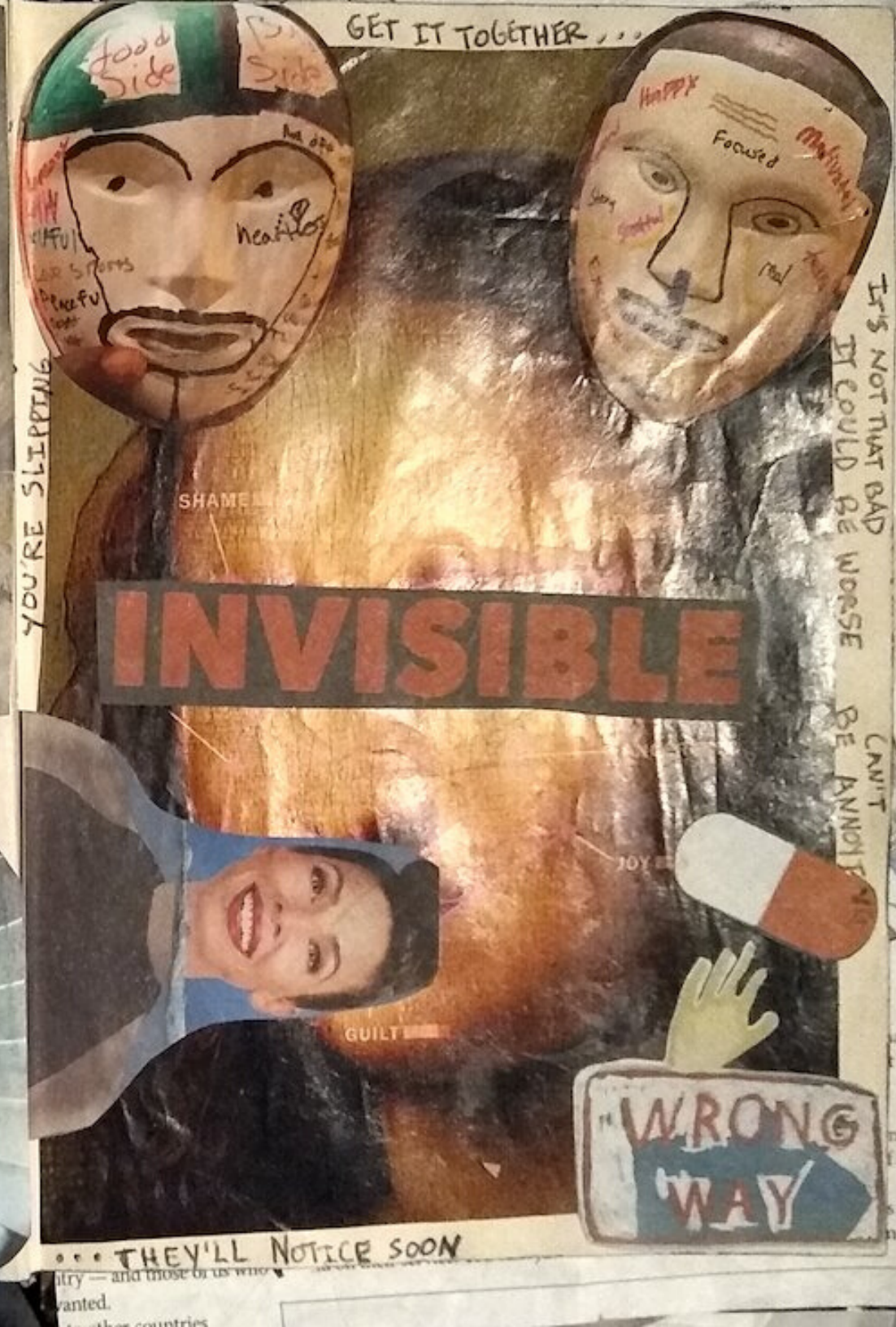


MUCH
FOR
AND THEN IT'S
ALONE ENA
AND GI

UNTIL IT
ONE BUT N
SIANT T

highest archangels in
ter-nal sal-va-tion
to His ho-ly na-
sus the Cru-ci-fied,
rophet, and Priest, and King
com-ing! o-ver the

HELP



GET IT TOGETHER...

YOU'RE SLIPPING

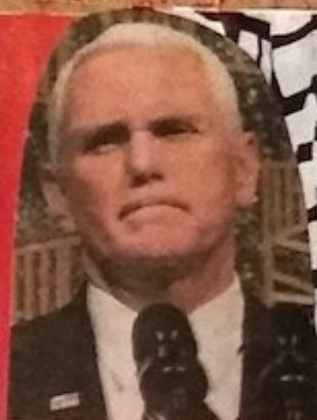
INVISIBLE

IT'S NOT THAT BAD
IT COULD BE WORSE
CAN'T
BE ANNOTATED

...THEY'LL NOTICE SOON

WRONG WAY

'I feel like somebody has killed me.'



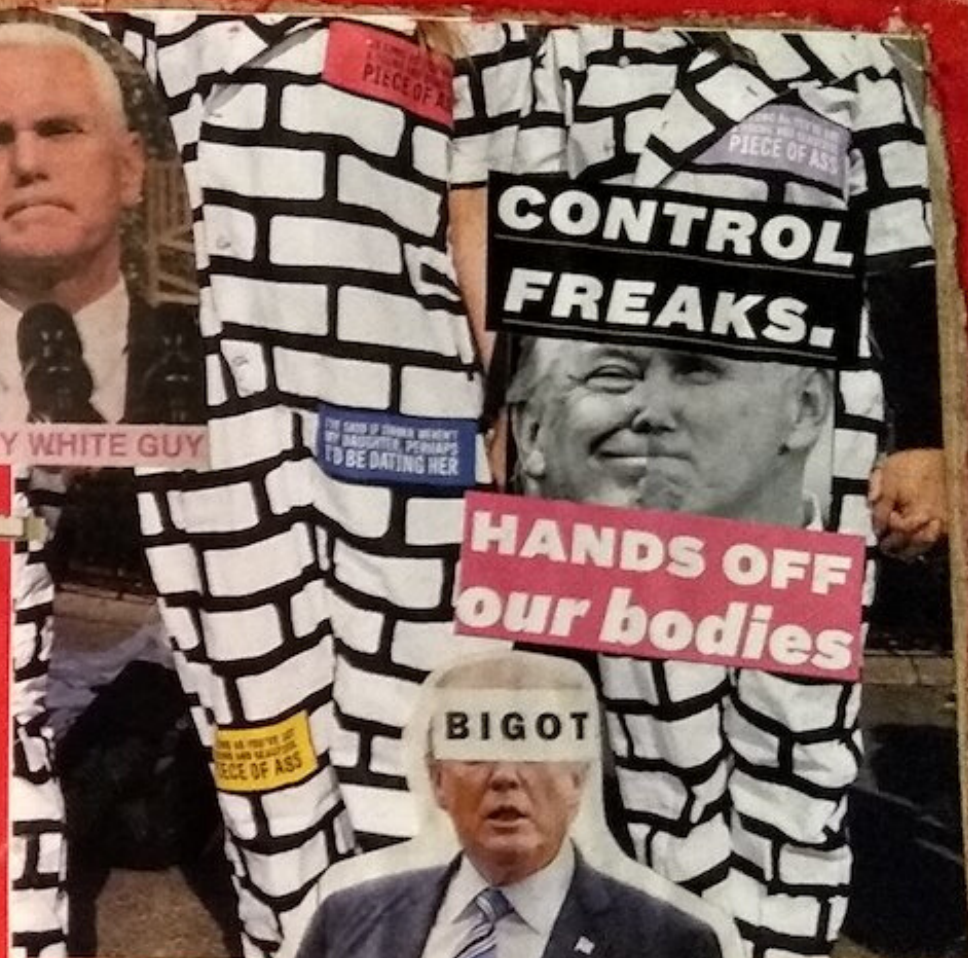
CREEPY WHITE GUY



RACIST

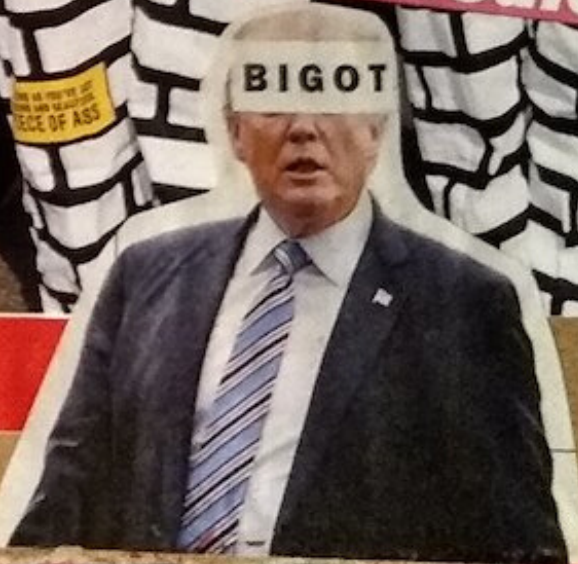
DEAD

TO RIP OUT YOUR GUTS!



CONTROL FREAKS.

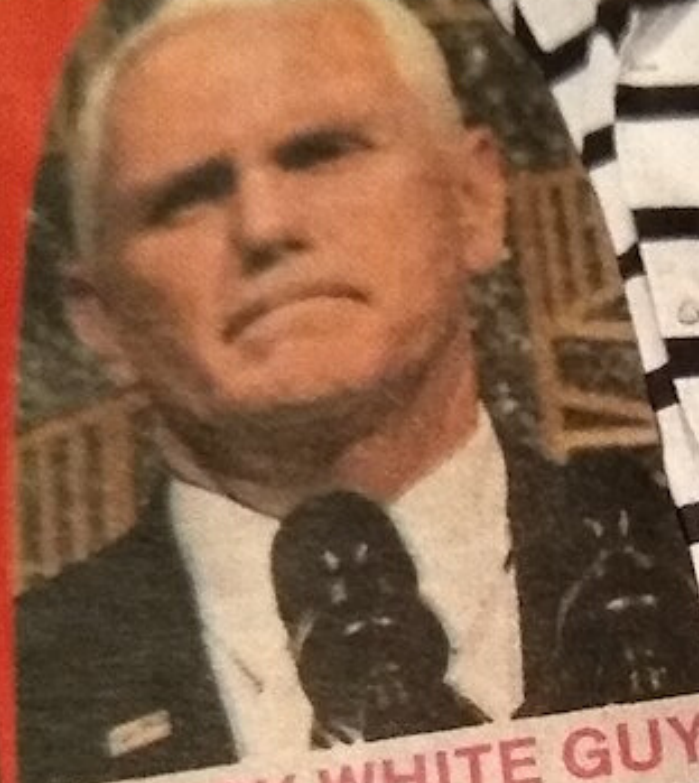
HANDS OFF our bodies



BIGOT

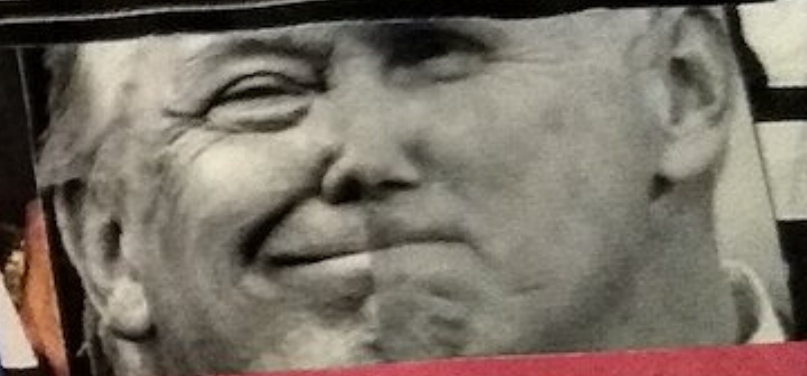
EL PENDEJO

me.



CREEPY WHITE GUY

CONTROL
FREAKS.



I'VE SAID IF IVANKA WEREN'T
MY DAUGHTER, PERHAPS
I'D BE DATING HER

HANDS OFF
our bodies

TO RIP OUT YOUR GUTS!



LONG AS YOU'VE GOT
BIG AND BEAUTIFUL
PIECE OF ASS

BIGOT



STOP THE HATE

I am not an undocumented immigrant. I am an American citizen.

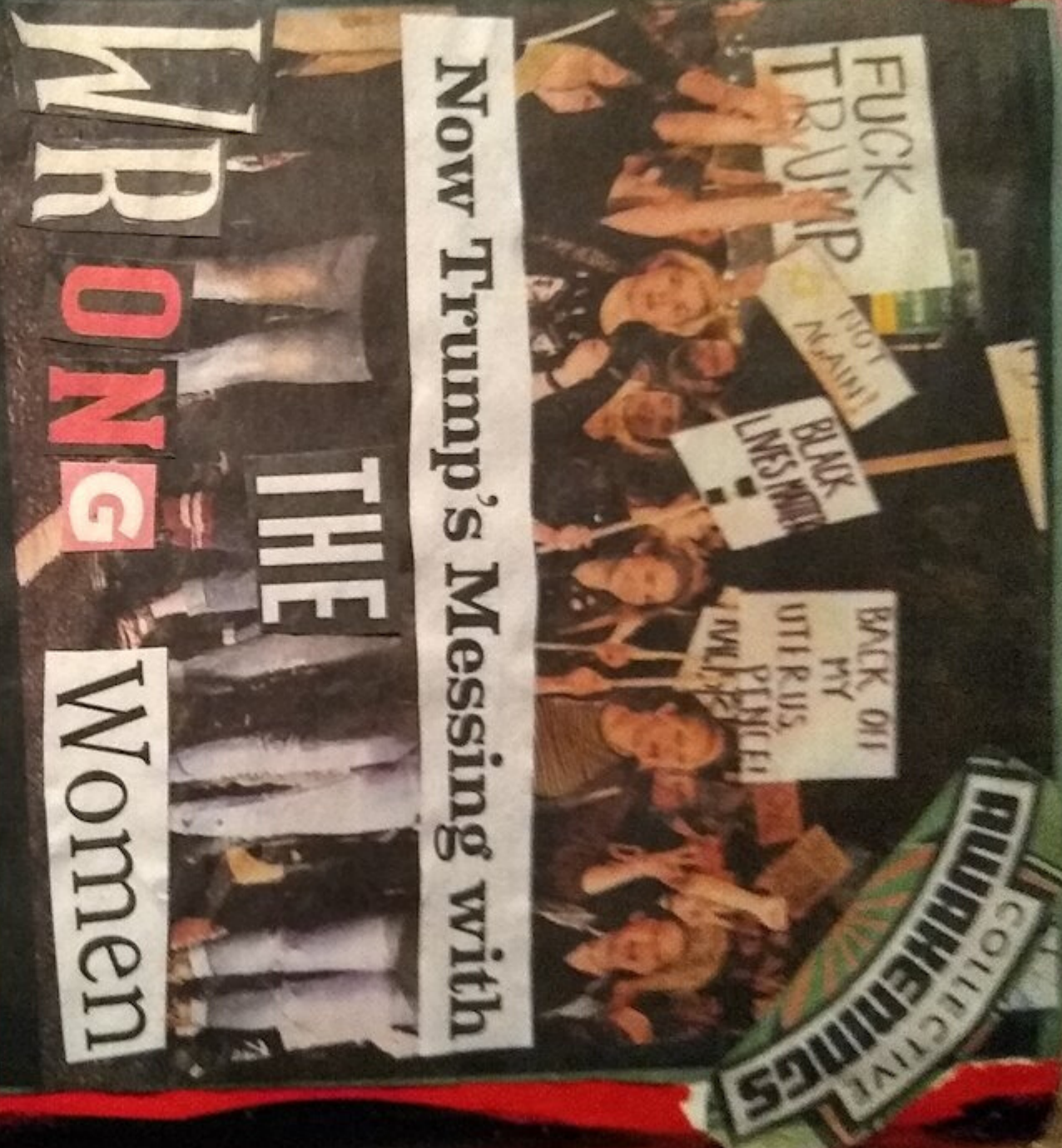
As a result, I have never had to make the choice to sacrifice the lives of my family in the attempt to save them. I have never experienced radical violence due to my religion, ancestry or political views. I have never experienced the terror of being sent back to a country I have never known. I have never witnessed a lost generation of children due to years and years of war.

I cannot pretend that I can even partially know or truly understand the depths of despair that accompanies the lives of so many who are simply trying to survive.

Although I freely admit that I do not have the answers, I do know that erupting in hate is not one of them. If we are to remain a great nation, we must find it within ourselves to muster up the humanity that I know exists.

I understand that we cannot shelter the world, but we can cease to hate those that need shelter.

*Melissa Quinn
Dexter*



Lashonda Love

SHE/HER

I am 24 years old from Columbus, OH. I have my B.A. in Music Performance from Denison University in Granville, OH. I am also the founder, head editor, and publisher of UnBound.

As a queer, pagan, woman of color, the intersections of identity and the validation of those identities in creative spaces is of incredible importance to me. UnBound is one of many projects I am working on in this capacity.

In my free time, I am a plant mom, I have two cats and an iguana, I teach yoga, and I clock a ridiculous amount of video game hours a week.

2 AM SOME NIGHT

Knees wobble under my elbows"
Zach Thomas is a Sex Panther"
Scrawled across the stall door
I stare

Imagine friends dancing in the lounge
To every beat of Runaround Sue
It fades into the bathroom

Was it just good sex?
Should I find Zach Thomas?
I think of his arms around my waist
He whispers in my ear how good I am
Sweat rolling down his back
And it was good
So good he thinks I'm the only one for
him

I never do
Not because I don't want to protect the next girl
Keep him from pushing her
Warn her of the aggression
The anger

I wonder if she loved Zach Thomas
The girl who paid homage to him in faded red
marker

That's all I ever wanted

Now, I fight to not write a message
To scribble in childish envy
"D.H. has a small dick"
nothing else
just his initials
just enough someone will recognize him

But because Zach Thomas has been scrubbed so
that the plastic stall door peels steel wool tracks
Across his name
And I wonder if whoever wrote it
Wishes it was gone everyday

SAQSAYWAMAN

Apu, the Peruvian word for mountain,
Sounds like a sneeze not quite contained.
I squat and relieve myself
A friend's mother holding me up
so I don't piss down my legs.
I've never had to go outside before
while pairs of eyes peek at me
though they promised not to watch

Here in the slums,
mangy dogs run across bricks and aqueducts.
Children chase them
skin blistering and cracking,
they smile as we give them bikes
and I teach a small girl to say
"I love you" in English
teach her to hug as she says it

All I think about is your hard hands
when they sent my back towards the bed
"I love you" having barely slipped your mouth
and I apologized for making you do it
For pulling out of a kiss too soon

"you're a child" you said
chastising me
because I had taken away your favorite toy

I want to tell you you're right
because I derided a heavily accented phrase –
a mispronounced mountain –
as a "Sexy Woman" and dissolved into giggles.
You've always liked it better when I don't use words at all.

As I think of you my words dribble out of me and trickle
past the pants bunched around my knees
past the bush and on and on until
I'm sure they're stuck in the foliage.
Apu Sexy Woman, out and exposed,
we release on her like some eerie pornography.

I want to call you,
to tell you about this place.
Is that what happens when you think about someone you love?
you want to share your world with them?
I always expected you'd share yours too.

Children lay rings of flowers around my neck,
grab my hands and sing the harsh syllables of my name
a name you've only ever screamed
as I sat crying in the car next to you
These children bounce the sounds around
back and forth on their tongues with laughter
And I think that this, now, is the
only way to pronounce it.



SANCTUARY

Thick pine scent wafts through
Ripples of dim sunlight
On the matted grassy floor

A man once said grass is the beautiful hair of
graves
I claw at the dirt
Ripping up green tufts of strangers
I feel the hair prickle on my own skin
Feel the cool breeze play at the base of my
neck
And name a brown tinted patch after myself

I stare at the rope
Imagine a twirling brown snake
around my neck
Imagine the only face anyone will see again
Gaping mouth
Slack jawed against the rope
As gravity pulls relentlessly
They'll cry and I'll never see it
I tear the grass from the forest floor

Crickets chirp in a vast chorus
Invisible in vibrant green bushes and brambles glowing in
afternoon light
one chirps so close to me,
so distinct, I pick it out among the others
it chirps as if it sees the tears
on my face
As if it wants to say
"This life is too sweet
to leave"
and watches me
take the rope down from the tree
and

This life is too sweet
I don't believe in clouds to watch it from
My throat aches as tears are forced out
Emptying me to only sadness
knowing happiness can only
exist while I'm still alive to feel it

Jasmine Corkhill

SHE/HER

Jaz lives in England and currently has a fairly boring job whilst trying her best to keep doodling on the side. her favourite art to do is detailed drawings (when she can find the patience!) and she likes to animate videos too.

She is also interested in interior design and hopes to one day renovate a double decker bus into her home!



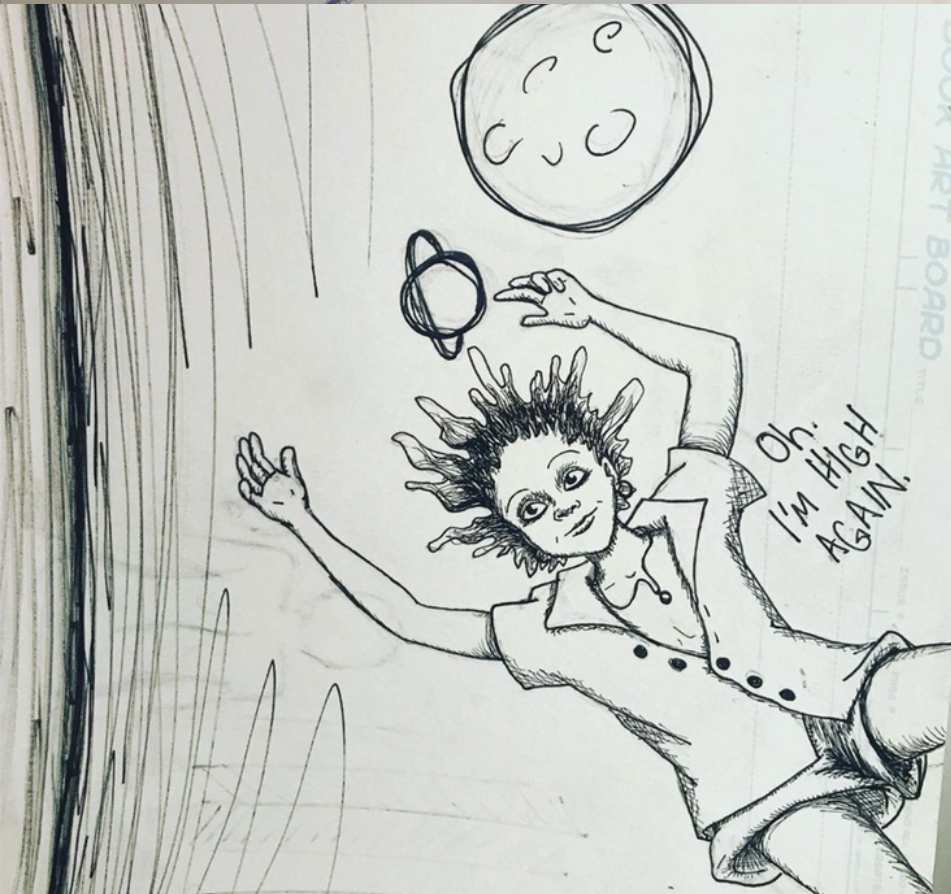
Lexie Dungan

SHE/HER

Lexie is a queer, radically feminist artist based in Columbus, Ohio. Her work includes paintings, comics, animation, photography, and physical installations among many other projects. Some of her current projects include collaboration on a mixed-media fantasy novel as well as collaboration on a story-telling project where she uses comics to represent interview experiences of people of color.

She can be found on instagram @l.d.m.a.art





Rayna Kingston

SHE/HER

Rayna Kingston is a young professional working for an environmental start-up in Denver, Colorado.

Growing up, sex was taboo and never talked about amongst her friends. Her poems aim to challenge the idea that sex should be kept a secret. Instead Rayna's poetry suggests that sex should be looked at as a beautiful and expressive unifier. Rayna shows this unity by comparing sex to common natural elements.

Sexual turn on: not being in control, "I am so aware of my life and am in control of everything, so I like when I am not in control"

I move and she moves with me.

But sometimes we move in opposite directions.

Some days we are in sync and we shine together,
other days she is gloomy, while I am sunny.

For the most part I am in control of our relationship.

For the most part.

I withstand her cold days with layers of warmth.

I outsmart her rays with lotion to my skin.

On particularly difficult days when her words move fast and form
circles in the clouds, I move inside and stay hidden in bed.

For the most part I know how to control her . . .

For the most part. But while control is what I know, it is when I
lose control to her that I find new life.

Sometimes she stings me without warning, perhaps because I'm
sweet.

Other nights, I wake up to her bites from moving in the
sheets. Other times she blinds me and makes my eyes red and
swell.

She teases me by showing me what I cannot touch or smell. For
the most part I am in control,

but I live for the moments that I do not have to play that role.

Sexual turn on: lightly pulling of hair; gentle; a movement that is both dominate and submissive.

His touch is so familiar yet different every time.
His touch melts on my skin.
He gives moisture to my mouth when I provide my tongue.
He is a regular companion on short winter nights.
Come spring, he over stays his welcome,
but that may be my fault.
It is my fault.
Because my actions make him stay.
When there is too much of him, he dominates my thoughts.
I think about his inches and how long he will last.
Our best days are when I can meet him outside and play.
Sometimes when we play I throw him at others.
Sometimes I roll him and stack him.
Sometimes I submit to his impression and we leave angle indentations.
But whenever we're done playing,
This always remains true—
I am always wetter, and he is too.

Sexual turn on: choking and hairpulling; "I like rough stuff."

Like sand,
Like dirt,
More like the boulders in the stream
Bouncing me in between.

Like gravel,
Like rocks,
Scratching over me
It's a black out scene.

I am the ground,
He is the steam,
His waves keep on pounding into me
My favorite place to be.

I am out of breath
There is no release
I have no oxygen left in me.
It's a black out scene.

Like sand,
Like dirt
The current loosens his grip
That was a great trip.

Zhenya Gavrilova

SHE/HER

Take absurd art that you interpret by yourself and add good storytelling and you will get an amazing mix.

That is my **kokorozashi** (jp. purpose and ambition): to comprehend both and become a film director.
To transform words into visual.

Right now for me it's only about absurd, style without any story or context.

Sharing that with the Unbound Zine is like fixing that promise.

List of beloved artists of mine to inspire you:

Sachin Teng

William Mortenson

Grimes

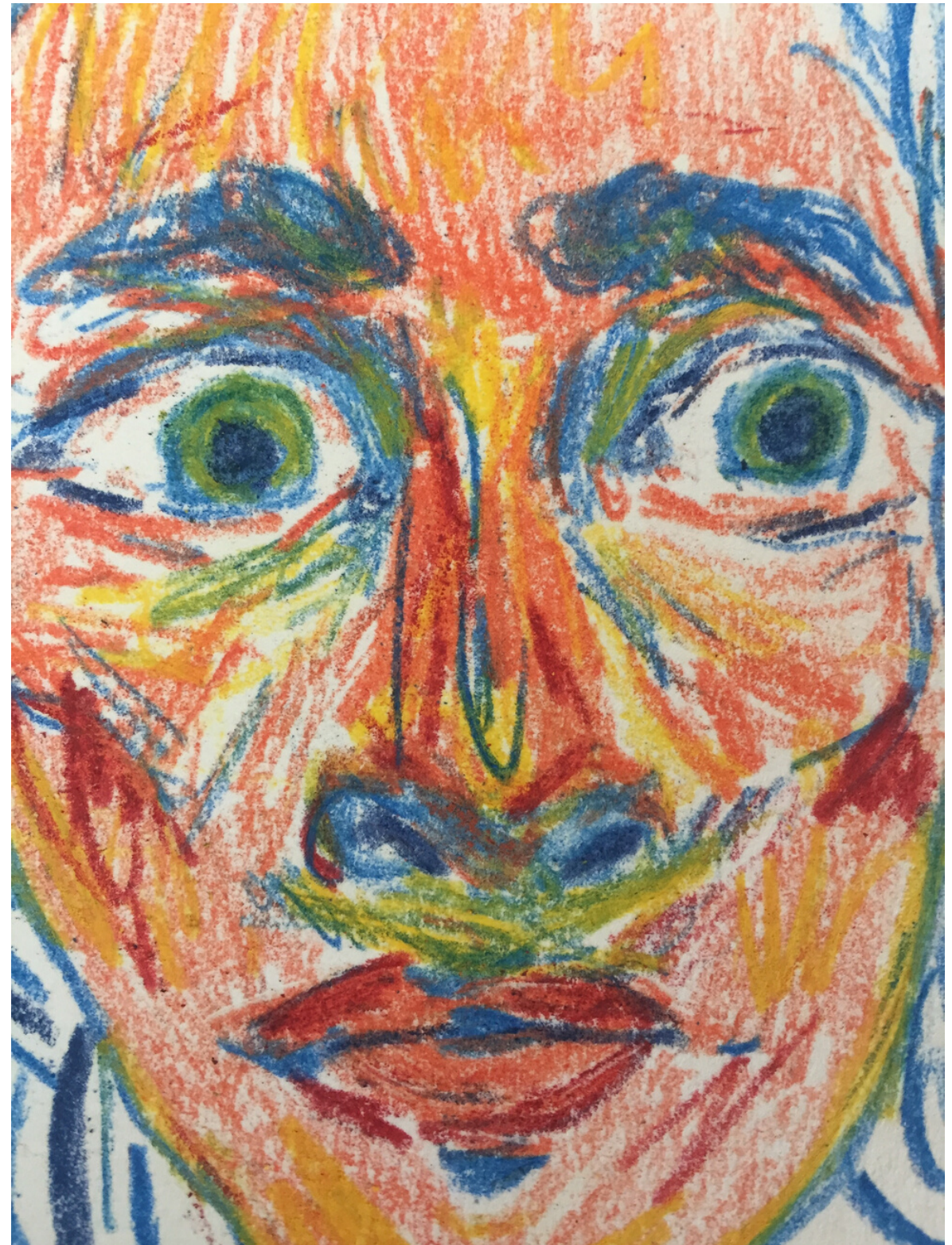
Koharu Sugawara

Hifana

LAIKA studio

Tim Burton (his book "The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories")

Inst. zhenya_gavra







Skye Cardoz

SHE/HER

Skye Cardoz is a writer from Mumbai, India. She has a thing for writing beautiful tragedy. She writes articles, short stories, poems, and love notes. She has also had an article published in Thought Catalog.

YOU ARE PURPOSE

No, I refuse to let you be brought down to traditions and good will gestures.
You were not "supposed to happen".
You were not a calculated decision.
You were not an accident.
You are purpose.

You were love that I had for your father.
Have you ever believed in magic?
You are an emotion transformed into a human being.
You are life.
You are happiness.
Your father and I don't have to look at each other.
We have you.

When we see you, we see our past,
our present, and our future.
We see that our love can be transformed into a beautiful ballerina who can solve math equations as she twirls.

You are an endless reflection of love.
Have you seen magic before?
Look at the three of us.
We are a beautiful reflection of love multiplying.

So darling, I know that you are feeling down.
But know this.
You were neither a mistake, nor a calculated decision.
We did not create you because it was about time.
We brought you into this life
because of the love we wanted to bring into the world.
The world doesn't have enough mathletes like you.
The world does not have enough smiles like yours.

So darling, know this.
You are love.
You are here for a purpose.
So act like it.
Act like the world is yours, because it is.
Don't let the world swallow you into its darkness.
You were born with an oar to help you paddle through it.

Darling, you were meant to survive.
You were meant to be here.
So stay.
The world needs our love.

Parabare

SHE/HER

The name parabare comes from the Latin “probare paratus” and means “prepared to prove”. She still hasn't figured out what she wants to prove, but the path is long and she knows she has the potential to do anything.

Just out of uni, parabare is trying to get the handle of this whole adulting thing. It's hard. There's a lot of thinking involved, which has led her to realize how little thought and effort she used to give to things outside academics. She is just now discovering what her principles are and what issues matter to her.

One of those principles is equality. She believes a big part of achieving equality nowadays comes from diverse representation in different media, which influences us from young ages. Coming from a Video Games Development Degree, parabare wants to explore those virtual worlds in more depth, with critical eyes. Through a series of articles, she will explore the representation -or lack of- of different social groups in video games.

You can find her on Instagram at @parabare

REPRESENTATION IN VIDEO GAMES: LGBT+

Video games have always been associated with a certain type of player: nerdy teenage boys. We can all agree that video games have often been thought of as a male-dominated hobby, and not a cool one at that. However, considering more and more women are playing a diverse variety of games on varying consoles, this notion is clearly false. Women are the minority in the gaming community, the perception being that most gamers are young men.

Technically, a gamer is anyone who plays games. They range from casual gamers (if they only play sporadically) to pro-gamers (if gaming is their profession). Basically, you don't need a fancy computer or the most expensive console on the market to be one. If you play Candy Crush on your way to school or work then, congratulations: you're one of us.

That makes more than 2.5 billion people -around one third of the total population of the planet- gamers. All of different races, genders, sexualities, religions, socio-economic backgrounds, etc. With so many people involved in the gaming world, we ought to take a closer look at the community and the dynamics playing out within it.

Studies have shown that the way people are portrayed in games influences the players' perception of the role those people have in real life. Keeping this in mind, shouldn't we be more careful of how we represent certain groups? For example, considering the high number of female gamers, one would think that they'd be represented as respected characters, not just decorations. Unfortunately, women have been used mainly as supporting characters, love interests -most of the time oversexualized, or used as the stereotypical “damsel in distress”. I'm looking at you, Peach.

Female characters are often used as motivation for the male protagonist to do something. Even though it makes sense that the protagonist would want to move Heaven and Earth to try to rescue or avenge their missing partner or love interest, there should be a balance between how often the protagonist is male and how often they are female..

We have to understand these decisions based on the social context they were made in. Most of the people that have worked in the field of game development over its history were male, as were most of the players. So, up until recently, most games have been made for men by men. This is just how it was. I said we have to understand it, not accept it.

Do players think that video games portray minorities badly? Most of them are unsure. Maybe it's because we haven't put video games under the same critical eye as other media. We often criticize representation in Hollywood, but we haven't even started to scratch the surface of video games. In order to get our facts straight, we have to examine these issues. The first minority that I will explore here is the LGTBQ+ collective and how it is portrayed.

So, what about LGTBQ+ representation? Well, it sucks. There is representation, and it is growing. We have amazing titles with queer protagonists and characters, like "Life is strange" or "The Last of Us: Left Behind", but during its history, video game developers have avoided having LGTBQ+ characters in their games.

One of the first video games with a character that belonged to the LGBTQ+ group was "Final Fight" back in 1989. In the arcade game, Poison was a trans woman, but she was an antagonist NPC, which means that she was a Non-Playable Character that you have to fight against, instead of having the possibility of playing as her. It isn't until the 1999 Final Fight Revenge game that players have the option of choosing Poison as their character.

During the '90s, more LGTBQ+ characters began to appear in video games, but they were all supporting characters. There were references to homosexual relationships as well as the laws related to those relationships.

Sam Greer, a queer gamer, takes us through queer representation in the history of video games in her article, "Queer representation in games isn't good enough, but it is getting better". She gives some great and detailed examples and makes a shocking point right in the first paragraph: there are only around 179 games that have queer characters. Considering there are currently millions of video games in the world, that number would be almost laughable if it wasn't so sad. Of those 179 games, only 83 have playable queer characters. Only 8 of them are pre-written queer instead of it being an option the player can choose.

As I've said before, video games influence the players. How people are represented can affect the real-life perception of those people. They aren't just games, they matter.

Obviously, not all protagonists should be LGTBQ+ characters, because then we would have the same problem of under representation for non-LGBTQ+ characters. We need balance and we can get it with time and effort. How? Not everybody can become a video game developer, but anybody can be a gamer. The market rules what kinds of games will be created in the future. We as clients have the deciding vote on what kind of representation is the one we are going to get. It is our money that makes video games possible.

Though I know there are more problems with awful representation of other groups, like races or religions, I would like to explore further into this group first. There are a lot of games that have evolved or are just making their way into our lives that have amazing LGTBQ+ leads. In this series, we will take a look at different video games where the representation of the LGTBQ+ community is key. Let's support these types of games and make them popular, or even more popular in some cases. We are the ones that decide.

During this series, I will play some games that have the type of characters we are looking for. Some of them have been recommended to me, some I came across on my own. If you have any recommendations of games for me to play or analyse, send them my way and I'll check them out.

Thank you and I'll see you in the next one!

This article is part of a series featured in multiple issues of UnBound.

Responses to this article or video game recommendations can be sent to Parabare through their instagram, through emailing unboundzine@gmail.com, or through comments left under Parabare's page on Unbound-zine.com

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To view original sources, please visit: [unbound-zine.com/current issue/parabare](http://unbound-zine.com/current%20issue/parabare)

Stone Davenport

SHE/HER

Hi, I'm Stone but lots of people call me Eli. I'm a 23 year-old Gemini who chooses various creative outlets depending on my mood (and energy level) that include but are not limited to photography, modeling, and writing.

My work can be reflective of a couple different things. First would be the acknowledgment of past trauma and the healing process associated with it, typically seen in my writing. It can be dark, and messy but it's necessary. Creating dark content gives me a safe way to express the negative things I've felt in life. Second would be the reflection of my growth and confidence that I've worked so hard for, which is typically seen in my modeling and photography. It's self expression of my pride and self love. Creating beautiful images gives me the opportunity to show people the beauty I see in myself and the world around me.

You can find me on social media platforms for my modeling and photography work, but I don't currently have a platform dedicated to my writing. My modeling work can be found @modelstoneblue on Instagram. My photography work can be found @stonebluephotography on Instagram or on VSCO @itsstoneblue.

LOVERS

When I was 10, there was a boy. He was kind when he held my hand and I thought maybe I loved him because I had known him for years so I had seen how he wanted so badly to be good but he had a tainted heart. In grade 5, he told me I was the only girl he'd ever trust or love and I believed him because I was naive and he made me feel special. I think that's why I let him kiss me passionately in the street after school with his arms tight around my waist to stop me from pulling away. I remember being uncomfortable with how tight his grip was, how his lips crushed mine, and his tongue was invasive. He told me my brain was lying to me and that I liked it deep down so I let him kiss me again. He said he was the only guy I could trust not to leave like my father did and he taught me that if I forced all my sad feelings down, I could pretend I was happy. Then when I couldn't pretend anymore, he told me I could self-medicate with vodka and cigarettes if I kept it a secret from my mother, otherwise she wouldn't let me see him anymore. I wanted to stop trusting him when he forced his hands under my shirt but he told me I was emotional from the vodka.

A few years later, there was a guy who was kind in the beginning. He was desperate to be in love and swore to me we'd last forever if I just promised to never leave him. He bought me a ring with his mom's credit card and told me we could run away from our family and friends to be happy together. We drank to celebrate, and I thought I enjoyed feeling his tongue in my whiskey-soaked mouth but he got too rough. Shortly after that I realized he was drunk all the time and we fought when I asked him to stop. He told me if I loved him, I wouldn't try to change him so instead I drank with him night after night. When I told

him I was unhappy and wanted to leave, he told me he'd kill himself if I left and that I'd be my fault, so I stayed. I stayed when the drinking got worse, I stayed when the drinking turned into pills, I stayed when the pills turned into heroin. One night I found him kissing another girl but he blamed it on the drugs and begged me to stay, then he raised his hands in anger when I told him I didn't want to. One night I drank up the courage to tell him I wouldn't let him hurt me anymore, so he put a baby in me and told me nobody would want me ever again.

For a brief time after that, there was a dude that was best friends with the last. He liked drugs and drinking too. He'd get drunk enough to talk about how his dad hit him and I wanted to save him. He'd get high and tell me I made him feel safe then ask me to slow dance without music while he talked about his ex. He'd beg me to take "one more shot" with him, over and over because "it would show him I cared enough to be vulnerable with him". I stopped wanting to save him the night he snuck some pills into my drink and then took me to the bathroom and locked the door.

When the baby had a heartbeat I told myself I would give it a chance and I'd love it so hard that there'd be no way of it turning out like it's father. I promised baby I'd never leave him alone, and I'd always protect him. I promised baby that I would be strong for him and show him what love was supposed to feel like.

For a long time there was no one, just me teaching baby how to walk and how to count.

One night, I decided I didn't have to be alone or put my life on hold to be a good mom and I started dating a friend. He was kind, and he was gentle. He taught me what kind of lover I want. He'd let me lay sprawled out in his lap while he played in my hair, fingers twisting through my curls and massaging my scalp. I'd watch him play video games and I'd laugh along until I fell asleep and then he'd put on his headset so he could keep playing without waking me. He read and played with baby, he loved and supported him as much as I did. When we drank together he'd keep me hydrated and carry me to bed, and no matter how much I wanted it he always said a drunk yes wasn't consent.

One day I realized I had stopped standing in corners when I was in a room full of people. I had stopped speaking softly and started saying "no". I realized I wasn't afraid anymore to be around men who were loud or drunk. I had stopped forcing myself to starve and binge-drink. I realized I stood a bit taller and I felt brave enough to smile. I had found self love.

Ana Júlia Olivier Rocha



Maria Tane

(BI)CYCLE

She drew a bicycle
And pointed to it
Looking straight
Into my eyes,
Challenging that very word.
"That's me", she said.
Were it for the bike to emerge
From the page
And assemble in front of her,
She'd have no idea how to ride it.
She'd stand just as clueless
As I am each time her head
Lays passingly on my shoulder
During a feat of laughter,
Seeking the support of my bones
While I'm trying to relay
On the fabric of the air
Between my hectic fingers
To carry us both.
My muscles are stiffened
By the sound of the same waves
That want to put them into motion
So how could I know any better
To turn my ragged limbs
Into lover's arms?
Tricky thing
To keep your balance
On the saddle of a bike
When you were only ever
Taught how to walk.

Max MacDonald



Micaela Wentzel



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