

The Wrong Kind of Bisexual

By Denarii Grace

One of the myths about bi-plus identity and experience that I loathe the most is the belief that dating is easy for us and we're constantly in the streets (and in the sheets) fucking. Not only does it erase the existence of asexual and aromantic bi-plus people, but it completely disregards the reality of desirability politics – the tired-ass idea that some people are more worthy of dating and fucking, based on race, skin color, body shape and size, (dis)ability, class, gender expression, immigration status, sexual orientation, age, and a whole lot more.

I'm a 31-year-old, very brown-skinned, Black, fat, multiply disabled, non-binary, femme, bisexual/queer, witchy woman. I can count on one hand the number of dates I've been on in my lifetime and still have fingers left over. I can count the number of times I've had sex (of any kind) in my lifetime and still have fingers left over, too.

I won't lie to you, reader: my sexless, dateless, romantically loveless life is caused by a number of factors. Dating (at least the way I would like to date) is hard when you're very poor. I have very unstable income; what income I *do* have is barely enough to pay a Verizon bill or buy groceries. I didn't date or have sex at all until college; in high school, I was more focused on being a "good Christian" and graduating third in my class. One of my many high school nicknames was "Jesus."

I'm not kidding.

I live with my mom, mostly due to circumstances outside of my control (that's an essay for another place and time). I love her, and vice versa, but it cramps my style when we – two whole-ass adults – live in a one-bedroom apartment. Sometimes life is just hard – physically, mentally, emotionally – and dating drama is

Denarii, continues on page 18

Body Hair, Don't Care

By Stephanie Enyeart

Growing up, it seemed perfectly natural that girls shaved their legs and armpits, but boys did not. When I was a kid, I eagerly anticipated learning how to use a razor, even becoming upset when my 16-month-younger sister ended up learning before I did. Before I hit puberty, my mom took me to the doctor to get a mole burned off my armpit so I wouldn't nick it when I started shaving. In hindsight, I wonder what the big deal was. How old was I? Twelve? Thirteen? Who, or what, was I removing my body hair for? But I didn't question it then, dutifully shaving whenever the hair started sprouting, along with every other girl I knew.

While I don't remember if body hair disgusted me then, I do recall that the thought of having visible hair on my legs or armpits made my heart race with anxiety. The thought of people's repulsed expressions if they saw hair creeping from underneath my arms or covering my legs in a soft down was enough motivation for me to stick to my shaving regimen. Girls weren't supposed to have body hair. Any hair that wasn't on your head or covering your private parts was hated and removed. Eyebrows were given strict boundaries, plucked so thin that eventually you could replace them with penciled lines. Even forearm hair wasn't allowed to grow too thick. All this, I learned at an early age. So I probably *was* disgusted by body hair then. Because society taught me that I should be.

The first time I remember seeing a woman with body hair was in college. I was taking a Middle Eastern dance class (belly dancing) with my friends in our freshman year. One day, as we were clicking finger cymbals above our heads, I glanced around the room through the mirrored wall and noticed two women with patches of hair on their armpits. I couldn't help but stare, but it wasn't out of revulsion. I was more intrigued than anything.

When I thought of women who didn't shave, I pictured hippies living in the woods. But here we were in a dance class at a large public university. And there were women with hairy armpits. Didn't they know the unofficially official rules? Weren't they grossed out by their non-feminine hair? Why they didn't shave, and how they acted so nonchalant about it, eluded me.

After that class, though, I didn't think about those women, or about body hair, for around five years. During that time, I came out as bisexual and, as I immersed myself in every LGBTQ



Stephanie, continues on page 19

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Editor's Note

The theme of this issue is "Bodies." Body image. Gendered bodies. Bodies and health. Changing bodies. Bodies converging and merging. Bodies and attraction. Sexual bodies.

This is an important topic for me, as my own bisexuality helped me learn to see the beauty in my own body. It was through my attractions to *other* women's bodies that I was able to expand my own conception of attractiveness and see beauty in my own. I had internalized the idea that to be attractive you needed to look – well, sort of like Barbie – but the women I was attracted to came in a wide range of body types.

You will find in this issue essays by Denarii Grace, Stephanie Enyeart, Lila Hartelius, Kristen G., Elsa Williams, Theresa Tyree, and Karen Remaley; and poetry by Robin Renée, Sam R. Schmitt, Jane Barnes, C. Thompson, Beth Innis, Kaylia Metcalfe, Courtney Carola, Misesa Denéa, and D'Arcy L.J. White; and artwork by Jo-Anne Carlson and WhyNot-BothCo.

In addition, *Around the World* features Anne Müller of Hamburg, Germany and MB Austin interviews author RJ Samuel. And then there are our regular features: our Research Corner, Advice from A. Rose Bi, News Briefs, and our calendar of events.

Enjoy!

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Upcoming in *Bi Women Quarterly*

Call for submissions

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Pop Culture

Did you find your first bi+ role model in a music video, concert, TV show, or novel? Do you have critiques of current media or ideas for how you'd like to see bi+ women represented? We welcome your perspectives on pop culture through personal stories, fiction, poetry, artwork, or opinion pieces. *DUE BY August 1.*

Call for submissions

Winter 2019 issue:

Bisexuality & Disability

We're seeking the personal stories, art, fiction, poetry, or opinion pieces of bi+ women who live with disabilities including but not limited to physical, visual, hearing, intellectual, and learning disabilities; chronic illness; or mental health issues. *DUE BY November 1.*

Submission guidelines are online at biwomenboston.org.

Send your submissions and suggestions for future topics to biwomeneditor@gmail.com.

Note: If you do not want your full name published, or wish to use a pseudonym, just let us know.

The Boston Bisexual Women's Network is a feminist, not-for-profit collective organization whose purpose is to bring women together for support and validation. We strive to create a safe environment in which women of all sexual self-identities; class backgrounds; racial, ethnic, and religious groups; ages; abilities and disabilities are welcome. Through the vehicles of discussion, support, education, outreach, political action, and social groups related to bisexuality, we are committed to the goals of full acceptance as bisexuals within the gay and lesbian community, and to full acceptance of bisexuality and the liberation of all gay and transgender people within the larger society.

Around the World: Anne Müller, Hamburg, Germany

I grew up in the northern part of Germany in a large farm house far away from other children except my three much older siblings and was rather lonesome. I liked being with animals and with my books and was not prepared for puberty and its effects on me. From books and magazines I knew much more about sexuality than was appropriate for my age, and when I was a teen I was eager to explore my sexuality with men and women. But at the same time I was rather shy. I was a tomboy and didn't feel included in any gender group. My fellow students didn't know what to make of my behavior, and neither did I. It took me a long time to figure out myself and my sexuality.

I had my first boyfriend when I was 18 years old and my first girlfriend at 19. Back then I thought sexuality was something you do to have fun, but it doesn't define who you are. During my twenties and thirties, after I had moved to Hamburg, my lifestyle alternated between heterosexual, gay, and asexual.

It was only when I reached 40 years old that I met bisexual people who strongly identified with their sexuality. I started to go regularly to bisexual meetings. These meetings are attended by approximately fifty people from all over Germany and neighboring countries (www.bine.net). That is where I experienced a sense of feeling at home I had never experienced before. It was not so much the fact that people defined themselves as bisexual that brought me in, but the way people treated each other – with great communication skills, with respect, and with love.

One aspect I liked about being at those bisexual meetings was the easiness of being myself without worrying about fitting in or being bullied as I had been in my teenage years.

Another thing was the cuddly atmosphere where everybody seems to be prepared to give a hug or a hand to hold whenever somebody needs comfort or tenderness.

Over the years my circle of friends came to include more and more bisexual people. One of us founded a Facebook group called “the family we wish for.” There is a lot of truth in this title.



Anne (left) marching with BiNe at Christopher Street Day, Hamburg

While engaging in activities like presenting myself as bisexual at Christopher Street Day (Germany's LGBTQI pride parade), talking to people about it, handing out leaflets and doing some work for our bisexual community, I came to know people from different countries.

I got to know Robyn Ochs, for example, and admired her work in Hamburg during the Christopher Street Day in 2016. A year later I had the chance to visit her in Boston and get to know even more bisexual women. Their hospitality was overwhelming.

Right now I am hosting a bisexual student from the Middle East for a few weeks. And I am getting a new perspective on our western beliefs and privileges. My bisexuality has expanded my view of the world in so many ways. I feel it is one of my strongest resources. I now realize that my identity is strongly connected with this part of myself.

I feel strong and supported by being part of the bi community. Every one of us is part of the family.



Anne and Robyn Ochs in Hamburg, Germany, August 2016



Anne at a BBWN/bi women's event in Boston, August 2017

For a Limited Time Only

By Lila Hartelius

“...It’s great they did that for Women’s Day.”

My mind snapped into focus. “What happened?” I asked a dance classmate as we redressed ourselves for the cold. “Nocibé had a 20% discount on women’s perfumes.”

“Oh,” I said and slipped my shoes on in silence.

Her innocent enthusiasm at this apparently benign sales offer seemed, in fact, symbolic of an idea that, by giving less of one’s money than usual to a chain store to obtain a product designed to apply on one’s body to enhance women’s allure to men, one is getting a deal. How many women, I wondered, who have felt a similar excitement upon discovering a discount on women’s beauty products, have considered the idea that they are intellectually and emotionally buying into a male-gaze-centered, consumerist ethic that perpetuates the myth that women must contribute monetarily to a misogynistic, commodity-based system to acquire something external that will, in theory, render them alluring enough for men to want them? How many such women have considered the idea that they are feeding into an ethos that says their value is based on how much men desire their bodies? How many women have considered the idea that this puts them in a position of being, to a certain degree, viewed by society as commodities?

In this light, women’s social identities are reduced to their bodies and their bodies to fetishized commodities. Women flocking to buy the latest dress, lipstick, or weight-loss program to try to make themselves look like models in the latest fashion magazines suggests a commodification of one’s own body in order to render it more “sellable.” This commodification’s focus is not on increasing the use value of one’s own body to oneself (e.g. by making it more efficient at what it does) but on increasing its exchange value.

Coupled with the societal message that women, inasmuch as they are their bodies, should be desirable to men, there is another message: women should not allow their bodies to be *too* easy for men to obtain. Saying a woman is “easy” is not a compliment. In a sense, if women follow the instruction of these paired messages, they participate in a social process whereby their bodies come to represent the equivalent of, for example, an expensive perfume. This is echoed in certain aspects of how men tend to be traditionally socially educated to regard women, with catch-one-if-you-can attitudes that teach men that women are desirable possessions that must be “won” or “bought” (with roses, expensive jewelry, mortgages, etc.).

Metaphorically speaking, if, in society’s eyes, women – or, rather, women’s bodies – are expensive perfume, then bisexual women – or, rather, their bodies – are expensive perfume on discount. In other words, if we argue that women’s bodies are, in society’s view, coveted fetishized commodities – highly desired objects whose value is, similar to that of a pearl, realized only via ex-

change – then bisexual women’s bodies are seen by society as coveted fetishized commodities *on discount*. This is evident in the co-existence of two stereotypes about bisexual women: 1) that they are exotic in bed, and 2) that they are “easy.” The first attributes to bisexual women a hyper-desirability or comparatively elevated social value. Yet in the second it is clear that the societal attitude is this: easier access may not always mean better quality in the long run and almost certainly guarantees against it. “The floodgates are open!” is what seems to resound from the conception that bisexual women are comparatively easy to seduce. Yet there is a question mark in the minds of those invited to “ravage the spoils”: why is this perfume “on discount” (or, in other words, easier to attain)? Is there a defect? Is it almost expired? Has it not sold very well? It is as if the facilitated access makes the “shopper” wary of the “product’s” value.

From this perspective, it seems society tells women that their value, inasmuch as it is equated with the social exchange value of their bodies, is directly proportionate to their body’s desirability to men and inversely proportionate to its accessibility to men. Bisexual women, then – and, more specifically, their bodies – inasmuch as they are seen by society as being both hyper-desirable by and hyper-accessible to men, would be regarded by society as having short- but not long-term value.

It might be tempting for some who are unacquainted with the LGBT community first-hand to say that within that community bisexual women can find a haven from this objectifying, degrading attitude toward them. However, I personally have experienced and heard of, with disappointing frequency, incidences of this same objectifying message about bisexual women expressed or implied in non-bi-specific LGBT circles. Whether it comes under the guise of compliments suggesting a view that bisexual women are wild creatures with sexual prowess and have “tried everything in bed,” or in the form of comments revealing an opinion that bisexual women are promiscuous, exhibit risky behavior, have STIs, or are bound to leave their partner for someone of the ‘opposite’ gender, it seems both heteronormative and queer cultures circulate the message that bisexual women are “not relationship material.” Given society’s insistence on monogamy as a relationship ideal – and given the predominance of the idea that once one has “settled down,” so (at the risk of being seen as perverse) must one’s sex life – this is not surprising considering the stereotypes that bisexual women are “easy” and “wild in bed.”

It is as if society is saying: “Save your big money for an expensive perfume, because then, in addition to the proof you’ll have from its character and personality, you’ll know it’s of exceptional quality and will render itself timeless. But until you find that one perfume that’s just right for you, why not have a little fun? Life is short. You might be disappointed, but, if you buy one of these perfumes while they’re on *discount*, at least it won’t put a dent in your wallet – and it’ll be fun while it lasts.”

Translation: “Save your heart for a woman who has the capacity to be attracted to members of your gender only, because then, in addition to the proof you’ll have from her character and personality, you’ll know she’s of exceptional quality and won’t leave you for someone of the ‘opposite’ gender. But until you find that one woman who’s just right for you, why not have a little fun?”

Lila, continues on next page

Lila, continued from previous page

Life is short. You might be disappointed but, if you have a fling with a *bisexual* woman, at least it won't be a big disappointment because it wouldn't have come to much of anything anyway – and it'll be fun while it lasts.

This message puts a spotlight on society's tendency to disproportionately perpetuate an image of bisexual women, as compared to non-bisexual women, that reduces their worth to the desirability of their bodies. If all one is good for is one's body, then where does that leave one's place in society? If many desire you but few want to keep you, where can you be expected to feel truly welcome?

Both heteronormative and queer spaces seem reluctant to welcome bisexual women, and the site and axis of this discord is bisexual women's bodies. The question of bisexual women's place in society is effectively a question of where bisexual women's *bodies* – both literal and symbolic – belong. The idea, in minority communities, of a "safe space" is a space into which only certain bodies, carrying certain identities, can enter (whether for good reason or not). The phrase "lesbians only" implies that bisexual women's bodies are unwelcome in the space denoted. In heteronormative society and LGBT circles alike, commenting that bisexual women are "exciting," "exotic," "sluts," or "cheaters" implies that, in the spaces the commenters inhabit or traverse, bisexual women's bodies may in some cases be welcome, but only temporarily.

In French, "*SDF*," which stands for *sans domicile fixe* ("without permanent residence") refers to homeless people. In a sense, bisexual women – and, more specifically, their bodies (metaphorically, and sometimes literally) – find themselves without permanent residence in society. They are too often either used for others' pleasure or shunned. Where they are not treated in these ways, they may still be regarded as worthy of such treatment. For example, using bisexual women for sexual gratification might be argued by some as justifiable by way of the stereotype that, because bisexual women are "easy," they cannot be "faithful" (in other words, that they cannot consecrate their sexual body to the hands of only one partner). Shunning bisexual women might be argued by some as justifiable by way of the stereotype that, because bisexual women are "easy," their bodies are "diseased" (in other words, that they have STIs). Whatever the excuses for such attitudes, the message broadcast seems to be that bisexual women's bodies have no place in society, or that, if they do, it is – like the discount on women's perfumes at Nocibé – for a limited time only.

Lila Hartelius, BA (lilahartelius.wordpress.com) is a bilingual (English/French), published writer and editor who has written funded grant and business proposals and served as editorial assistant for the International Journal of Transpersonal Psychology. Her work has been published in *Bi Women Quarterly*, *Weird Sisters West* and *Tendrel* (Naropa University's diversity journal). With competencies in communication techniques and active learning pedagogy, she has been a workshop leader at EuroBiCon and has contributed to the efforts of Bennington College's Queer Student Union, Naropa University's GLBTQ student group, and Boulder Pride.

Wednesday Afternoon

By Robin Renée

I give you my G-spot
You give me slick fingers
I give you garbled shouts,
sex beyond syntax
The two of us a blur
of cocks, pussy, paddles, straps
Your P-spot wants
what I want
Deep
inside each other, no lines
No lies, a gender playground bounce
and slide
You wear the fishnets
We kiss lavender lipstick
We give praises
in bodies, breath, coming.
Clinging, we rest.
Curled up cats
in the Kundalini sun.

Robin Renée is a recording artist, writer, activist, and a member of the bi and poly communities. Robin's recordings include *In Progress*, *All Six Senses*, *Live Devotion*, *spirit.rocks.sexy*, *This.*, and *All I Am*.



Photo credit: Mallory Beck Heartsong.

A Rock to Stand On

By Kristen G.

I stood there on that large rock, with the cool summer evening breezes caressing my skin, toes clenching to the granite under them. As the water rippled around me, I felt timid and wanted to hide. My short, chubby body was more exposed than ever before in my life. Where were the clothes that covered my insecurities? My neighbor and friend encouraged me on and said, “Don’t be afraid. Stand tall. Spread your arms out wide like you are flying.”

Earlier that year marked my return to Massachusetts and on that spring day when we met, he eyed my New Jersey plates and then boldly made his first impression. “Have you ever been to Gunnison Beach?” “Oh, the nudist beach? You go there?” I replied, laughing nervously. “Yeah, I used to head down there once a year. I’ve been a nudist for over 30 years.” My sheltered, late-20’s yuppie self was both astonished and intrigued.

As the weather warmed up, I found in him an exercise buddy and we started jogging together and then swimming on alternate nights. Turns out he was bisexual too, and being a couple decades older, experimented with cross-dressing in his 20’s through acting and modeling. As someone who recently came out with no close LGBT friends, he mentored me beyond ditching the swimsuit.

“What if the police show up?” I look around me – paranoid – as we side-stroked over to the island in the lake. The water enveloped every inch of my body like a blanket and I was alive with feeling. “Don’t worry, just keep the thong around your wrist. You can’t get arrested for being topless as a woman, but you have to wear a bottom.” While I didn’t get to validate his research, I was willing to take the risk given our quiet alcove of the nearby reservoir where he had been swimming for so many summers.

He freed me. He made me realize how culture created feelings of insecurity within me. He taught me to love my body more and to embrace it. He showed me how to challenge authority and to think about my rights. For that, I am forever grateful.

Now, several years later, I think back to that discussion we had, while swimming, about the legalities surrounding topless women. I imagine what it’s like to be a male in this society, to be able to walk around topless in most locations without a glance of judgment or surprise, never mind legal rights. This mental revisit has been sparked by my partner who is transitioning from male to female. What will it be like when he becomes she and walks through this world with a new set of expectations and rules set upon her? Is it really fair that society has different rules about revealing male and female bodies? About how we should behave and not behave? About who we should have sex with and how to have sex with those people? The legal and cultural rules bestowed upon us are invasive and senseless.

I watch my partner get dressed *en femme* and strive to flaunt those aspects of feminine appearance so typically deemed attractive. Brightly polished manicured nails. Check. Carefully applied make-up. Check. Silky smooth legs with minimal body hair. Check. Jewelry adorned so selectively to highlight the gentlest features of the bosom, neckline and ears. And high heels to boot. That same checklist is the one I have been rebelling against all my life and makes me even question my own position on the gender spectrum. Can’t I be myself and still be attractive? Who am I trying to appeal to? Clothes and appearance are such an important part of self-expression and identifying with subcultures. They are like a large bumper sticker on your body screaming who you are and what you stand for.

On the other end, and a real driver in my partner’s need to transition, the amount of stress on men in our culture to be “manly” is absurd. The picture of that prototype is even more confining than our sexy woman checklist. It takes bravery and the ability to “man up” every given second. To be a woman is to be gentle, and to be a man is to be strong.

What I love about the bisexual movement is that we challenge all of that. We challenge binaries placed on gender and sexuality. We state that there are no rules. Be who you want to be and be loved and wanted for who you are. I am a proud bisexual who will stand back on that rock, bare all and fearlessly claim my spot in this world.

Kristen still resides in Massachusetts and continuously seeks inspiration to live freely in this world. She champions for all that she stands for and is grateful for you and our community.



Kristen (right) & her partner

“Where Did You Get that Nasty Scar?”: A Memory Map of a Bi, Trans, Cancer Survivor’s Body

By Sam R. Schmitt

Sometimes, I run my fingers over the numb, dead flesh where medical grade steel rendered cyborg machinations. “...the size of a half-dollar coin.” “...just beneath the collarbone.” “...channels vinblastine through the heart.” If I twist my arm just so, a small concave void appears. Occasionally, I remind myself of the emptiness there, contorting my shoulder in the shower, letting droplets accumulate in the miniature skin basin. That place where heparinized saline pooled and burned beneath the surface, where alcohol swabs and butterfly needles thickened my skin into tanned leather. Now vacant, the only sign of my cancer is a three-inch, pink, keloid scar and a lingering sense that my body aged. I once dared to wear a V-neck in public. A stranger asked: “Where’d you get that nasty looking scar?” When I tell my story, they swoon: “You’re so young.” The stench of pity burns my nostrils. I sometimes catch myself scrutinizing medical pockmarks in the mirror. The shadows of tubes, wires, drips, and incisions penetrate my flesh. A borderlands body, caught in the twilight-sleep of surgery between dissection and vivisection, pity and perverse, gay and straight, man and woman.

Cupping my ribs, I press my forearms into my chest lifting away bits of undesired flesh. The same arms that embraced their lover whose beauty refracts light like a crystal. I imagine an impossible malleability. As if pinching away bits of clay or chipping away excess stone. In my mind’s eye, I etch a new body with pastels of pinks, browns, and reds. Doctors worry that cancer will come back in my breasts someday but greed runs the care industry. A cruel irony. They won’t pay to make me whole but they’ll pay to rip me open. I trace imaginary incisions across my chest. “Two lines beneath the pectoral muscles...” “Visible, double-incision scars...” “Repositioned with a free nipple graft...” If the scalpel touches my body I hope it leaves me scars, rippled and unsightly, because at least I would be visible.

Sam (they/them) is a doctoral candidate in Multicultural Women and Gender Studies at Texas Woman’s University and Adjunct Professor of Sociology at Hamline University. Sam enjoys reading, cats, strong black tea, a nice pair of socks, and thinking about gender, sexuality, bodies, and identity.

If you are in the Boston area, please consider joining us at one of our events. We host monthly brunches, and every three months there is a “Stuff & Stuff,” where we prepare the print mailing of this publication. Check out our calendar (page 24) for dates of upcoming events.



February Stuff & Stuff

Embodied

By Elsa Williams

Thirty years ago, when I was 15, I turned myself into an atheist. I excised my faith, but I couldn't excise the idea of sin. I decided that I was evil and I embraced that new identity, with the kind of devotion that only the religious can muster.

My mother was a Christian Scientist, but never pushed me into devotion. I had to go to Sunday school, but beyond that I was on my own. She had been raised a Christian Scientist, had left the faith in her late teens, and returned to it in her late twenties, when she was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. All that doctors could offer her was a life of suffering, so she turned to prayer. Mornings I could always find her in bed reading her Lesson. Her *Bible* and *Science and Health* marked with metal bookmarks and blue chalk. The practice of Christian Science involved quiet reading, contemplation, and prayer, and, as a child, I didn't have the discipline.

When I was 11, I started to mark my own books and read the Lesson each week. Which meant that by the time I got serious about Christian Science, I was in middle school. Ugly, awkward, and socially isolated. And very receptive to the idea that everything on the temporal plane was suffering. I had no trouble believing that I couldn't trust anyone but God. It soothed my loneliness and abetted my desire to think of myself as a disembodied mind, a glowing jellyfish floating through a dark world. Free from fat, body hair, acne, and bullying.

When I was 15, I realized I was bi. One spring night, I dropped into a hypnagogic vision of a woman's naked body under my own, my leg between hers, my hand on her breast. I came out of it transformed and dazed.

And in that daze, one day in after-school rehearsal for *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, I suddenly realized that the bump at the front of the music teacher's too tight jeans was his penis. His penis was right in front of me. Men had penises in their pants all the time. It felt like a revelation. Desire was completely different from the crushes I'd had before, where I fixated on any crumbs of attention that a boy or a male teacher gave me. This was about the messiness of bodies.

That spring, my mother took me to Paris for a week. We woke up very early every morning, and spent every minute visiting museums and historic sites. I spent the trip in a haze of sleep deprivation and hormones. I was totally absorbed by the nipples and belly buttons of the Egyptian statues, the sensuality of the ancient black stone. I searched out every painting or sculpture of the three muses dancing naked in a circle, lost in a secret reverie of women's bodies touching.

I had always lived in my head, either worrying or daydreaming. And living in my body was intoxicating. Warm velvet pleasure. I wallowed in it, even though I knew I should be fighting it. I

was supposed to be the watchman of my mind, but I had abandoned my post.

By that time, my mother, though still a practicing Christian Scientist, had pulled away from the community. We moved to California when I was 14, and it took her a long time to connect to any kind of community there. But also, the year before we moved, she'd had viral meningitis. She told me that Christian Scientists could turn against you if you got sick, blame you for not having prayed hard enough. I'm not sure if that happened to my mother, or if the fear was enough for her to exile herself.

So it felt like there wasn't anyone I could turn to for advice on how to reconcile religion with queer desire. Talking to my mother was out of the question. She did not seem to have any concept of sexual desire as a thing women experience. I have since wondered if she has ever had the visceral experience of desire, and if so, why it didn't make her question the sexual rules she grew up with in the 1950s? That girls only have sex to please boys, and that it is a tight wire act to extract what they need – marriage, respect, and fidelity – out of the bargain. That homosexuality is intentional, deviant, and political, permanently tied to the Communist menace from all the propaganda films the teachers made her watch on Friday afternoons.

My desire didn't feel like a political stance – it felt like a vital part of me – but it did feel intentional. I was sure that if I worked hard enough, I could retreat into meditation and dull the demands of my body, the same way I had used prayer to dull the pain of a jammed finger. My new sinfulness felt fragile, like if I opened it up to debate, I would be forced to give it up.

The closest thing in Christian Science to sin was Error, the error of turning away from God's Truth and putting your trust and belief in the false world of the senses. So I turned away from God and identified as a sinner.

Overnight, I became a materialist, a humanist, an atheist. It felt imperative that I extract myself from a worldview that denied the reality and importance of my desire.

One night that spring I snuck out to watch the midnight showing of the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* because I had intuited that it had something to say to my new sinful self. I searched out sinful books. *Story of the Eye*, *City of the Night*. But also anything I could find about being queer. *The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse*, *Black Unicorn*, *Another Mother Tongue*, *Gossamer Axe*, *Rubyfruit Jungle*. None of which had much to say about being bisexual.

The conviction that I was now irretrievably evil helped me escape from a set of religious ideas that was encouraging my worst



Elsa, continues on next page

Elsa, continued from previous page

impulses of isolation and social withdrawal. And it helped me ignore all of my mother's heartfelt but regressive ideas about sexuality.

But thinking of myself and my sexuality as bad made it hard for me to realize that I was allowed to be as inexperienced and naive as my peers. I felt thoroughly debauched. I had sinned in my heart. And I wasn't going to stop. I was fiercely protective of that sin. I refused to be ashamed.

For a couple of years, my sin remained in the purely theoretical realm. None of my friends drank or did drugs or went to the parties the popular kids threw when their parents were out of town. I lived in the cloister of being a nerd girl. Though I intended to have as much sex and do as many drugs as I could, if I could make myself cool enough for either one to be on offer.

That cloister didn't protect me for very long. I chafed at the other girls' timidity. And the world was much bigger than my honors classes. I was a tall, striking teenager who looked older. And I worked hard to give the impression that I was up for anything.

When I was 17, I went down on a boy because he told me, "I thought you were adventurous." And I felt like I had something to prove. I wanted to be tough, but spent the next day hiding in the school art studio and crying. It felt like it was all my fault because I had wanted "experience."

I talked to the school counselor, and she told me it was OK to kiss a boy and then say no. That no matter what he said, I hadn't been leading him on. I nodded, but deep down, I didn't believe her.

That spring, I slept with a woman for the first time. I had been in love with Carmen for two years, but she had believed me when I said I was bad. She thought she was just another notch in my bedpost.

The school counselor was the only person I felt like I could trust, so I told her about Carmen. Told her I was bi. She told me about the Pacific Center, a queer youth group in Berkeley, which was a lifeline for me.

At the end of the school year, the counselor pulled me aside to tell me earnestly, "Elsa, you're not bad. You get good grades. You don't do drugs."

Though I now cringe at her limited idea of what made me good, I wasn't able to hear what she was trying to say. That I wasn't intentionally causing trouble, even if my mother and some teachers seemed to think I was. It felt like my sexuality, which was so central to my identity, was inherently wild, deviant, corrupt, and a choice.

Elsa Williams is working on a memoir about her early 20s and blogs at worn-smooth.tumblr.com. She is a biomedical scientist living in Medford, Massachusetts with her husband and two children.

Jazz Under a Full Moon/ Poem for Bill Evans

By Jane Barnes

For Gordon

I first hear you in a house where
my mother is dying with a plastic
tube up her nose

and love has left me
after ten years and gone to
South America and I am driving

to a gym at midnight on Route 5
under moonlight and I put in
your tape sent by a faraway friend

and the fact that love's died and even
I will die and the moon shrink
to the size of a noose and

even you Bill Evans will die in fact
he's already died and I will
never run long enough on the

running machine to get skinny
again so what it's glorious
'cause look at the moon it's as

bright as a fried egg and look at
me alive with a little egg
on my face

Jane Barnes is a long-time New Yorker, currently living in Staten Island.

Editor's note: Bill Evans (1929-1989) was an American jazz pianist and composer.



Boobs

By Theresa Tyree

The first time I was uncomfortable with my body was when I noticed my breasts starting to grow. I was horseback riding, and had just moved my horse from a walk into a trot. Even posting like you're supposed to in that jaunty gate, my chest was suddenly sore – the flesh of my budding breasts protesting at the harsh up-and-down movement. Having breasts only got worse from there. I had to learn to wear a whole new piece of clothing, figure out how to run again, and see what was comfortable and what I couldn't stand (underwires were hard at first, but as my breasts grew to DDs, they became a necessary evil).

Bras were annoying. They were weird. My wearing them made some people comfortable – like my mother – and some people uncomfortable – like the kids at school or my Taekwondo instructors if they saw part of it due to the high cut of training bras or the sheerness of my white Taekwondo uniform.

So, from an early age, my breasts were more of an annoyance and a bother than anything else. I put up with them, because what was the alternative? I covered them up, because I didn't like the way people treated me when they could see parts of them. I noticed the differences between mine and other girls' in the high school locker room while changing out of our swimsuits and showering after Phys Ed class.

I can only attribute my not knowing bisexuality was a thing at the time for why that didn't clue me in that I was into girls as well.

Years later, the woman who gave me my first book publishing internship asked me if I was gay. I was applying to her publishing house specifically because she published gay and lesbian science fiction and fantasy, so the question was less out of the blue than you might think. I told her I didn't really know. I'd never had a girlfriend, but I wasn't dating boys at the time – because this was during college, and all the ones with good heads on their shoulders were busy studying. Then she asked me if I found myself staring at boobs a lot. It took me a minute to respond, because I was of two minds. On one hand, yes, I definitely noticed women's breasts. On the other, when she phrased it that way, I could only think of the uncomfortable way boys had looked at mine in high school.

I told her no, and she waved me off and said, "Then you're not gay, so you'll get married and have kids someday." I looked up to this woman, and at the time she was one of the only women in my life I knew who identified as a lesbian. Because of those two things, I assumed she knew better than me as to whether I was actually into women or not.

Yet, a year later, I fell in love with my first girlfriend.

And I loved her breasts.

I loved a lot of other things about her too, though. Her long,



pretty blond moon-goddess hair and the way it fell away from the sloping curve of her neck when she turned her head to kiss me. I loved her delicate wrists and the way she wrote *Rise of the Guardians* poetry as poorly disguised homework assignments for our English class.

Her breasts weren't more exciting than the rest of her. They were only exciting to begin with because they were a part of her. Otherwise, they were mundane. Normal. Boring. I had a set of my own. I saw breasts every day. If that's what I wanted, I didn't need a partner to get an eyeful. Having a partner trust me enough to get vulnerable and naked with me, though? Now that was really hot.

I had a really different relationship with the male body. While the female body was familiar and mundane when not in a consensual sexual situation, male bodies were foreign and culturally weaponized against me. I felt subjugated and demeaned by certain acts with my male partners. I refused to let my first boyfriend touch my breasts. The second only got to touch them through my clothes. Men groped women to objectify and scare them on TV. Women were forced to their knees by rapists in literature and on screen in acts of dominance. Society and abstinence-only sex education screamed at me that a woman's worth was lessened by each penis that had been inside of her mouth or vagina.

To me, having a man touch my breasts or ask me for oral or vaginal sex could be nothing but violent.

It took me a long time to get over that trauma and reclaim those things for myself. I discovered that I liked having my breasts caressed. I found that oral sex could make me feel magnificently powerful. And when the silence of the bedroom was broken and replaced with the murmured desire-clad words of partners checking in with each other and expressing enthusiastic consent, vaginal sex could be remarkably intimate and fulfilling.

But there were other aspects of existing in a female body that sucked – like how female nudity was considered provocative. I had stood in the showers as a sexually confused teenager with a

Theresa., continues on next page

Theresa, continued from previous page

bunch of naked girls my age, looking at their bodies glistening in the spray right in front of me, and *known* there was nothing sexual about their nudity. It was functional – all about getting the chlorine from the school pool out of their skin and hair before changing back into their clothes and going to their next class.

If I could figure that out as a teenager, then it stood to reason adult men and adolescent boys could too. Those who couldn't became a point of contempt.

As I went on with life, I became aware that no one got to expect things from my body except me. That doing things for myself and not because someone expects me to is so much more fulfilling. Some days I want the support of a bra, and some days the very thought of one makes my ribs ache. On days like that, I go out without one on. It made me self-conscious at first, but as I

did it more and more, I noticed that no one has the guts to say anything about it to my face. In the winter, I keep as much hair on my body as I can—because I live in the Pacific Northwest and it gets *cold* in October and doesn't let up until the end of March! In the summer, I shave it all off and enjoy the feeling of rubbing my smooth, bare legs together in my heat-relieving skirts and shorts. It's all about what makes me comfortable now. And the dream is to someday have a partner who sees my body as mundanely as I do: special only because it is mine, and otherwise just a lot of daily upkeep.

Theresa Tyree is a freelance writer and editor. Find out more about her favorite stories on her blog at noodlesfromtomorrow.blogspot.com.

Portion

By C. Thompson

Head
Shoulders, knees, toes

Plus hands. Warm and buzzing round my waist,

They wake
me.

To my body's wants. Wants
Your lips on mine
Cloyingly sweet amaretto

Then also
Teeth occasionally pin-pricking the
flesh
Sharp like

A tart lemon sour.
Sour, sour acid
shock my eyes open, awake

Aware of you.
Your proximity to me

and despite my insecurity
I yearn to know you like
this.

The ocean calm is emptied of its passion.
Be wind rough and wake me. Fill me,
Heaping portion of you to satisfy—

as I've never been one
for diets.

Ignore that tired cliché, I'm not so gimme-gimme
greedy.
Simply waiting for permission
to take
a
bite of you (or two)

thirst—that wanting language
no,
with you I think there's something
that I'd rather like
to eat



C. Thompson is a Massachusetts transplant who has always desperately expressed herself in as many ways as possible. By day (or night) she is a flight attendant. Outside of work she cycles between hobbies and daydreams, hoping to take advantage of the vibrant Boston Bi+ Community through involvement and mutual support.

When I Was Ten

By Beth Innis

When I was ten, I stopped eating
after enough boys had told me I had “fat legs”
after my brother laughed that I was developing breasts
I was hungry and scared

When I was ten, I stopped eating
when my parents wouldn't cease their fighting
when I couldn't get out of my best friend's shadow
(I was glad and mad when they noticed)

When I was ten, I stopped eating
I couldn't answer any of their questions
All I could see was the calorie count on the side of the box
And the ever lowering numbers on the scale

When I was twenty, I stopped eating
(as much)
I learned the ways to do it
the things to say that kept people comfortable
that kept the questions at bay

When I was twenty, I stopped eating
I couldn't stop dating men
though I should have been dating women
(it was easier to reduce portions)

When I was twenty-two, I stopped eating
the boyfriend at the time only knew my present body
I couldn't ask him to love another one

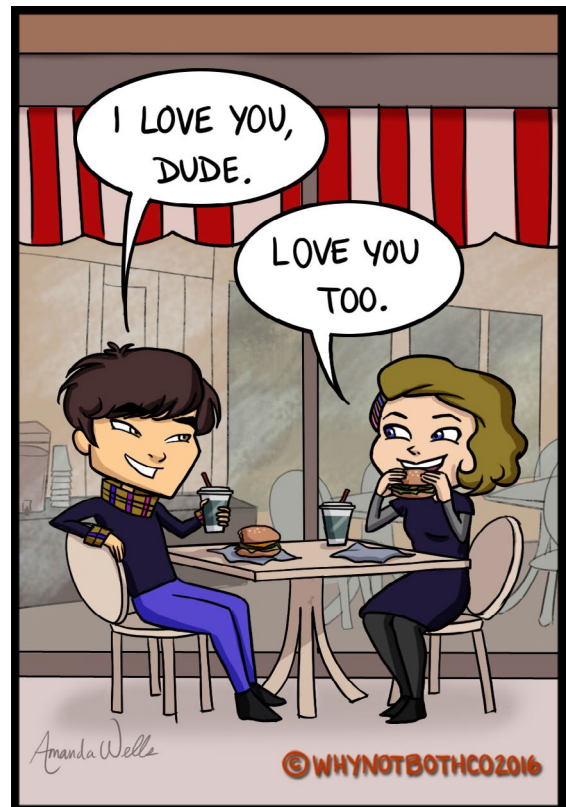
When I was thirty and losing baby weight
When I was thirty-two and losing baby weight
When I was thirty-four with mysterious medical symptoms
When I was thirty-eight with a diagnosis
When I was forty and my daughter started shedding pounds
and my other daughter started gaining pounds

When I was forty, I started eating
The food I cooked with my own two hands
I cooked for my little ones
I ate heartily with a man that knew the whole me
With muscles and curves and jiggles
With passions and anger and moments without control
Without the relief of secretly going to bed hungry

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



Woman 1. 12x16” acrylic piece by Jo-Anne Carlson



“True Friendship” by WhyNotBothCo

Me: A Timeline

By Kaylia Metcalfe

As a child, a little girl, my body was not mine.

You, held me, moved me, positioned my limbs... there were lines on the ground and unseen lines in the air that one did not cross.

Stop running. Stop dancing. It's not the right time.

Put this on, it's cute.

Let me brush your hair.

Stand still. Smile.

Awkward growing, changing, feeling both too big and too small for my own frame.

A prison. A beehive of humming buzzing stinging emotions. There is no guide and no ability to give permission because it was never asked.

Stop running. Stop dancing. You look like a freak

Put this on, it's modest.

Don't cut your hair, you'll look like a boy

Stand still. Smile

I sought refuge in a white dress behind a white picket fence

The family nuclear: both safe and radioactive. The inevitable unenviable trap that they promised would be perfect

Stop running. Stop dancing. The walls are too close

Put this on, it's normal

You need a haircut to look your age

Stand still. Smile

I see the hurdle of middle age on my horizon and I finally find myself in the mirror

Divorce

Pride

A voice found on the pages of scribbled dreams

I can't run because my knees are old. But I can dance in my kitchen. I can slide on slippered socks and sway to a Spotify playlist called "lesbian rock"

I put on and take off my disguises at will now. Default soccer mom and then angry activist with fist raised. High femme and low butch. I haven't found the right shoes yet but I like to play dress up.

I think I am going to dye my hair purple. Maybe just the tips. It's up to me now, my very own rainbow flag of defiance

Like the wind, I move. Gentle and firm and then raging like a hurricane. A tornado of unrepentant emotions and the playful breeze of spring days filled with hope.

I never stand still.

But goddammit I smile.



Kaylia Metcalfe is a nerdy queer writer living in Fresno, CA, where she keeps busy working as a community organizer, activist, and freelance writer. www.kayliametcalfewriter.com

Bodies

By Courtney Carola

i.
he turns my body into a minefield;
with every touch, every kiss
something in me ignites
a flame is lit
and one by one
we are overcome by explosions

ii.
she turns my body into putty;
every touch, every kiss
though soft as a feather
is molten
and slowly but surely
i am melting in her embrace

iii.
they turn my body into a playground;
there is so much to explore
so much to experience
together, we go to places i've never been
and visit the places i love
all while having fun
so much fun

iv.
he talks about my body as if i am poetry
and he is the writer
there are stories in my skin
that even i haven't read yet
and he tells me about them;
he brings them to life

v.
she talks about my body as if i am a painting
and she is the artist
to her, i am a portrait
that not even the finest museums could hold
she makes me feel like no one else has ever;
she makes me feel beautiful

vi.
they talk about my body as if i am a movie
and they are the audience
their eyes follow my every move
watching me intently
when they look at me, i know they hope to see
the two of us happily ever after

By day, Courtney Carola is a 24-year-old poet (her debut collection, Have Some Pride, is available now) and high school library aide. By night, she fights against bi-erasure and for bi visibility.

Lambda Literary Awards Finalists for 2018 awards in Bisexual Categories

Bisexual Fiction

The Gift by Barbara Browning, Coffee House Press
Homecoming Queens by J.E. Sumerau, Sense Publishers
Next Year, for Sure by Zoey Leigh Peterson, Scribner
Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl by Andrea Lawlor, Rescue Press
The Penalty for Holding by Georgette Gouveia, Less Than Three Press

Bisexual Nonfiction

Hunger by Roxane Gay, HarperCollins
Truth Be Bold: Serenading Life & Death in the Age of AIDS by Julene Tripp Weaver, Finishing Line Press
What the Mouth Wants by Monica Meneghetti, Dagger Editions

My Body through the Decades

By Karen Remaley

As a child, I went from being a chubby baby/toddler, which was considered adorable, to a bony, scrawny child. Our culture readily accepts and celebrates babies, toddlers, and pregnant women being plump. As I thinned out and began to wear the fashionable short dresses of the early 1970's, my older siblings would tease that my thin legs resembled the images seen on television of starving children in Africa.

Once puberty arrived, I still was skinny; I just had curves on top of my svelte frame. I was intensely uncomfortable with my body throughout my teenage years and was grateful for the oversized trend of the 1980s as it allowed me to hide my body. I quickly learned that hiding my body didn't prevent unwanted attention.

In my late teens, it became more common that I was out in public without my older siblings or parents, and I had to deal with what we called cat-callers at the time, although street harassers is a far more accurate term. These were men, sometimes more than two decades older than me, who felt the need to comment on my body and tell me what they would do with me if given a chance. Often, I was walking to or from my summer jobs. I could have had on a blouse with a plunging neckline and a short skirt, and it still wouldn't have given them the right to talk to me that way. But of course, I was often dressed for work, so I was "properly" covered in business attire.

In my twenties, I became more comfortable with who I was and began to take a little more pride in my body. I was not an

athletic child, but as an adult, I found forms of physical exercise that I enjoyed. I was engaging in various types of aerobic exercise and not only loved doing it but also loved what it did for my body. All of those forces combined so that by the time I was thirty and had given birth to my first child, I was thoroughly confident in my body. Interestingly, I began to enjoy sex much more than I had when I was in my late teens and early twenties. I'm sure having a more experienced partner was a contributing factor, but I believe my comfort level with my body was a primary cause.

Now that I am approaching fifty and it's easier to gain weight than in any other non-pregnant phase of my life, I still love my body. I'd like to lose five to ten pounds, but I still have confidence, appreciation, and respect for my body. I'm grateful for all that it has been through over the years, and I want to protect it so that my body will continue to serve me well for another fifty years.

Karen is a bisexual, feminist wife and mother. She is an advocate for gun violence prevention and various social justice issues. You can find her on Twitter at @KarenRemaley.



Bisexual Book Awards Finalists 2018

Non-Fiction

Queer, There, and Everywhere: 23 People Who Changed the World by Sarah Prager, HarperCollins

Unconditional: A Guide to Loving and Supporting Your LGBTQ Child by Telaina Eriksen, Mango Media

Young Bisexual Women's Experiences in Secondary Schools by Mary-Anne McAllum, Routledge

Memoir/Biography

First Time Ever by Peggy Seeger, Faber & Faber

A Girl Walks Into a Book by Miranda Pennington, Seal Press/Hachette Book Group

What the Mouth Wants: A Memoir of Food, Love and Belonging by Monica Meneghetti, Dagger Editions/Caitlin Press

Fiction

The Change Room by Karen Connelly, Random House / PenguinRandomHouse

Enigma Variations by André Aciman, Farrar, Straus and Giroux/Macmillan

Her Body and Other Parties by Carmen Maria Machado, Graywolf Press

Keeping the Faith by A.M. Leibowitz, Supposed Crimes

The Mathematics of Change by Amanda Kabak, Brain Mill Press

Pages For Her: A Novel by Sylvia Brownrigg, Counterpoint

(Note: This is a partial list. For a full list of nominees, visit: <http://www.biwriters.org/>)

A Wildfire that Cannot be Contained: My Bisexual Body Journey(s)

By Misia Denéa

It started in elementary school,
In Kindergarten I fell hard for a burnt cinnamon hued boy
named Alejandro
I professed my love to him... to no avail.
Oh and then there is my 2nd grade tomboy crush sam, She
rocked my world
I leaned over to give her a kiss on the cheek during story time,
she enjoyed it for several seconds
Once the rest of the kids shrieked “ Ewwwww Yuck!”
Sam quickly turned her delight into shame and furiously
rubbed away the sweet chocolate kiss
I laid on her cheek
I tucked away my Sapphic urges for quite some time.
What does a young girl do with this wild fire that cannot be
contained?

On the first day of middle school i swooned over a tall lanky
Christen
She played basketball and had hair so short

I mistook her for one of the young men in our 6th grade class
I imagined that at every school dance I could lean my head
against her heart to hear it beat
While Whitney, Mariah or Toni swept us away into a sweet
and luscious oblivion
A wild fire that cannot be contained

In Middle school I kept myself busy with boys.
Chris kissed me in the band room when I put my clarinet
away in my cubby
Eric chased me and wrote me love letters
I wanted to be fast and grown like my friend Christina
So I slipped into the abyss of *Mostly* unfulfilling make out
sessions with cis-het dudes
STILL... a wild fire that cannot be contained

By age 16 I made love to my best friend Vanessa
I'll never forget, she stayed over my house after my 10th grade
spring dance ballet recital
We ebbed and flowed out of sweet stormy kisses
I let my cassette player play jazz
Our bodies matched the intensity of miles and Coltrane
improvisational bops
Our heads and hearts swirled all night long
She was my first flame... but our interaction to her was just a
game
My wild fire could not be contained

By age 17 Beth was my steady girlfriend
We skipped school together to cherish precious moments
By college I was succumb to my hetero normativity and
internalized biphobia

Once I was in my mid 20's I once again felt free enough to
explore longer term relationships with women
Now I'm happily coupled again with a man
Will he ask me for my hand?

All i ever wanted was to understand
How does a girl stand in between both worlds
Janelle Monae helped me sort out my Dirty Computer
For me... love is queer
My heart has soared through the highest heights



*Misia Denéa is a Body Positive Well-
ness Consultant and is the owner and
founder of Hatha Holistic Integrative
Wellness. She is an award-winning
performance artist and recently made
her screen debut at San Francisco's
Queer Woman of Color Media Arts
Project with her film "Bi/Black/Body-
Positive/Bliss."*

Too Fucking Hot

By D'Arcy L.J. White

Too fucking hot
but not too hot to fuck
watching yet another unsatisfying MMF threesome movie
waiting for the pivotal fucking scene
only to be left disappointed
with only my own hand and imagination for comfort
the characters never quite queer enough
someone always getting punished
a disappointing end to a disappointing day

In my imagination no one ever goes unpunished
and I'm not greedy
I'll take both cocks for sure
but definitely wouldn't be disappointed with just one,
so long as we all got our happy endings
sometimes I like to be the boy in the middle
giving and getting at the same time
suppose I could do that with a MF pair as well
I'm certainly not opposed to the idea of a strap-on
for fucking or being fucked



But right now my body is playing traitor
bleeding when it shouldn't
and not when it should
and always the small stabbing pains
which worsen with any sexual activity
a big "fuck you" to my newly germinating outness

I wonder if it was the formaldehyde leaching from my cheap-ass Walmart dresser in this godforsaken basement dump?
or was it the fucking ant killer spray I used in desperation
even though we had nowhere to go for eight hours afterwards
probably breathing that shit in for days

at times I feel almost normal on these new meds,
grateful for the cessation of bleeding,
the worry I'm dying
even as I pop cancer-risk in pill form into my mouth,
dutifully
docilely
as the bitch-doctor instructed
every fucking afternoon

birth control for the sexless
punishment for the old bisexual
who would not stay quiet
and closeted
not for all the gay ex-friends
and bitchy former het colleagues in the world

Guess I'll go down loudly
yelling and marching
and masturbating
and in pain

We need better meds.
And we need better films.

D'Arcy L.J. White is an 47-year old solo-poly bisexual writer and artist from Toronto, Ontario, Canada. They are currently living with anxiety, depression, and (possibly) perimenopause.

Letter

Dear BBWN,

It was really great going to the March brunch at Beth's and meeting you and everyone there. Excited for the next one in May – please count me in.

Also, been enjoying reading the latest edition of *BWQ* – clearly been missing out all these years and so glad that I now have this ongoing anthology as inspiration for activism and further self-reflection. Love how it is stretching my perspective with all things bi.

Thanks and see you in May!
Kristen G., Boston

(Something to say? Write to us at biwomeneditor@gmail.com.)

the last thing on my mind. And there have been times when I purposely wasn't dating or having sex, for these and other reasons.

But make no mistake: I would have many more opportunities if I were thin/slim thick, able-bodied and able-minded, light- or white-skinned, anything but Black (but especially white), straight, middle or upper class. [Statistics](#) on the experiences of online dating for Black women recently came up again on Black Twitter in response to an excerpt from Issa Rae's 2015 satirical book, *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl*. The fact of the matter is this: it's [hard out here](#) for us, regardless of other circumstances. And it's even harder for those of us Black and not cisgender men who are the most marginalized: trans, non-binary, single parents, queer, disabled, brown – and especially dark-skinned, fat, poor, non-Christians (most especially those from non-Abrahamic religions), etc.

My body is all wrong: my skin is too dark, my belly is too big, my butt isn't big enough, I have stretch marks and cellulite, I don't shave, I have relatively short, kinky-curly hair that you can't just run your fingers through, I have a big nose and small eyes, and many times you can see me using my cane in public.

Of course, in my mind, none of these things are bad. In fact, I love my body now more than I ever have in my entire life, thanks to my discovery several years ago of Health at Every Size, fat liberation, radical Black love spaces, and disability justice. But I must wade through a society that finds fault with all of those things and more. And that shit is hard.

And what's more, those desirability politics didn't just come out of nowhere. They are the direct result of a society that devalues all of those marginalized identities in every aspect of life: health-care, education, the judicial and prison systems, government and politics, religion, and more.

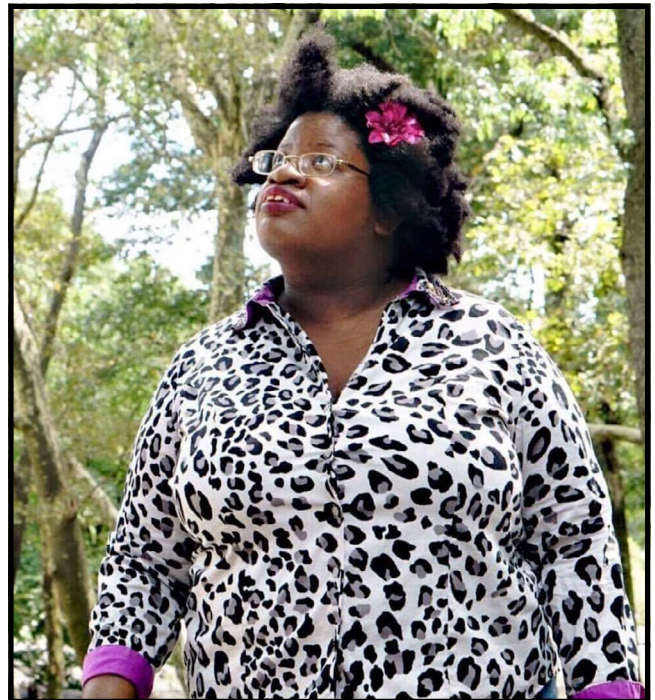
This means that the work of liberation for bi-plus folks – people like me – is tainted by a world that values people like me the least. As a bi leader myself, I know many wonderful, insightful people doing work tirelessly, with little to no pay, for our diverse community. It's uplifting and encouraging to know so many bi+ rock stars: various ages, races, skin colors, bi+ labels, relationship orientations, from very vanilla to copiously kinky, various income levels (though mostly poor, if I'm honest), cis and trans/non-binary/agender, from various parts of the world,

of various faiths (or lack thereof), and of various shapes, heights, and sizes. We are truly beautiful in that way.

But the truth is, it can be hard to be in my body in this community as well as outside of it. It's rare that I see myself, my body, in bi-plus spaces, in campaigns, in parades, in queer media. It's tiring, it's demoralizing, it's anger-inducing. If my kind of bi doesn't exist in these and other spaces then I'm reminded, painfully, that *I'm* not supposed to exist. It's a cruel joke that my ancestors sent me here with so much magic, only to feel like it's constantly being snuffed out. Of course, I know that no one can actually steal my magic, but the weight of living in this world often makes it hard to conjure the good.

So I just curl my big, Black, bi body into a ball under the covers and watch *Buffy*, retreating into a world in which magic reveals, saves, and heals.

Denarii Grace is a Black, bisexual, non-binary, proudly fat, multiply disabled, poor, femme woman. She's a blues singer-songwriter, poet, freelance writer, editor (non-fiction editor at The Deaf Poets Society), screenwriter, and public speaker/educator/activist. They coined the term "exogender" to describe their (a)gender experience.



If you live in or around Boston, or are visiting, please consider attending and/or hosting one of our brunches, which are held more-or-less monthly in members' homes.

The next two brunches will be on July 14 and August 12, and are listed in our calendar on p. 24.

You are welcome to reach out to Char (avon.alger@gmail.com) for more info about hosting or attending a brunch.

material I could find; I learned a lot about gender identity as well. Gradually, I frequented more queer spaces where gender was often discussed, performed, and challenged. I began slowly – and then quite suddenly – to recognize how so many things were gendered: clothing; birthday cards; hygiene and grooming products; relationship roles. Somewhat ironically, it took me the longest to realize how our bodies are gendered as well. It was literally right under my nose (women aren't supposed to have hair above their lip either!) in ways I had previously taken for granted. Body hair was only one aspect of our gendered selves. Muscles. Height. Breast size. Butt size. Piercings. Hair styles. Makeup. There are many and varied ways we alter and present our bodies to conform to the expectations of being a man or a woman. And if we don't conform, or we don't fit within the binary, we are ostracized.

As I came to these realizations about gender, I tried to rebel against the stereotypes. It helped that I had made friends with a couple of women who didn't shave. Inspired by their indifference to body hair, I started letting my hair grow longer in between shaving, testing the waters and seeing how I felt about my hairier body. Despite my growing irritation toward gender norms, I was still a little surprised by how I liked my own body hair, given the social stigma. I liked the patches of hair on my pits. I liked discovering the strip of skin on my shin that doesn't grow any hair at all. I had never really noticed this quirk because I kept the rest of my legs shaved. The more I let my hair grow, the more comfortable I was with it, and the stronger my appreciation became for my body in general.

Unexpectedly, another person influenced my decision to stop shaving my body hair: my ex-boyfriend. Up until the past year, my dating life was sporadic and, although it was a poor excuse, I used it to rationalize letting my body hair grow out. Remembering those thoughts, I surprised myself when I realized I had consciously thought about growing, and even started to grow out my body hair near the end of a brief relationship with a straight, cisgender man the previous summer. I mention his identities because I think it's significant that even in a relationship where I felt heteronormative pressure to uphold female stereotypes, I made progress in fighting the societal pressure to remove my body hair. On the other hand, it may not be surprising at all. During the entirety of our relationship, I felt intense internalized biphobia and erasure of my queerness. Growing out my leg and armpit hair may have been my way of trying to defend my identity by queering the way I presented myself as female.

From the start of going *au naturel*, I tried not to pressure myself to declare that I would never pick up a razor again. At any rate, it wasn't like I needed to decide whether I was always going to shave my legs or never shave them again. That would only be creating another either/or dilemma for myself (did I mention

that biphobia earlier?). I could shave at any time if I wanted to. The only rule was that I couldn't shave just because I felt socially pressured to do so. If I was going to shave, it would be because it's what I wanted. Slipping my smooth legs into cool bed sheets at night is an amazing feeling that I don't want to miss out on just to rebel against society's belief that women look disgusting with leg hair.

Ultimately, I don't care whether women shave or not. I'm not arguing that all women should stop shaving just to stick it to the man. Sure, I'm lazy, and it would be nice to not feel pressured to keep my body clean-shaven so often. But it isn't the worst chore; I don't mind doing it if I want smooth skin. The problem lies in the huge double standard concerning societal expectations surrounding body hair. I think we can generally agree that body hair on anyone is gross on some level, even. It's not like we ogle their armpit hair. Body hair on men is just something we accept. Women, on the other hand, are held to stricter beauty standards simply because we're women and that's what's expected of us. Yet, there's no practical reason for us to shave our hair. It's all for aesthetics. So if women are expected to shave, men should be expected to shave. If we're disgusted by armpit and leg hair on women, we should be disgusted by armpit and leg hair on men. Everyone should be held to the same standard. Regardless of gender, people should be able to maintain their body hair in a way that they want, however they feel beautiful, and for whatever reasons they choose, except for what society says you should do with it based on your gender.

I fully acknowledge that transitioning to a more open mindset about who can grow body hair is easier said than done. It can be hard to challenge our opinions about body hair because of the beauty standards engrained in our society. People are still going to have opinions of what is attractive and what is not. And that's okay. Everyone is allowed to have an opinion. Opinions can change, however. Our tastes and preferences change all the time. Sometimes they do so naturally. Sometimes they change because we actively question our preconceived beliefs or we discover something that changes our mind. In the latter way, we could work toward challenging our notions of who should have body hair and what is beautiful. And even if we decide we don't like something, who are we to judge someone on standards that are subjective anyways? This isn't going to happen overnight, but I believe we could work towards developing a more accepting mindset around at least this one aspect of our gendered bodies.

In the meantime, I want my armpit mole back.

Stephanie Enyeart is currently figuring out how to navigate swimsuit season as a woman with body hair. She works in higher education in Indianapolis and has an on-and-off-again relationship with writing. In 2018, she's attempting to draw a comic a day on her Instagram, @thefuffyskunk.

From the Inside Looking Out: An Interview with Author RJ Samuel

By MB Austin

RJ Samuel is the author of five novels, including *Heart Stopper*, the Vision Painter series, *A Place Somewhere*, and *An Outsider Inside*. Each is a page-turner, neither a traditional mystery nor a formula-following thriller, but with enough twists and turns to keep you guessing up to the very end. And each centers on a complex female lead, with a rich set of supporting characters.

MB: *An Outsider Inside* deals with a number of issues related to identity and the expectations of others based on race/ethnicity and sex/gender. Racism and homophobia are issues you could draw on your own experience for; but you also tackle biphobia as a central concern in this story. Why did you decide to, and how did you go about your research to get the authenticity you sought?

RJ: The story did not start out with biphobia as even an issue, but rather with a character whose gender the reader would never know. As the story changed, in many ways to reflect what was happening in my life, it occurred to me that, despite my own experience and values, I had racist, homophobic, and biphobic stereotypes floating in my bloodstream, injected there by my upbringing and exposure to very many different cultures, each with their own particular brand of obvious and even more hidden hatreds. I realized that I focused on the behaviors in others that affected me personally such as racism and homophobia, but as biphobia did not affect me personally, I was not really aware of it in me or in the lesbian community.

When I began discussing my book and mentioned that the lesbian activist protagonist falls in love with a gay man, I got some negative feedback that shouldn't have surprised me. But it did, as I had missed the depth of biphobia that existed around me. Writing the book changed me, and I hope the story changes others. My aim is that instead of feeling 'called out' the reader will like the character and live through the changes with her and feel differently at the end of the book.

I researched by examining every one of my stereotypes about bisexual people and then I asked a bisexual author friend who writes lesbian romance for a list of hurtful statements she had experienced. She sent me a long list and I incorporated them into Jaya's own biphobia as well as that of the lesbian group with which she worked. Bi readers have commented that they almost could not make it through the first part of the book because of the level of biphobia; but I needed to get that reality across to those who don't have to experience it directly. I deal with racism in the same way in the book. The Prologue is very hard for me to read at author events because of the language and the racist slurs, but it is the reading that always silences the room, and which has the most power because it is based on the truth that most people not of color don't have to see or hear.

I hope that bi readers continue through the book as the reviewer, Tara Scott, did. In her wonderful reviews on *The Lesbian Review*

and *Curve* magazine she said, "As a bisexual woman married to a man, I've heard some of Jaya's opinions directed at me before, and reading them immediately put me on edge. I'm glad I stuck with the book, however, because Jaya experiences things, particularly in her attractions to and interactions with Chloe, Ishmael, Isabella, and Lana's writings, that challenge her biphobia to its core, and I found it affirming to see her shift in perspective."

MB: Your protagonist Jaya Dillon's biphobia and her determination to keep at least one part of her intersectional identity fitting into a neat box seem inextricably linked. What role do you feel her girlhood outsider-ness as the only child of color in an Irish village played in the fears she has about sexual identity?

RJ: Jaya equates love with belonging and cannot accept love outside of her society's rules if it leads to possible ostracization. She pushes away anyone who doesn't fit into the society-specific rules and judges them – she pushes Chloe away first, and later her attraction for Ishmael. Her loyalty to the group that accepted her is taken to an extreme, to the point of making herself 'invisible,' which in a way is how she survived being the only child of color in the village. Growing up as the only child of color had more of an impact on Jaya than her later realization of her sexuality. Her lesbian activism and identity led her to be more outspoken, to make herself more visible. Her skin color and experiences growing up shaped who she is; but it is her sexuality that gets her accepted into the lesbian community, so she does not equate being biphobic with being racist. How many people do we know who insist, with horror, they are not racist, but can easily justify being biphobic? We have silos of life experiences and prejudices that sometimes do not connect and feed or cleanse each other.

MB: This story is a very specific situation with fictional people, but the behaviors and the emotions feel so real that readers with very different lives still relate to the characters. What do you think are the universal elements they connect with?

RJ: I believe that the strongest human instinct is to 'belong.' Our survival depends on not being left out. I think it happens insidiously with marginalized groups. We find a place where we can finally be accepted and when something disrupts that it scares us to the core that we will not be able to survive alone. Every character in the book is doing the same thing in that they are fighting to remain in their society. I think every reader can relate to the common fear of not belonging in the first place or of losing that belonging within a particular group.

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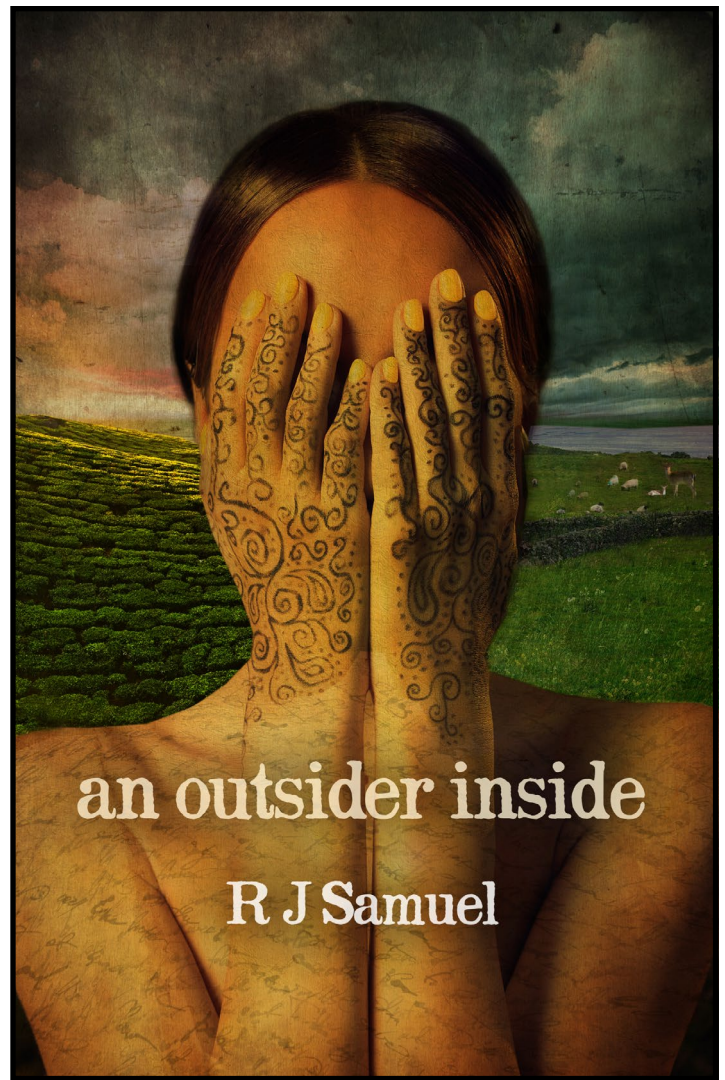
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MB: You've been doing theatre improv for a few years now, and recently you're diving into a new adventure related to gender presentation. What can you tell us?

RJ: I started taking improv classes in October 2016 to improve my author readings. They have really helped me to grow in confidence and have given me a sense that I have a right to be here and to express myself. I had been thinking about gender and identity and sexuality, so when I was recently playing with an app that changes your photo to different versions of yourself, I found it interesting that the male version of me really affected me. A lesbian friend joked about it causing her momentary confusion and mentioned that I could be a drag king. That was quite a shocking concept to me (I come from a relatively conservative Indian family). I have no desire to transition but I'm now really enjoying trying out a male presentation both as part of my improv here in Atlanta and also at the GCLS conference where I plan to karaoke in character.

I'm finding it fascinating to see how I feel when presenting as a man, and how others react to me. I've also been deeply touched by how supportive most of my friends have been because I've seen how damaging the lack of support can be to those who are struggling with their gender identity. It makes me realize how lucky I am and that to me is what life is about now, not avoiding, but seeing the wonderful aspects of a challenging situation.

MB Austin's first two *Maji Rios* thrillers are *Strictly Need to Know* and *Running Off Radar*. Learn more at www.mbaustin.me.



News Briefs

By Robyn Ochs



Dutch bisexual ice skater Ireen Wüst has become the most successful speed skater in Olympic history, as well as the most decorated LGBTQ Olympian ever. She also tied Australian swimmer Ian Thorpe's record for the most gold medals by an out LGBT Olympian, earning her fifth gold medal in speed skating at the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.



According to Autostraddle, there are [at least] 4 out bi women running for office in the U.S. right now: Krysten Sinema (US Senate from AZ); Katie Hill (CA Cong. 25); Renitta Shannon (GA House of Reps); and Kate Brown (running for re-election as Governor of OR).

On March 4, bisexual congresswoman Angélica Lozano became the first openly LGBT person elected to Colombia's Senate. Lozano, formerly served on Bogotá City Council and was elected to the Colombian House of Representatives in 2014.

RECENTLY OUT AS BI+: It's hard to even keep track these days, but the list includes Alyson Stoner (actress, dancer and star of Disney's *Cheaper by the Dozen*). In a *Teen Vogue* interview, she wrote: "I, Alyson, am attracted to men, women, and people who identify in other ways. I can love people of every gender identity and expression. It is the soul that captivates me. It is the love we can build and the goodness we can contribute to the world by supporting each other's best journeys." And then there's singer Janelle Monae, who came out as pansexual and queer, telling *Rolling Stone*, "I consider myself to be a free-ass motherfucker."

Research Corner

This column is under the capable supervision of Renate Baumgartner and Soudeh Rad. Renate Baumgartner is currently researching bisexual women and their experiences of discrimination in Vienna, Austria. She holds a Ph.D. in natural sciences, is a bi+ activist, and offers workshops for bisexual empowerment. Soudeh Rad is an Iranian gender-equality activist based in France and cofounder of Dojensgara.org, a website about bisexuality in Persian. Some columns will be written by Renate, some by Soudeh – and some by both. If there is research on bisexuality that you would like them to be aware of, please write to them clobiwomeneditor@gmail.com.

Visible Lesbians - Invisible Bisexuals?

By Renate Baumgartner

Featuring the article: Nikki Hayfield, Victoria Clarke, Emma Halliwell, Helen Malson (2013) Visible lesbians and invisible bisexuals: Appearance and visual identities among bisexual women, *Women's Studies International Forum*, 40, 172-182.

Is there a bi woman “look”? The stereotypical appearance of the “lesbian butch” and the “lesbian femme” are widely known (while culturally and historically variable), but is there something comparable for bisexual women? Although the idea that sexual identity can be read simply through physical appearance is partly rooted in stereotype, this question also points to a pressing issue: How do we recognize each other in the world? Are there visual codes that let our bi*dars ring? Is bisexuality perhaps less invisible than we thought?

We express ourselves and communicate with others by adorning and modifying our bodies through clothing, piercings, tattoos, haircuts, and make-up. We can choose to construct a particular “look” to be visible to others as members of a particular group (such as the goth or punk subculture) or as part of a coming-out process.

We can also choose a certain appearance to hide or to conform. Sexual minorities have used these forms of bodily expression to gain recognition from peers, to communicate membership within the LGBTQ community, and to make political statements.

This study explored bi women’s self-expression through their appearance through interviews with 20 self-identified bisexual women. It was conducted in the early 2000s in the UK, which is known for its lively bisexual activism. The study aimed to understand how and whether bi women combatted bisexual invisibility and bisexual erasure and made themselves visible as bisexual through appearance practices, such as clothing, body art, and cosmetics.*

The results revealed that the women understood bisexual visual identity in relation to lesbian visual identity. In comparison to a visible and widely recognized lesbian “look,” they spoke about an invisible bisexual appearance. They felt they had to choose between a lesbian and a heterosexual look, and they described their style as being something in between. They also said that their style was policed by others in different ways, dependent upon social contexts, but that they did not alter

their self-expression based on the gender of their current partner. These results indicate that clothing and appearance play an important role in bi* women’s self-expression, but also that without a distinct style it is hard to recognize each other.

Does this sound familiar to you? Is visual appearance an important part of your identity and self-expression? Do you think your community has a particular bi woman “look”? Have certain queer or bisexual styles reached the mainstream: What about the trend of bi*-flag colored hair?

Questions asked were:

Do you think your look is influenced by you being bisexual?

Do you think that there is such a thing as a bisexual look?

Do you remember making any changes to your appearance around the time you identified as bisexual?

Do friends influence how you look?

Do you think your appearance is influenced by your partner?

Does your dress change according to where you are going out on ‘the scene’?



What some of us look like.
Some of the bi+ folks who attended MassEquality's
Icons Event in Boston on March 22, 2018

Advice From A. Rose Bi



An avid BWQ reader herself, A. Rose Bi proudly identifies as a bisexual woman. She currently lives in New England with her cat who loves to sleep on her lap while she spends most of her time watching TV and playing videogames. In addition to being an out bi woman, A. has a degree in Cognitive Science, has completed trainings for LGBTQ+ and sexual assault survivor advocacy, and has experience answering calls for an anonymous LGBTQ+ help line. She is passionate about feminism, the bi+ community, LGBTQ+ and female representation in the media, and helping others.

A. Rose Bi's column relies on questions from readers like you! You can send any questions you may have or suspect other readers may have to the author directly at askbwq@gmail.com or by posting on the Bi Women Quarterly's facebook group. All questions are anonymous, nothing is off-limits, and anything related to upcoming issue topics is extra-encouraged!

Dear A. Rose Bi,

I have a weird condition called pectus excavatum where my rib cage indents inward on the right side. I've noticed I'm much less worried about it around people who identify as male, but I'm much more self-conscious around people who identify as female because I compare myself to them and find them to be so much more attractive. This has reached the point where my fears have gotten in the way of my relationships. What advice do you have for overcoming the fear that people of the same gender presentation are comparing themselves to you?

Sincerely,
Same Gender Self-Conscious

Dear Same Gender Self-Conscious,

While I don't know much about your specific condition – only what a quick internet search taught me – I have a feeling a lot of people will relate to the issue of being more or less self-conscious with partners of the same or different gender presentation as themselves. As women, we often talk about body expectations we feel from men (read: the patriarchy), but I think as a queer community, I've rarely heard discussions about body dysmorphia around same-gender partners. And I love your question because I think we need to address it more.

First of all, as is true for nearly all things we're self-conscious about, I would bet that you notice your condition far, far more than anyone else does. I would also bet that any partner you

have who's worth your time cares much more about being able to spend time with you than judging your physical appearance, regardless of gender. And if someone ever makes you feel otherwise, kick 'em to the curb!

But, I know that's all easier said than done – getting over insecurities, even if you logically know other people aren't judging you for it, is still extremely hard. Plus, when you're partnered with someone who presents more similarly to you, it's so easy to compare apples to apples (which is, I promise, not a boob joke).

Hopefully some of this is helpful, but overall my advice is that in the same way you're self-conscious about one thing, the person you're partnered with is likely self-conscious about something about their own body, and while you're busy worrying if they're noticing your "flaw," they're too busy worrying if you notice theirs to notice yours. And probably, vice versa. At the end of the day, honest conversations with a partner you trust can often help quell some of these fears and concerns, plus can often build more trust and a stronger bond in your relationship.

My parting thoughts to you are: You are gorgeous. You deserve love. And anyone who disagrees doesn't deserve to take up space in your life or mind.

Lots of love,
A. Rose Bi

To our readers: If you rarely see people who look like you, think like you, or share your experiences and perspectives represented in print, then your voice is especially important. You can increase representation of people like you by lifting your own voice, so please consider submitting your writing and/or artwork to *Bi Women Quarterly*. We are committed to expanding representation and to making sure that the pages of this publication encompass a wide range of diversities, including (but not limited to) age, race, geography, relationship choices, ability, spiritual practice, family configuration, and so much more.

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center, located at 29 Stanhope Street in Boston, behind Club Cafe. Call 617-424-9595.

Ongoing Events

Come to our monthly bi brunch! All women are welcome! See calendar for dates.

2nd Mondays:

Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. 7pm. Info: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com.

2nd Wednesdays:

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

2nd Thursdays:

Younger BLiSS Group. 7pm. For bi folks 20-29. Info: Kate at youngblissboston@gmail.com.

3rd Saturdays:

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

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

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



CALENDAR

June

3 (Sunday) AIDS Walk Boston. The 4.8-mile AIDS Walk starts at the Hatch Shell in Boston's Back Bay. The Walk raises money and awareness for essential HIV prevention, advocacy, and services. More info at: AIDSwalkBoston.org.

8 (Friday) 6pm, Boston Dyke March. Gather at the Boston Common Gazebo for a night of frolicking and marching with the queerest women in town. The Boston Dyke March is a non-commercial, community-centered, grassroots, inclusive pride event for everyone: Dykes, Lesbians, Queers, Bi-Folks, Trans women, Trans men, Genderqueers, Non-Binary folks, Allies, and everyone in between. Info: bostonDykeMarch.com.

9 (Saturday) 12pm, Boston Pride Festival and Parade. March with the Bisexual Resource Center and help us carry a giant Bi+ flag for the fourth year in a row! Parade at 12pm; visit our booth from 11am-6pm. Info/RSVP: brc@biresource.net.

11 (Monday) 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. A peer-led support group for women in a straight marriage/relationship struggling with sexual orientation or coming out. Meets 2nd Mondays. RSVP/Info: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com.

14 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). If you are in your 20s or mid-30s (or thereabouts) and identify somewhere along the lines of bisexual/omni/pan/fluid (or are questioning in that direction), please join us on the second Thursdays for a few hours of discussion, support, and/or the eating and drinking of delicious things. Info/RSVP: youngblissboston@gmail.com.

16 (Saturday) Rhode Island PrideFest & Illuminated Night Parade. PrideFest is from 12-7pm and the Illuminated Night Parade begins at 8:30pm in Providence, RI. Info: prideRI.org.

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

July

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

8 (Sunday), 2-4pm, Tea with Bisexual Women Partnered with Men (BWPM). A peer-led support

meetup co-hosted by BIWOC and the BRC. We will discuss a wide range of issues related to attraction, sexuality, and gender in a supportive safe space for only trans and cis women and non-binary folks of all races and ethnic backgrounds. RSVP: <https://www.meetup.com/Bi-Community-Activities/events/ftvxgmyxkblb/>.

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

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

14 (Saturday) 12-3pm, Bi Women's Brunch at Frances's in Roslindale. Bring a potluck brunch item to share. This is a great way to meet other bi and bi-friendly women in the area! Pets in home. Info/RSVP: frances@gardenofwords.com.

21 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch. (See June 16th)

August

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

2-5 (Thursday-Sunday), BiCon UK. A week-end-long educational and social gathering for bi+ people, friends, partners, and others with a supportive interest in bisexuality. BiCon is has been held in a different part of the UK each year since 1984. More Info: <https://2018.bicon.org.uk>.

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

12 (Sunday) 12pm-3pm, Potluck Brunch. This one's at Kara's in Milford, NH. It may seem far away, but it is worth it. Great for northern Mass and NH folks! Lots of parking. Bring a potluck brunch item to share. This is a great way to meet other bi+ and bi+-friendly women in the area! Info/RSVP: kara.ammon@gmail.com. Mention in your RSVP if you need a ride share. We can't promise rides, but can try to help.

13 (Monday) 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. All bi and bi-friendly people of all genders and orientations welcome to attend. Meetings are peer-facilitated discussion groups, sometimes with a pre-selected topic or presenter. Meets 1st Wednesdays. Info/RSVP: bliss@biresource.org.

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