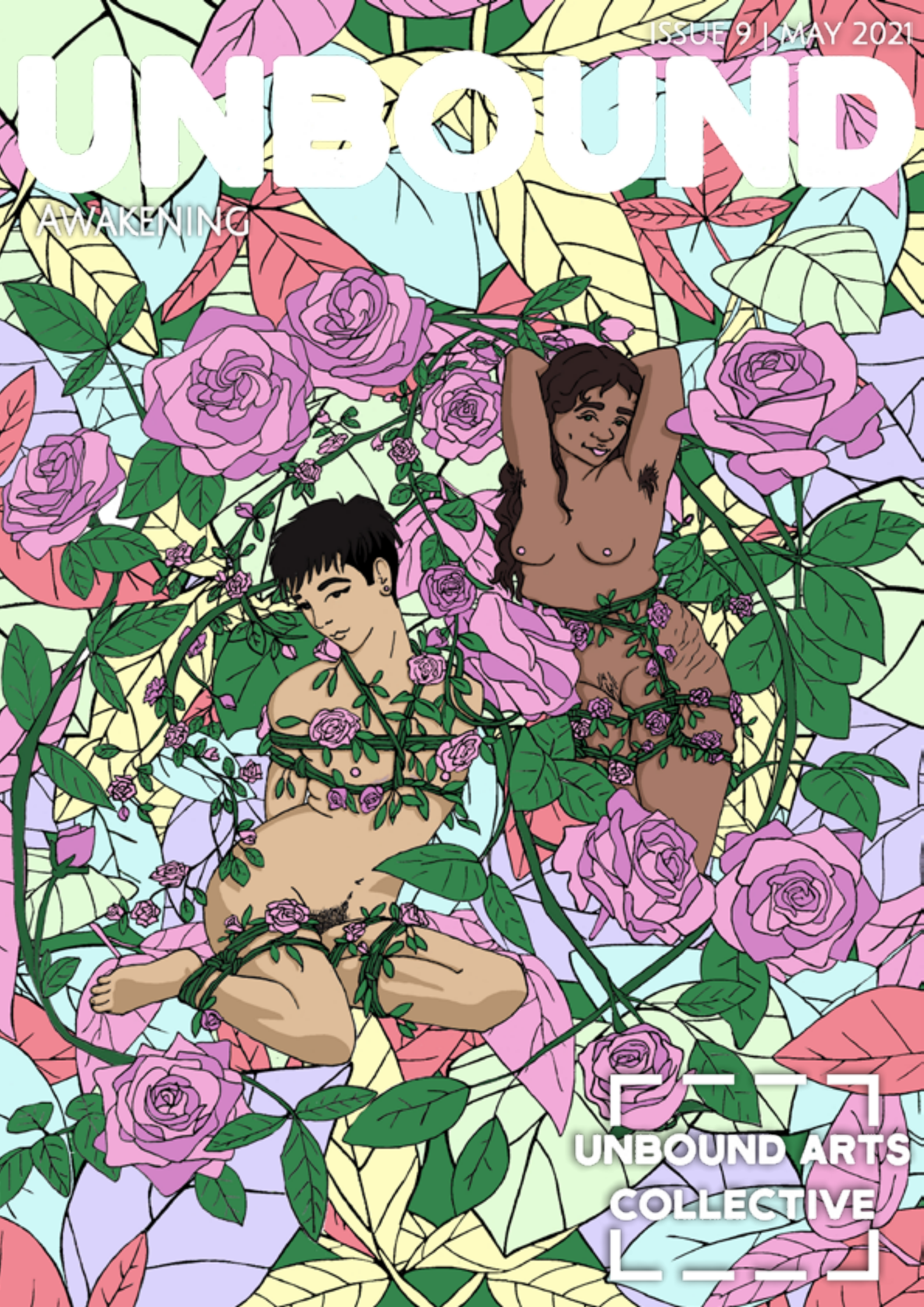


UNBOUND

AWAKENING



UNBOUND ARTS
COLLECTIVE

UnBound Arts Collective is a collaboration between womyn, trans, and nonbinary creatives working to share the voices and works of the marginalized, with an emphasis on the intersecting disadvantages faced by black folks, indigenous folks, and people of color globally. We aim our collaborative efforts at dismantlement of patriarchy, racism, and imperialism through educational and artistic projects, both local and global.

For more information or to view our other projects or past issues of the zine, please visit unboundartscollective.com

If you have any questions or want to learn how to submit your work to this publication, please contact us at info@unboundartscollective.com

This zine is best viewed in a pdf reader such as Adobe Acrobat viewing two pages with cover view toggled.

Dear Zinesters,

The UnBound Team

LASHONDA LOVE *executive director*

ANNE MILLS *assistant director*

CASEY PARKER *editing lead*

LEXIE DUNGAN *art lead*

ENKFI SAVIERO *publishing lead*

Interested in joining UnBound Arts Collective? We are always looking for bright and motivated people to join on as blog writers, artists, editors, social media assistants, and more! Simply email info@unboundartscollective.com and let us know why we should have you on the team!

Cover Art

Lexie Dungan
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Cooper Black
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All graphics were sourced from [Canva](https://www.canva.com/) or drawn by our art lead, Lexie Dungan.

Awaken!

Or... simply go back to bed and take a nap. Spring 2021 calls for collective rest. While the themes for this issue are formed around ideas of awakening, sensuality, pleasure, and nature, our societal reality is also experiencing an awakening. After over a year of closed doors and windows, social distancing, illness, fear, murder, and more, we are asked to have a coming to. We are asked to get the hell up, shake the dust from our limbs, and return to normalcy.

Maybe this is absolutely beautiful and long awaited for those of us who have been living in crushing loneliness - I am sure the prospect of seeing faces we have missed is enough to bring most of us to tears at this point. However, the parts of us that we have been looking for (Pleasure. Rest. Community.) are still asking us to dream with them. They are still asking us to bring them from the deep recesses of our bodies to the waking world.

What spring shoots and unfurling blossoms can you awaken from the soft sheets and pillows of your garden bed? What might wake up within you if you allow yourself to rest? To bring stillness and quiet to the ever-present buzzing [of your phone]? To touch and soothe and to bring pleasure?

Don't let the siren call of capitalist grind culture dull your senses and gaslight you into believing you have to go back to the way things were. Worse, don't let it make you feel you need to catch up. You don't need to catch up - you need to catch your breath. We all need to catch our breath.

Awakening asks that we feel alive. Aliveness asks that we feel rested and refreshed, fulfilled and joyful.

Go take a nap and then read this issue.

Lashonda Love
Pronouns: they/she
Executive Director



NoniCakes is a local online bakery, serving all gluten and dairy free items (and sometimes vegan too!!). We serve mainly the North Columbus Ohio area, we also have products available at the Brown Bag Deli in German Village!

Find us at NoniCakes.com



Le Fae Rouge is run by Jamie, who is presumably a creative collective of fae in a trenchcoat. They make and specialize in comfortable, sexy underwear and accessories for folks all across the gender spectrum, including, soon, a gaff adaption to our standard underwear cut that externally looks identical to the non-gaff pairs AND has been touted by our sample testers as “the most comfortable gaff I’ve ever worn I never want to take it off”.

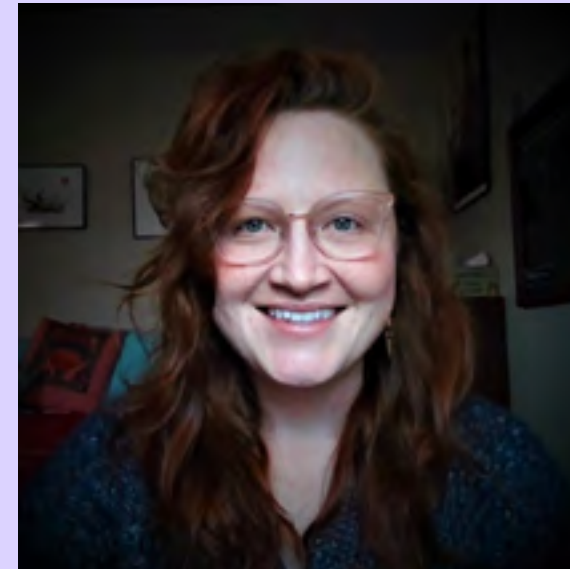
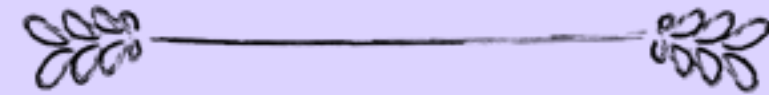


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Featured Contributors



Samantha Tucker

she/her

Sam is an Anti-racist, Anti-Capitalist queer who earned her MFA in Creative Nonfiction from that fucking Buckeye school in 2017. She writes, teaches, and marches in Columbus, Ohio. Find more of her writing [here](#)

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Michael J. Morris

they/them

Michael J. Morris is a consulting astrologer and tarot reader, artist, writer, teacher, facilitator, and witch committed to personal and collective healing and liberation. They began their consulting practice Co Witchcraft Offerings in 2019. Michael holds a PhD in Dance Studies and brings decades of experience in dance, yoga, reiki, and other somatic practices and approaches to embodiment to their work. They are a queer feminist, and their practices are inspired and informed by years of study and teaching in feminism, queer studies, gender and sexuality studies, environmental studies, and other branches of critical theory.



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Astrological Advice

for

Bootlicking, Neo-Liberals, Specifically

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

You've noticed the cop who lives on your block (that white, blonde lady, Kim Porter; the news conference said she mistook her gun for a taser and shot Daunte Wright, a very young Black father). That cop now has twenty-four hour police protection. Her French-knockoff McMansion is surrounded by a six-foot chain link (you always thought her house an eyesore anyway). The neighborhood looks more like local news shots of Minneapolis, police cars lining the streets, mostly white men with severe haircuts and a walk like they've got a stick up their ass. Come to think of it, you've never had a pleasant encounter with the police. They always seem so high on their own power—mind you, you've never been in any real trouble with the law. Suppose there are two sides to every story and continue picking up dog shit in the backyard.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

The thing is you voted for Obama twice. You voted for Clinton and Biden, too. You have Black friends, one, really; you served in the military with her but you haven't spoken for years. You understand the protests. You understand the anger and sadness. How upsetting, you think to yourself when you see the news (thirteen-year-old Adam Toledo shot by police in Chicago. Police said he was holding a gun while body cam footage shows him with his hands up). How upsetting, indeed. That said, you just cannot get behind the looting and destruction. That CVS was just built like a year ago. It was your favorite CVS and really close to your stop. Now you'll have to find a new CVS. Maybe try a Walgreens?

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

It's really weird, you think, the way the deputy (Jason Meade who shot Casey Goodson in the back, repeatedly) mistook the Subway sandwich for a gun (Casey Goodson was walking into his own house with his lunch after a dentist visit). It's strange, too, the way the cops treated the Goodson family (calling them "Bitch," threatening to shoot them, not letting them into their own cars to stay out of the cold). You wonder why Jason Meade (deputy and Baptist pastor) was not in uniform, or why he didn't just disable Casey Goodson, or maybe even just ask him to chat (Meade once said "Jesus was the manliest man in the history of mankind" and, in a sermon at a Baptist Convention told his flock, "I work for the sheriff's office...I hunt people—it's a great job, I love it"). Stop thinking about it. These things are complicated and there's nothing you can do about it. Netflix just dropped a new True Crime doc!

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

You're a new True Crime doc on Netflix! You were filmed in New Mexico and you're about a young woman who went missing from her own backyard! The police immediately identify a suspect, a Mexican kid who walked by her house one time even though he doesn't even live in her neighborhood. He was visiting a classmate to "study" "calculus," but the cops are pretty sure it was him! You begin to suggest through narrated and heavily spliced editing that the kid may have been in a gang, so it appears this case was probably gang-related! The cops think so! The cops have a binder full of people who appear Latinx or Hispanic and these people are all definitely criminals though they have not been charged with any crime! Meanwhile, the murdered woman's family is certain the young woman was murdered by her own white fiancée...a cop himself! What a wild ride you are! So many twists and turns, so little critical awareness, so little time!

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

You're a local news anchor and you keep citing the authorities when you report on these—hmm, police-committed acts of violence? What's the best way to rhetorically sanitize this news? So it's more palatable. A phrase that, when you say it, we know exactly what you mean even though you're actually not saying anything at all. Authorities say authorities shot...no, that's too obvious, how do you sound neutral? Even when that decided neutrality means compromising the truth. "A man was shot," say authorities...Yes. That's what you should do. Change around the words so no fault is assigned, even though it only benefits the "authorities" who "authorized" your report. It crosses your mind, the way a man cannot get shot without someone else shooting them, uniformed or otherwise, but you've got news to report. Keep doing you. You're very good at what you do.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

You've never voted because you don't like any candidates in any election. You're thinking about starting a podcast about politics and the state of America. Good for you!

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

You live in qwhite undisturbed Upper Arlington (in Columbus) (but it's Upper Arlington) and you found Trump distasteful, and you put a Biden sign in your yard. You took it down the day after the election—you're not that into politics—and you think the police killings are tragic for all sides, but it seems like a big stretch to say that Columbus Police using a helicopter one night is proof they are racist. (You did hear they flew over Black neighborhoods exclusively, over which they flew in a pattern that sliced the letters C, P, and D through the night sky, but boys will be boys and you understand sometimes they need to let off a little steam.) You won't be convinced that defunding the police is a viable idea. In fact, you agree with Biden. More training! More money! More toys! They'll figure it out one day, you think, and you're probably right.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

Recently your neighbor put some trash in your trashcan. It was on the curb for pickup and she was walking by. You've seen her do this three times now in the last year. She's a Black woman, and you didn't want to have to call the police on her, but third time's a charm. This has gone far enough. You won't stand for this any longer. Your trash can, your trash. You have no choice but to call the police. Who else is going to make people follow the rules?!

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

You're a wealthy, cis white gay man and you know oppression (you don't). It took you until you were FOURTEEN to tell your parents you're gay (they knew, they're very supportive) and they insist on calling the day you came out your "Gay Birthday" which is just so tokenizing (it isn't). You have been prejudiced against (you haven't) and the world despises you (it doesn't, not like it used to, you're actually pretty trendy right now) and so you know a thing or two about protest (you never have) and disrupting power (interrupting your female boss does not count, but ok). Your favorite time of year is PRIDE and it's the only time of year you and all of your gays can get together (not true, you actually gentrified an entire neighborhood). You feel like lately the celebration has been derailed by people protesting the police and preaching Black Lives Matter and you won't put up with it any longer. You want to know: why can't they just do their own thing? Why can't they understand PRIDE is for celebration and honoring Stonewall (Stonewall was a protest against police started by Black and trans women...) and not for making happy people think about bad stuff (...oh, ok). Maybe you should consider throwing your own backyard pride?

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

You are a regular American citizen and you aren't too sure about this whole supposed "school to prison pipeline." You don't need to learn anything more about it. Follow your gut. Curiosity is a real time suck.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

You are an editor at Simon and Schuster. You are behind the book deal they gave one of the cops who killed Breonna Taylor. You think it's important that people can hear "both sides." You knew there would be backlash, but you believed it would help drum up buzz for the book. You are a bad person. You will continue being a bad person. Go fuck yourself.

PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

You become a cop because you are a genuinely good person who believes you can affect change. You were born and raised in America, where fascism is so prevalent, so quotidian, it's the air we breathe. You believe Black Lives Matter and you know the police force is problematic at best and racist and deadly at worst. You studied criminal justice in school because you are interested in restorative justice. You want to believe in the best of humanity. You think you can fix the bad apples. You think you can model leadership that puts "words before war," as they say in the academy. You are an excellent communicator and you want to help your community. In the academy you spend hundreds of hours watching YouTube streams that show the many ways police are in danger. You are told that everyone is out to get the police. You are told that citizens are the sheep and you are the wolf. You spend a lot of time at the range shooting guns. You come to know the heat of the gun in your hand intimately. You watch cops in danger on YouTube. You practice shooting. You see how badly a traffic stop could go. You practice shooting. You wanted to change policing. Policing has changed you. You are a cop now. There are laws and someone has to enforce them. Don't question the laws or lawmakers—your job is only enforcement. Protect yourself and protect your kind. Everyone is out to get the cops. You started a genuinely good person who believed you could affect change and now you are a cop within a system and culture of cops. Everyone is a potential bad guy. You watch videos on YouTube. You can shoot at close range or far. There are laws to enforce. You are a cop.

Vinnie Fisher

Not Going Anywhere

In this piece I wanted to explore queer history along with using springtime flowers and colours.

The male skeleton illustrated dates back between 2900 and 2500BC and is from the Corded Ware culture of the Copper Age. Unlike the others nearby which were buried facing west towards their weapons, this body was found facing east towards domestic jugs- the way women's bodies of that time are often found. As burial rights were very strict, archaeologists have theorised that the person may have been transgender or third sex.

I like to think of things like this whenever people argue that being queer is a "trend" or something to happen in recent years, we have always been here and are not going anywhere <3

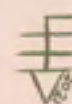
Vinnie is a Non-Binary illustrator and MA Games Design Graduate from Yorkshire, England. She loves folklore, pretty dice and binge drinking cups of tea! They also enjoy anime, gaming, practicing witchcraft and brewing flower wine.



STORENVY



THE AWAKENING



Into The Unknown

For George

The Fool has come to me. Again and again, they jump out of my Tarot deck, onto my breakfast tray table, where I pull daily cards and scribble in my journals.

This tarot deck has a life of its own. It was gifted to me years ago when I was a baby witch, by a boyfriend who always encouraged me to develop my talents. He died very suddenly recently, and I can think of no person whose passing is a better embodiment of The Fool.

George, the fool in question, was a constant source of radical, steadfast, unconditional love in my life. He was my artistic collaborator, sometimes lover, and a devoted friend. He was a visionary, a person who lives outside this dimension and time, and inexplicably, he loved me with no strings attached; radically, steadfastly. He loved me from the moment we met, and he never stopped. It didn't matter if it had been a year or five minutes since we last spoke. George loved me. He always will.

To receive George's love was, and is, the most ego-smashing experience of my lifetime. There was nothing I could have ever done to earn this love. There is no cosmic tribunal that could ever deem me worthy. I exist, and therefore George loved me. That is how deep his faith in his love was—a fool's love, he said many times. He died as he loved—leaping joyously into the unknown with the faith of a child, which, as we know, is the wisest faith of all.

I struggled to receive his love. In the end, I chose a different man, a man who said the things I wanted to hear as he slowly drove me mad with his actions; a man who professed undying love as he abused my body

and mutilated my soul. Somehow, my ego told me, this seemed more fitting—more what I deserved.

I can hardly be surprised that The Fool is visiting me. They often appear when I am being asked to shed my skin; to step into something new. I am no stranger to transformation through loss, it runs through my blood.

Yet this time feels different.

Again and again I have transformed; burning what no longer is meant to come with me on my journeys. I have left relationships, churches, people who felt like home. I have left treasured homes.

I am not being asked to experience the burn of loss this time, unless it is the loss of all the trauma in which my ego is so intent on remaining firmly entrenched.

In the wisdom of the Fool, we are not being asked to leave, but rather to follow. We are being invited into the playful curiosity of the unknown.

What ego-embarrassing bounty lies for us, in the wisdom of the unseen?

We have all lost in the last year; community, jobs, loved ones, money, hugs, freedom, making out at bars. Mother Nature, in Their wisdom, sent us home...sent us inward even when we were essential and could not stay home.

This pandemic is far from over, and yet the wheel turns; needles are going in arms; children are returning in pods to classrooms; like it or not, we are being asked to shift, to turn, to change.

We are awakening in a strange place.

I am awakening, too. The nights that I drink alcohol, I awaken the next morning and don't look much at myself in the mirror. The alcohol burns; it burns away the trauma that is sometimes too much for me to feel; it acts as oven mitts for the burning of all that I remember.

I wear my trauma with a kind of ill-placed egoic pride; as if my suffering is a badge of honor. I remember the burning of the boyfriend I chose who was neither so loving nor so kind as George. This boyfriend wanted to possess, to own, to hurt, to sublimate. I struggle not to let the abuse I suffered at his hands define me, destroy me. In my darkest moments, there is nothing else.



Alcohol dampens the memories of the black glint of hate in my abuser's eyes when he dominated and brutalized my soft body...it burns away the remembrance of him, of all the times he frightened me with his hate, his codependence, his jealousy, his rage.

I fear white men because of him. The fear burns, just the same as the booze.

But when I do not drink, I awaken the next morning, and the burning is all inside of me, like a flame through which I pass my fingers without pain.

I look into the mirror and I see my blue eyes blazing back at me like icy embers of fury. I see my queerness, my desire, my holy rage, the words that burn (only until I write them), my music, my passion. I see the rage that I feel for all the oppressed: I am the least among them. We are not alone. We stand or fall together.

I am a queer fairy. I burn. I am a gloriously angry biped, and I am ALIVE.

Recently, I reach out to a friend. "I feel like I am stuck in some sort of messy alchemy process. Alchemy stinks before it gets better."

My friend replies simply: "Better start thinking about how to spend all that gold."

The Fool notes all this, and takes my hand. "Come with me, Sweetheart. Come with me into the joyous beyond. What has passed is in the past; you are safe."

"Come with me into that which is new; your soul calls to you; the wheel turns. There is no loss in leaving and no gain in staying. What has been, is. What will be, is yet to be discovered."

"Are you brave enough to step out? Will you take nothing from the past with you and come with me on the journey?"

"Are you brave enough to forget him, to trust the healing you have already done?"

"Can you trust the beating of your own valiant heart and follow where it leads?"

Am I curious enough to leave the past where it belongs?

Am I humble enough to be happy again?

Do I trust that I have broken the generational curses?

The Fool isn't just about the new. It's about all that came before.

What glorious, divinely inspired madness makes us ready to take that leap, friendless and alone, with no one to witness it?

How can we lovingly honor the previous selves of us, alone, ugly-sobbing in the rain, along with the version who stands before us, clear eyed and burning with righteous purpose on this bright morning?

When we welcome the equinox, be it autumnal or vernal, how do we hold in balance all that has come before and all that is yet to come?

The equinox is a moment of pause, of balance, but balance is nothing more than constant microcorrections. And we constantly move and turn, whether we wish or not.

And so, we awaken.

We awaken inside the chrysalis and burst out—we spread large, ungainly wings behind us and fly after eons of grubbing in the dirt.

We awaken to gold—pure gold.

How embarrassing to our ego, who would so much rather we stay stuck in the trauma, oven mitts at the ready, being burnt alive by the memories.

Awakening in and of itself is an embarrassment of riches. A humiliating blow to our scarcity mindsets.

And yet, our gold is meant to be spent—to be shared.

What riches have we gleaned in the last year? What wisdom needs to be acknowledged? How do we need to be held and witnessed? In what ways can we share with our community?

We leave all behind, but we carry our gold with us.

We step into the unknown. Join us.

Victoria Dragonfly

she/they



Victoria Dragonfly is a neurodivergent writer, mother, practicing witch, dancer, classically trained opera singer, Tarot reader, and mental health professional. They live in Santa Cruz, California, with their two children and two cats.

Sarah McCoy

she/they 

Millennial attorney harnessing my autism spectrum disorder to teach myself painting and photography.



Fragmented

Oil on canvas, 30x40 inch

Oil painting finished in October 2020.



“Untitled” is a photo from a self-portrait series called “In the Closet”.





“Untitled” is a photo from the series “I’ll Never Give Up Trying to Stop the Rain for You”

Fig Spread On Toast

I'm going to propose to Fig
That I come with them. I'm so fucking scared.
Scared of rejection, scared of them not craving the same thing.
They've been dropping

Hints

And I can't lie,
I'm not sure if I am fielding them well. This is an argument between the
Brain and Soul.

I'm going to propose anyway. Fear
Has ruled over me as a malefic monarchy for far too long
And the permafrost is melting, half a million people have died, and our
extinction is being normalized.
That being said, I think the least I can do is fall in love,
And let that love rule me like the benefic Lover that They are.

J. Faye 
they/he

Dreamy, supremely romantic
Atlanta dyke navigating my
early twenties.



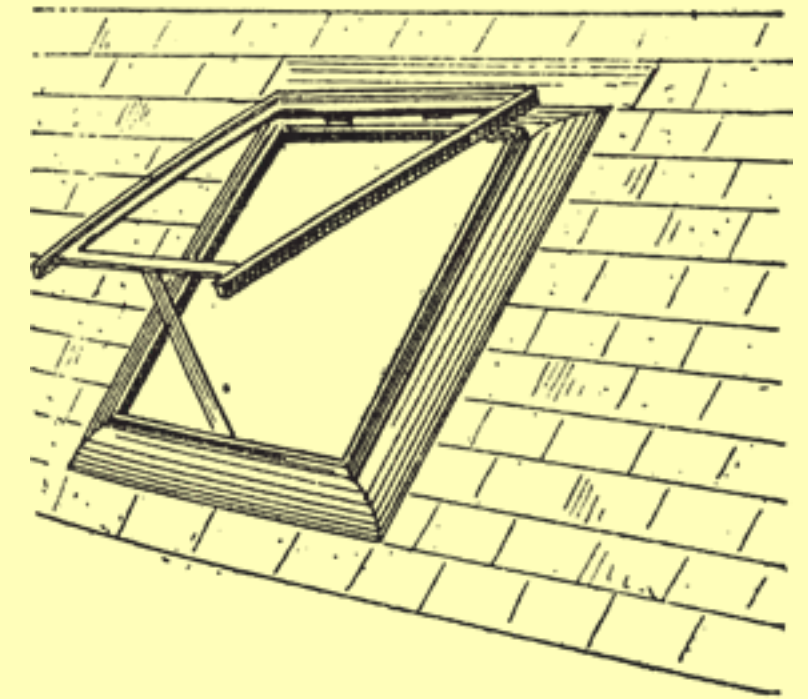
Daylight Savings

light stretched on the carpet
sun reaches my cheek

blink fast to catch the movement
squint to see the magic

neck softly rolls upward

blink to catch the dust on your eyelashes
blink again to let it go



Harry Adams

they/them



Harry is a non-binary creative living in Essex, UK. They write poetry, make films and more recently have started loom weaving. Harry's work explores emotional avenues of identity, relationships and their perspective as an anxious late twenty-something, gender non-conforming person.

Ecosexuality: Toward Pleasurable Relationality With the More-Than-Human World

Michael J. Morris, PhD

*Flesh pressing against flesh, sliding and stroking,
taking in and entering.*

*Heavy breathing and sighs and whispers and
moaning, any number of parts coming into any
number of openings.*

*Pulses accelerate, friction fluctuates with wetness in
vacillating frequencies and variable speeds.*

*Sweat mingles on the surfaces of skin, slipping
across the porousness of permeable bodies moving
in rhythms that rise and fall along currents we can
never fully contain.*

*All of this escalates, throbbing, mounting towards
more and more and more, quaking through climaxes
that reverberate throughout places seen and unseen,
sometimes settling back into quietude, sometimes
building once again to another crest, another
eruption, another dispersal of self.*

There are not only human bodies here. Already within this perhaps familiar scene, an inter-species collective is at play. As feminist biologist Donna Haraway has written, "...human genomes can be found in only about 10 percent of all the cells that occupy the mundane space I call my body; the other 90 percent of the cells are filled with the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such ... To be one is always to *become with* many."¹ Human bodies themselves are already vast ecosystems of nonhuman lives, a swarming microbiome without which we do not live; sex, any sex, is already a multi-species affair. To cum with one is always to cum with many.²

There are ways in which many of us do recognize and manage the ecological more-than-human dimensions of sex and sexuality: the majority of what we call safer-sex practices—our careful use of pharmaceuticals and latex barriers, gloves and condoms and dental dams—strategically mediate between our open, permeable, vulnerable bodies and the plethora of viral and bacterial sexual partners

that may be in bed with us. What we refer to as STIs or STDs—sexually transmitted infections or diseases—describe a range of potential interspecies intimacies, some of them short-term and some of them constituting life-long relationships.

And what of those synthetic pharmaceuticals and materials that enable our intimacies? In the 20th and 21st centuries, our sexual bodies are already prosthetic bodies, cyborg bodies: from the surfaces of our flesh to the molecular potential of our cells, we are actively incorporating technologies onto and into our bodies that allow us to fuck in the ways that we desire. Latex allows us entry into one another's bodies, Pre Exposure Prophylaxis or PrEP flows in our blood preventing HIV transmission, Viagra makes us hard, and contraceptive pharmaceuticals—administered in the forms of pills, IUDs, vaginal rings, patches, and implants—have become the most used pharmaceutical molecules in the whole of human history,³ not only in human bodies but also in ecosystems beyond our bodies.⁴ Opening our frame a bit, we might consider the ubiquity of internet pornography, a virtual prosthetic for fantasy and desire, our devices becoming mechanical partners in our most private acts. We might consider the sex toy and beauty product industries, the vibrators and dildos and lubricants and skin care regimens that bolster our sex lives, synthetic playmates with whom we synthesize our sex.

These sexual technologies—and others—all carry ecological implications beyond our bodies and bedrooms. A number of studies have shown that the synthetic hormones used in birth-control pharmaceuticals are excreted in urine and waste, and have come to circulate in water supplies and ecosystems, with effects ranging from mutated intersex amphibians to impacting the reproductive potential of aquatic life. The full range of effects are still being studied but what is clear is that the chemicals we use to modify our bodies' reproductive

capacities and democratize sexual liberation have ecological effects for other species as well, and the effects of pharmaceuticals like Viagra and PrEP in ecosystems have yet to be studied. Latex barriers like condoms, another leading form of safer-sex and contraception, are used, removed, and deposited in trash, eventually making their ways to landfills, and although many latex formulas are eventually biodegradable, they nevertheless become a factor in the ecological homeostasis within those environmental milieus. Reflecting on the sex toy and beauty product industries, we might consider the industrial manufacturing and packaging processes that bring us these products, where those packaging materials and discarded toys end up, all those batteries powering all those vibrators eventually also added to landfills. And while we may take our phones, tablets, and computers for granted in the 21st century, as we turn our attention to the ecological implications of sexuality, we should recognize that jacking in and jacking off to internet pornography requires energy resources that link our sexual predilections and techno-stimulated orgasms directly to industries such as coal mining, electricity, and alternative energy sources.

What I hope is becoming clear is that sex and sexuality, even in their most mundane forms, involve our already more-than-human bodies mediating more-than-human sexual partners, incorporating more-than-human technologies with consequential entanglements with a much larger world that is far more than human.⁵

"Ecosexuality" is a term for these and many other entanglements of human sexuality with the nonhuman world. Broadly speaking, ecosexuality directs attention toward various ways in which sexuality is already ecological, and the ways in which ecology might be understood as sexual or erotic. This term has come to be used by artists, academics, activists, environmentalists, people working in sex industries, and others. Its dimensions can be practical, material, biological, metaphorical, representational, conceptual, and philosophical.

I first encountered the term "ecosexuality" in the work of artists Annie Sprinkle and Elizabeth Stephens. In 2008, they declared themselves ecosexuals, and married the Earth as their lover. In the years that followed, they married the Sky, the Sea, the Moon, the Appalachian

"Water Pollution Caused by Birth Control Poses Dilemma" Live Science

"Can Birth Control Hormones be Filtered From Water Supplies?" American Scientific, July 28, 2009,

"Birth control pill threatens fish populations" CBCNews, October 13, 2014,

5 More of this in Stefanie Iris Weiss, *Eco-Sex: Go Green Between the Sheets and Make Your Love Life Sustainable* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2010).

6 *Ecosex Manifesto*

7 Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: Towards A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 87.



Mountains, Snow, Rocks, Coal, the Sun, Lake Kallavesi in Finland, and the soil. They have written two Ecosex Manifestos, produced national and international Ecosex Symposiums, and continue to produce performances, workshops, "eco-sex walking tours," gallery exhibitions, and films that enact their vision of ecosexuality—working to shift the metaphor from "Earth as Mother" to "Earth as Lover." As Sprinkle and Stephens have declared in their Ecosex Manifesto, "... we are all part of, not separate from, nature. Thus, all sex is ecosex."⁶ I first met Beth and Annie in 2009. Since then, I have participated in two of their ecosexual weddings, marrying the Appalachian Mountains in Athens, Ohio, and the Sun in San Francisco, California. Ecosexuality became the focus of my dissertation, which I completed in 2015. I have gone on teach courses on Ecosexuality & the Arts at Denison University and spoken about ecosexuality at both national and international conferences.

Why ecosexuality? What is the usefulness of thinking sexuality or ecology in these terms? There are a number of answers I could offer to this, not the least of which being that it gives us a way of accounting for the ecological effects of our sexual practices. But what I would claim most strongly is that addressing the more-than-human dimensions of sexuality is necessary for the deterritorialization of human sexuality, specifically when "human sexuality" continues to function as a domain in which both human exceptionalism and normative/naturalized sexualities are defended and maintained. By "human exceptionalism," I'm referring to the belief that human life is not only qualitatively different from all other life on this planet, but that humans occupy the top of an ontological hierarchy "in a position *superior* to everything else on earth."⁷ This anthropocentric exceptionalism persists from a long Western philosophical tradition that maintains the human right to dominion over the

¹ Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 3-4 (italics original).

² Alphonso Lingis writes, "Human animals live in symbiosis with thousands of species of anaerobic bacteria, 600 species in our mouths which neutralize the toxins all plants produce to ward off their enemies, 400 species in our intestines, without which we could not digest and absorb the food we ingest. Some synthesize vitamins, others produce polysaccharides or sugars our bodies need. The number of microbes that colonize our bodies exceeds the number of cells in our bodies by up to a hundredfold. Macrophages in our bloodstream hunt and devour trillions of bacteria and viruses entering our porous bodies continually. They replicate with their own DNA and RNA and not ours, they are the agents that maintain our bodies." "Bestiality," *symploke* 6, no. 1/2 (Special Issue: Practicing Deleuze & Guattari, 1998): 57.

³ Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013), 28. Also see Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 203-31; Lara V. Marks, *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁴ Wynne Parry, "Water Pollution Caused by Birth Control Causes Dilemma," May 22, 2012,

planet, resulting in the violent instrumentalization of the nonhuman world from which the human is said to be separate. Sexuality specifically functions as an ideological frontier along which we steadfastly maintain that separateness, an area in which we insist on maintaining some fantasy of our own purity. By insisting that sexuality has never been a purely human affair, ecosexuality challenges the mythology and ideology of human exceptionalism that would set “humankind” apart from and above other life on this planet,⁸ and in doing so, creates opportunities to intervene in the often violent ways that we engage with more-than-human lives.

Furthermore, this disruption of human exceptionalism and anthropocentrism also challenges and invites us to reimagine kinship relations and recognize a richly diverse network of meaningful relationships that cannot be acknowledged and celebrated within an imperialist, colonialist, white supremacist, human exceptionalist, capitalist hetero-patriarchy fixated on reproductive monogamous heterosexual partnership. Whether we choose to marry the Earth, Sky, and Sea like Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle, commit to protect the waters of the earth from pipelines, get intimate with the land where we live and honor its Indigenous histories, invest deeply in interspecies care in our relationships with animals and plants and bees, cultivate grounding and abiding relationships with crystals and stones, inhale the sweet smell of springtime flowers bursting forth in their own sexualities, and so on, ecosexuality attenuates us to pleasurable and meaningful relations beyond the human. What might become possible if we allow more relations to matter? When we come into consciousness of our intrinsic inter- and intra-connectedness with-and-in the vast more-than-human world, how is it possible to feel lonely? From an ecosexual perspective, not only is all sex ecosex, but we have never been alone; we have always been held and constituted within countless life-affirming relations, and we always will be—even in death when our bodies re-enter the material and energetic continuums of ecosystems to which we



belong. These have perhaps been the greatest gift of ecosexuality for me: not only recognizing that I myself am always already more-than-human, but also awakening to the availability of more pleasure, more connection, and more meaningful relations. And as we awaken to our place in such a world, I believe we also begin to access vital resources for dismantling the oppressive, extractive conditions of an anthropocentric and human exceptionalist society. When we realize the deep pleasure of belonging with-and-in the more-than-human, our concern for the planet in an age of intense climate collapse can no longer be limited to the survival of the human species, but rather, we may find ourselves orienting toward the care and well-being of all life from which we are never truly separate.

“What might become possible if we allow more relations to matter?”

⁸ In this sense, ecosexuality would enact what Haraway—following Derrida—describes as a wound to human exceptionalism. She writes, “Freud described three great historical wounds to the primary narcissism of the self-centered human subject, who tries to hold panic at bay by the fantasy of human exceptionalism. First is the Copernican wound that removed the Earth itself, man’s home world, from the center of the cosmos and indeed paved the way for that cosmos to burst open into a universe of inhumane, nonteleological times and spaces. Science made that decentering cut. The second wound is the Darwinian, which puts Homo sapiens firmly in the world of other critters, all trying to make an earthly living and so evolving in relation to one another without the sureties of directional signposts that culminate in Man. Science inflicted that cruel one too. The third wound is the Freudian, which posited an unconscious that undid the primacy of conscious processes, including the reason that comforted Man with his unique excellence, with dire consequences for teleology once again. Science seems to hold that blade too. I want to add a fourth wound, the informatic or cyborgian, which infolds organic and technological flesh and so melds the Great Divide as well.” Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 11-12. Like the three historic great wounds, and Haraway’s own informatic or cyborgian wound, ecosexuality strikes at one of the final frontiers along which human exceptionalism is maintained: sexual separateness from the nonhuman world.

If you would like to learn more about ecosexuality, I recommend:

- Assuming the Ecosexual Position: The Earth as Lover, by Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens with Jennie Klein: <https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/assuming-the-ecosexual-position>
- “What’s in Ecosexuality for an Indigenous Scholar of ‘Nature?’” by Kim TallBear: <https://indigenousts.com/whats-in-ecosexuality-for-an-indigenous-scholar-of-nature/>
- Goodbye Gauley Mountain: An Ecosexual Love Story (2014), a film by Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle
- Water Makes Us Wet (2017), a film by Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle
- “Ecosexuals Are Queering Environmentalism” by Mary Katherine Tramontana for TeenVogue.com: <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/ecosexual>
- KQED Arts, “Eco Artists Transform ‘Mother Earth’ into ‘Lover Earth’”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NP2OgI5adwM>

Michael J. Morris

they/them



Expressions In Spring Mud

From “Black Magic: Expressions for Black Bodies”

These expressions are written from the perspective of the brown body. They can be practiced by all, but specifically hold space for melanated folks. Further, while these expressions are written with words, they are meant to be embodied. The language is intentionally provocative enough for you to read it and gain something through the powers of your imagination, but to fully embrace these practices and feel their benefits, you should try these practices in your own bodies, in your own limbs.

Every expression written here can be practiced from your own comfort level. Going outside may look like practicing near a window from inside your home. Feeling rain can be standing in your shower. Playing in mud can be grabbing soil from your houseplants and mixing it in a bowl of water. You know what you need and what you have to work with. Adjust these practices to your heart's content.



With skin in all the shades of wet and drying mud, the bark on sticks, twigs, and branches, we have constant connection to earth. We ground. Are grounded.

After the cooling rains of a spring shower, find a patch of wet soil, undress to your ability or comfort level, and paint your flesh with the smooth mud. Take care to savor each caress. Imagine mud hugging skin, skin hugging muscle, muscle hugging bone, bone hugging marrow, and so on. Work your way back out and envision the embrace of the air around you. The support of ground beneath you. The knowledge that at all times we are falling towards the center of the earth and she holds us up, lays us on her belly, in her palms, and allows us to curl into her. Envision our suspension in the black ocean of space, ferried through the stars and spiraling to an unknown destination.

Smell the mud on your fingers. Taste it if you feel so inclined. Recall if it has always smelled this good or just on this particular day.

Drop your attention down to your pelvis or to your legs, whichever feels most like the foundation of your body's house in this moment. Begin to bounce, shake, or move softly. Move every inch of your body this way. Your toes, your ankles, calves, eyebrows, tongue, elbows - every inch. Shake your hair out or massage your fingers into your scalp. Stir up every single part of you. Loosen cobwebs, puff large plumes of dust, explore your forgotten hallways. Move until you find stillness.



Once you are still, stand, sit, lay down, move closer to the earth in whatever way is the most pleasurable for you. Imagine your mind is a great sieve. Like mud and silt and sand in water, you are stirred up. You are tumultuous and, in your stillness, you will come to settle. With your sieve, you catch, sift, and filter out the things that no longer serve you. That which you keep eventually settles back in the calm waters of the kidneys, around the muddy limbs of your body, seeps back into your muscles and bones, until your water is clear. Until you have clarity. What can grow from your settled mud? What seeds will you plant? Imagine shoots, and sprouts, and saplings rising out of the sediment you decided to keep. You are self-sustaining. A closed ecosystem planting, fertilizing, watering, growing, harvesting, and cycling again. You are life-giving.

Stay here as long as you desire. When you feel ready to move on from this practice, do so.

Lashonda Love

they/she  [lashonda-love.com](https://www.instagram.com/lashonda-love.com)

Lashonda is a versatile creative and activist born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. They hold their B.A. in Music from Denison University and are the Executive Director of UnBound Arts Collective. As a queer, pagan, woman of color raised in a low-income, trauma-affected household, Lashonda centers the intersections of identities as well as trauma storytelling in their works and projects. Among being obsessed with their pets, plants, astrophysics, and burlesque shows, their favorite thing in the world is laying on the couch and playing video games or binge-watching their favorite shows.

“You are self-sustaining.”



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