

The Non-Binary Agenda

By Denarii Grace

I've been [out as bisexual](#) for over a decade now, but it took me 31 years to [come out](#) as non-binary/agender. While I readily acknowledge that this isn't the case for everyone, for me, sexual and romantic orientation feel a lot easier—make a lot more sense—than gender identity. Perhaps it's because of my specific journey.

I've been aware of my same/similar gender attractions (and, perhaps most importantly, their *co-existence* with my different/dissimilar gender attractions) since elementary school, since before I got my period, since . . . well, a *really* long time. Identifying outside of the conventional binary of gender, on the other hand, is a relatively new phenomenon for me.

The night before writing this, I read an article shared by a friend (also non-binary) about a 10-year-old who just came out as non-binary and uses they/them pronouns. The child is white and thin, fitting into the few media conceptions of what it means to be non-binary—completely removed from my experiences as a lifelong fat Black person—but I read it with such fascination, awe, longing, and also some doubt.



As an older millennial, born in 1987, I often wonder what it would have been like to have come of age in a society that, while certainly *unbelievably far* from perfect, is much more accepting and understanding of queerness and, to a lesser extent, transness

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Poly-Pan Panoply

By Talitha Milroy

I was raised in a strictly Christian household. It was a narrow world, singular. One God, one path, one truth. One body in Christ. One man and one woman.

Needless to say, I wasn't a tidy fit.

I've never been good at settling for just one option. Why have one of anything when you could have them all?

As a little girl, when given the choice between custard and ice-cream, I would always request a bit of both. At restaurants, I'd ask my sister to order something different from me, so we could swap halfway and try more options. When the time eventually came for me to apply for university, unable to decide between a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Science, I applied for a double degree so that I could do both.

Around the same time that I started university, I stopped being a Christian, and around the same time as all that, I realised I wasn't straight.

All of a sudden, there were *so many possibilities*.

In the time since then, I've discovered a lot more things about myself. I'm pansexual, panromantic, and non-binary. When it comes to kink, I'm a switch. I'm also polyamorous. In terms of spirituality, I would call myself both pantheist and polytheist.

I'm a poly-pan panoply. A cornucopia of contradictions.

Genders, sexualities, sexual roles, partners, pronouns, deities, degrees . . . the more the merrier. *¿Por qué no los dos?*

It's a lot of labels to be walking around with, and honestly, I'm not that keen on labels. They can feel a bit too much like boxes. They do, however, allow me to find my people, and they help me to explain myself, which is something I find myself doing an awful lot.

A lot of people out there are passionately certain that kink and polyamory must never be included in the alphabet soup of the LGBTQIA+ community. Other people out there are equally certain that it must be included and have started to use

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Editor's Note

The theme of this issue is “Non-binary x2 (or more).”

We are pleased to present you with writing by Denarii Grace, Talitha Milroy, Emily Fisher, Sarah Jen, Christi Sessa, Natalie Perry, Mariah Cruz, Buffy Lee, Lila Hartelius, and Tania Israel.

And this time around we have not one, but TWO “Around the World” interviews. Carla Imperial interviews Rhye Labrador from the Philippines, and Katelynn Bishop interviews Bree Mountain from Australia.

Casey Lawrence writes about Ursula LeGuin’s 1969 classic, *The Left Hand of Darkness* without which, she argues, “discussion of gender in science fiction is complete.” And Robin Renée reviews Jan Steckel’s latest poetry compilation, *Like Flesh Covers Bone*.

You will also find artwork by Jo-Anne Carlson, Why Not Both Co, and Emily Fisher, advice from A Rose Bi, and our calendar of events.

I’m pleased to announce that our new Etsy shop—the proceeds of which support the production of this publication—is doing well. We just made our 150th sale! Visit us at www.etsy.com/shop/BiProducts.

We offer this resource for free, but it costs a considerable amount to produce and mail BWQ. If you find value in these pages, please consider giving a one-time gift at biwomenboston.org/donate-2 or becoming a monthly sustainer.

~Robyn Ochs

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BBWN is an all-volunteer organization. Want to proofread, edit submissions, host one of our monthly brunches, help out with our new Etsy store, or with our website (we use WordPress)? Or, if you’re a student, consider an internship. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Robyn (biwomeneditor@gmail.com).

Upcoming in *Bi Women Quarterly* Call for submissions

Fall 2019: Growing Older

What are the challenges/opportunities of being an older bi+ person? How has aging transformed you—in mind, body, spirit, or sexuality? How have you stayed the same? What have been the most significant moments or transitions in your life? For younger folks: What have you learned from older bi+ folks? And no matter your age, what do you imagine your future holds? Submissions are due by August 1.

Winter 2020: “Women’s Space”

At *BWQ* we are committed to creating radically inclusionary women’s space. What does it mean for *BWQ* to be a “women’s” publication in a non-binary world? What are your experiences with women’s space? What is the importance of women’s space to you? How can we all work together to create more inclusive, affirming, and welcoming spaces? Submissions are 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: Interview with Rhye Labrador, Philippines

Interviewed by Carla Imperial

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me! What's your full name?

Rhye Labrador (Rhye Labrador Gentoleo, in countries that recognize our Holy Union).

Can you tell us a little about yourself, where you were raised, and what you do and enjoy these days?

I was born and raised in the bustling city of Manila. Now, I'm permanently residing in Quezon City. My life has been very dramatic. I was transferred to Bataan in sixth grade because my mom needed to work. She couldn't do that with my siblings and me by her side, so due to these complicated circumstances we stayed with our father's family.

Now, I am 31 years old and I am a public servant, in the Local Government of Quezon City for nine years now, handling life skills trainings, career guidance and employment coaching, and women and youth Empowerment. I am an active member of the Quezon City Pride Council and Side B Philippines. I am also a freelance event-host and singer.

I love reading, watching documentaries, public speaking (motivational), and cooking, and I have certified wanderlust, hoping to travel to all of the 81 provinces in the Philippines and out of the country before I get too old!

What is Side B Philippines?

Side B PH is a non-political organization founded in 2016, whose members identify as bisexual, the B in LGBT+. It was founded by bisexual activists Raffy Aquino and Fire Sia. After aligning definitions and organizational goals, it was officially launched at the 2016 Metro Manila Pride March.

The main advocacy areas of SIDE B PH are:

SOGIE Awareness (sexual orientation & gender identity and expression)

Information and

Dissemination

Employment Equality

Bi-Visibility Campaigns

The organization focuses and develops the above-mentioned advocacy areas by researching and compiling references to bisexuality in the Philippines, running online surveys related to each advocacy area, and conducting SOGIE and diversity inclusion talks and seminars in mostly corporate spaces. We also assist students with research papers related to LGBT studies and accommodate interviews and the like.

SOGIE in the workplace is one of our main points in every fo-

rum or seminar we cater. We want to create a safer space for the community in terms of employment, education, etc.

How do you personally identify, both in your gender expression and sexual orientation? How did you "arrive" at this identity?

During my elementary days, I was often called "tomboy" (meaning lesbian in the Philippines), maybe because of the way I carried myself, cut my hair, and talked. It did affect me a bit, because I knew that I wasn't. I didn't have any crushes at that time, except in sixth grade, when a boy said he liked me and I blushed! At that young age, nothing lasts too long, though, because how can you expect any feelings to develop further, when you're too busy playing sports and playing outdoors!

When I reached high school, that's when the confusion started. I started to feel attracted to men, had some suitors, but I also had attractions to women. That part I tried to ignore, though, as my father's family is Christian, and they implied to me the immorality thing (you know what I mean). But as I grew older, I realized that my attractions were not just for men. I realized that I am a bisexual woman. I acknowledge that I have the potential to have attractions romantically and/or physically to people of more than one sex, not necessarily at the same time, degree, or way. I am more attracted to men (that includes transmen because transmen are men ♥) and lesbians (hard butch in particular).

I went through confusing times, like a typical human being, and I started to search and read, joined support groups, watched documentaries about LGBT and the like. Now, I'm happily married to the man of my life, Nel. Oh, and the person that I first came out to is my mom.

Although it wasn't easy to come out to my Christian family, I was not worried about myself because I am strong enough to accept whatever reaction they'll have. Whether they accept me or not, it doesn't matter, as long as my mom (the only person who has stood beside me through thick and thin before Nel came into my life) accepts and embraces me. I was worried about my husband's feelings, but he has been really supportive and has said,



Rhye, continued on next page

Rbye, continued from previous page

“Whatever they think of you, it doesn’t matter at all. What is important is that we have each other and the people who truly care and love us will always have our backs.” And we’ve been together for more than three years now!

What is the general acceptance of bi people in the Philippines? Is being bi as accepted as being gay or lesbian?

I think it’s more tolerated than accepted. For some, it’s better than nothing! But for me, being “tolerated” is not enough. Bisexuals are usually referred to as the “introduction to being gay or lesbian.” Like, seriously? And also, being bi, for some, means “straight-looking gay.” As for bisexual women, they often say that there’s no such thing as that; “you’re really a lesbian,” as if they know what we really feel.

Society now is more accepting, I should admit, thanks to the LGBT champs and advocates for helping us to educate people.

Is there same-sex marriage in the Philippines?

There are religious sectors (progressive Catholic groups, for example) who do Holy Unions for LGBT couples. There is no law saying that it’s legal nor illegal. We had our holy union December 10, 2016, the same date of our first anniversary, and it was officiated by Bishop Regen Luna.

Are there specific Filipino terms used to describe LGBTQ folks?

Bakla, Tomboy, Silahis, Paminta, Tibo, to name some. For bi people, they call us greedy and free for all. (Can you imagine? Hahaha!)

A Filipino American told me about the term FilipinX which is meant to be inclusive of all genders instead of referring to Filipinos (masculine) and Filipinas (feminine). Is that term used widely in the Philippines?

FilipinX isn’t widely used here in the Philippines, and to be honest, I haven’t encountered such a term. But in reading about it, I don’t think it’s acceptable to some Pinoys (people from the Philippines). It’s like they’re being forced to cater to Western standards.

What are the general thoughts about President Duterte of the Philippines? Have there been any concerns about the rights of LGBTQ people since he’s been in power?



Ah, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. The Iron Fist President. The people who don’t believe in him called him a psycho, and the people who love him, praise him and look at him as the real-life superman of the poor. I may be a public servant, but I’m not really into politics. Seeing the pros and cons of his administration, I must say that it depends upon who you are talking to if you want to know more about him.

For me, I see how he protects his people, how he fights for the extermination of drugs. But I also fear that he is a man with no hesitations who will break down any kind of barrier in his way. I’m worried about his regard for women and I hope he will be more mindful about his words towards women. I hope he will embrace the LGBT community and make the Philippines a safe haven for us. He knows that we don’t ask for too much; we just want equality and acceptance, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. In 2017, he considered creating an LGBT commission, and even looked for a representation of LGBT in the Anti-Poverty body. He even said that there is the possibility of the legalization of same-sex marriage in the Philippines. I am hoping for the best and that our president will work harder to make those things possible. And also, may he leave a legacy, to pass the SOGIE bill before the end of his term as president of the Philippines.

I always hope and pray for *love* to conquer the *hate*. In all aspects. In all places. At all times.

Maraming Salamat, Rbye. Thank you so much.

Carla Imperial is a Filipino American writer & musician living in Northampton with her wife of 25 years, Megan, and their 11-year-old daughter, Kai.

AROUND THE WORLD: Bree Mountain, Australia

Interviewed by Katelynn Bishop

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Where to start? Well, I grew up in the Blue Mountains about two hours out of Sydney, Australia. I am the daughter of a social worker who followed in her footsteps, having studied Social Work straight out of high school.

I have worked in a variety of areas, including working with people with disabilities, people seeking asylum, Indigenous Australians within Alice Springs in rural Australia, the homeless community, and people addicted to substances. I have spent the last three years working with children in out-of-home care, also known as foster and residential care.

However, after the recent success of the projects I have been pursuing with Bi+ Visibility, I have decided to step away from full-time employment and follow in the direction my work with the bi+ community takes me. I plan to return to study in this area and continue to build Bi+ Visibility to further meet the needs of our community.

When did you first identify as bisexual?

This is a hard question to answer, as I believe there are many stages in this journey.

The first time I thought about the possibility of being interested in women was during a conversation with a high school friend,

probably at around 15, where she was having her first conversations about identifying as a lesbian. I knew at this time there was a part of me, too, that could be interested in women, but knowing I was interested in men made these thoughts confusing and I boxed them away.

A few years later, however, these fleeting thoughts began to linger, and I found it harder and harder to deny their existence. Again, like so many, it took having my first real crush on a member of the same sex to face the reality that in fact, I may not be as straight as I thought.

This was when my internal journey truly began; however, it wasn't until a few years later that I found myself comfortable enough to be open about my sexuality. The years in the lead up to this time were paved with discomfort, denial, shame, confusion, and at times exclusion.

One of the first people I openly confided in, a close friend who identified as gay, told me that I "don't get the golden ticket," suggesting that my bisexuality didn't count as a "coming out." In the months that followed, any interest I showed in men was met with, "See, I told you you're straight." It was a very hard time for me, and it wasn't until I had my first girlfriend a year later that this friend saw me as "legitimate." But I would have to say the first time I truly identified as bisexual, proudly and publicly, was during the Australian Same-Sex Marriage Postal Plebiscite.

This was a very hard time for the LGBTIQ+ community in Australia: as in many countries, a vote gave those who preached hatred a platform to yell louder. It was spoken about everywhere and within my small home town in the Blue Mountains a man spent every day in the local town square with a "vote no" sign explaining to members of the community the terror same-sex marriage would bring.

The hurt I felt for those being vilified was immense and I felt like I needed to do something. My mother, sister, and I decided to fight this man's hate with love, and covered the town square with love-heart cutouts with messages of support for the local LGBTIQ+ community. Within days the community joined in and "Trees of Love" sprouted up all over the Blue Mountains. I was proud to stand with my community and fight, and together we won that vote and same-sex marriage has been legal in Australia for over a year.

What resources and community support were you able to find when you first identified as bisexual, if any?

I would say this question is the perfect segue into the work I am now doing with Bi+ Visibility. The answer is: none. It was actually the lack of events in Sydney on Bi Visibility Day last year that pushed me to get involved.



Bree Mountain

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On the day where I was supposed to feel visible, I felt the complete opposite. I was invisible, as was my community. It was this lack of visibility that made me realize something had to be done.

The group you are involved with, Bi+ Visibility, along with the broader Australian bi+ community, has had some exciting milestones and news lately! Tell us about what has been going on.

What a year it has been for the bi+ community in Australia! It truly is 20BiTeen [on social media: 2019 is being referred to as the year of the bisexual -ed.].

Since getting involved in this space around October last year, I have seen so much progress all around the country and even the world for our community. Maybe it's the fact my Facebook newsfeed is now predominantly bi+ groups, but it seems that bisexuality is something that is being spoken about more freely. With more celebrities speaking openly about their sexuality and shows such as *The Bisexual* and *The Bi Life* popping up, I feel like bisexual visibility is on the rise.

Within Australia, the last two years have seen the establishment of organized bisexual+ networks around the country and, excitingly, our first bi+ specific mental health service, Bi+ Australia.

2019 has also seen the release of the first findings of the largest study of bisexuals in Australia and I believe the world, conducted by Bi+ Australia's Managing Director Julia Taylor. Julia's study, *Who I Am*, surveyed more than 2500+ bisexual Australians and is filling a knowledge gap that will hopefully enable us to provide up-to-date, accurate information about our community within our advocacy moving forward.

2019 also saw the second national LGBTQI+ conference, *Better Together*, which brought together voices from every state as well as a number of delegates from the U.S., the U.K., and the Philippines to join in the conversation exploring current issues facing the LGBTQI+ community and how to work together to bring about meaningful social change. The bisexual community was well-represented within the conference with special mention to Sydney Bi+ Network President Amber Loomis and Vice President Eloise Monteiro who ran an inspiring and informative workshop about the bisexual+ community.

In terms of milestones for Bi+ Visibility, I'm not sure where to begin!

Our first true involvement within the advocacy space was through the #Bseen campaign launched October 2018. This was a direct response to the lack of visibility many of us felt on Bi Visibility Day. This campaign was about making bisexual+ people visible not only to society, but also to each other. From the very first day the campaign launched we had people messaging us saying they had never met another bisexual person in their life. This campaign offered those, and many others, a sense of community that so many of us have never experienced.

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Signs for the Mardi Gras float

The second big goal for Bi+ Visibility was in relation to Sydney's Pride Parade, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. As the name suggests, the organization hasn't always been welcoming to the bisexual+ community and it had been many years since a bi+ float had participated.

After three months of hard work and dedication from a beautiful team of volunteers from around the country, we marched proudly alongside 80 bisexual+ identifying people dressed as bi+ icons, or "bicons" as we liked to call them, down Sydney's iconic Oxford Street with the rest of our beautiful LGBTQI+ community. And I had the opportunity to be interviewed live on national TV alongside our float.

Since then, Bi+ Visibility has been working closely with the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to help make the event and organization more inclusive. The organization is currently undergoing consultation with their members to change the name from *Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras* to something inclusive of the broader LGBTQI+ community.

The third area that we are currently focusing on is raising awareness of the significant mental health issues our community experiences, particularly within the political sphere.

After the success of the #Bseen campaign, Bi+ Visibility, along with bi networks around Australia, were invited to meet with the Australian Greens Senator Janet Rice, a proud bisexual woman, who holds The Greens' LGBTQI+ Portfolio. Senator Rice is an incredible advocate for the bisexual+ community, having made a powerful speech in parliament on Bi Visibility Day that I would recommend everyone watch.

We communicated to Senator Rice the need for policy to separate the "B" from the "LGBTQI+" in order to address our unique needs.

We spoke about the current mental health concerns facing our community, including Julia Taylor's *Who I Am* study that found that one in three bisexual+ people have attempted suicide. We advocated for the need for policies directed at the bisexual+

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community to address these frightening statistics and create real change.

Since that time, The Australian Greens have shared their LGBTQI+ Campaign Commitments, which include \$70 million in grants for community organizations with \$3 million dedicated specifically to bi+ mental health programs and services!

Their commitments also include funding for bi+ specific research, bi+ peer support programs, raising awareness of biphobia, and improving bi+ access to family and intimate partner violence services.

We were also very excited to have Janet Rice march alongside the Bi+ Mardi Gras Float!

“Visibility” is part of the name of your organization, and the #Bseen campaign emphasizes visibility. Can you share with us your thoughts on the importance of visibility? How do you promote bi+ visibility?

To me, visibility is core to everything we are working towards for our community. When we look at these mental health statistics, the research shows that one of the biggest contributing factors is isolation felt by our community. Not only have I felt this on a personal level, I have heard first hand from many the toll that isolation and exclusion can take.

When we first began the #Bseen campaign, we received a message from a man that stated, “Had I not seen this, I would have ended my life.” That was the first day of the campaign, and from that moment on I have wanted to do everything I can to show our community they are seen, valued, and celebrated.

Visibility is also incredibly important to fight the stereotypes, stigma, and biphobia that many bisexual+ people experience.



#B-seen campaign, Paramatta Pride

Often these attitudes are based on ignorance and lack of understanding. By increasing visibility, and by putting a face, many faces, to our community and speaking out against these views together, we can challenge those notions.

I have also co-founded an events organization, BiCONIC, with my close friend, LGTBQI+ advocate and ultimate ally, Diego Garcia Luna, which hosts events at local pubs and clubs for bi+ people, queer folk, and their allies. I feel these events not only offer the community a safe space to “party,” but also increase visibility and hopefully in turn help normalize bisexuality within the wider community.

What is your vision for the bisexual+ community in Australia? What challenges do you face, and what do you look forward to?

I envision a strong sense of community for every bisexual+ person around the nation. I want there to be enough platforms—including local community groups, networks, parties, social media, and media representation—that bisexual+ people no longer feel the isolation that research shows so many of us feel. I would also like to see funding reaching bisexual+ specific organizations, such as Bi+ Australia, which has the specialized knowledge and skills to address our needs. Currently there are some great publicly funded LGBTQI+ services, but we need more funding for services that are by and for the bi+ community to meet our unique needs, including mental health concerns.

I believe one of the main challenges we currently face is the discrimination and biphobia that many bisexual+ communities around the world experience. As a community, we often experience discrimination from both the straight community and members of the LGBTQI+ community, as well. The recent Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras name change consultation has demonstrated this recently, with members of the wider community stating that bisexual people don't belong in the parade, amongst other more hurtful things that aren't worth repeating.



Performers and organizers of BiConic

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This will be an ongoing challenge; however, as our community grows, I feel these voices will be overshadowed.

Moving forward, I am incredibly excited to see more groundbreaking studies like Julia Taylor's *Who I Am* study. But overall, I am most excited to see the love, support, and sense of community that is growing and continues to grow. I truly believe it is our time and look forward to seeing what the years to come will bring.

What do you want readers to know about bi+ activism in Australia?

So many of the incredible bisexual+ advocates here in Australia—Ruby Mountford and Anthony Lekkas (Melbourne Bisexual Network), Amber Loomis and Elouise Monteiro (Sydney Bi+ Network), and Misty Farquhar (Bisexual Community Perth)—all started off as individuals who were frustrated with the current state of things and decided to do something.

There are so many ways to support your local community that anyone can do within their town or city. Starting a closed Facebook group is a really great way to start. This offers bisexual+ locals a safe space to speak openly about their sexuality, meet others, and find support. The Bisexual+ Networks around Australia were founded by dedicated volunteers who want to enact change. Anyone can take this step and I would encourage readers who are interested in pursuing something like this to visit our website at www.biplusaustralia.org and reach out to us—we would be more than willing to offer guidance.



Overall, my message is anyone, anywhere, can take steps to enact change. It is through dedicated volunteers uniting together that we will see lasting change. I encourage everyone to think about what they can do to help support and continue to develop our incredible community!

Katelynn Bishop has a Ph.D. in Sociology with an emphasis in Feminist Studies. She currently teaches sociology and pursues social justice in Northern California, where she lives with her partner and cat. She is assistant editor of Bi Women Quarterly.

Breaking Binary

By Emily A. Fisher

I was raised without much gender enforcement, which I'm so thankful for. My dad bought the toys I think he wanted, and I got to play with those as well as what girls normally get. I had Legos, My Little Ponies, an erector set, Ninja Turtles, and Barbies. I remember wanting to be a princess for one Halloween and a knight the next. I had a lot of imagination, and being an only child, I made up all my own stories. I was a boy character one day, a girl the next, but most often a dragon or a lava monster. When I was a teenager, I would read about people who were my heroes and I would see myself being just like them—fictional characters like Picard of the Starship Enterprise, Hermione from Harry Potter, Buffy from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, or Frasier.

For my real career aspirations, I could be just like George Washington Carver, Rosalind Franklin, Marie Curie, or Richard Feynman. Their gender was irrelevant; we liked the same things: science and discovery. I saw myself in them. I wanted to explore, invent, and unravel the mysteries of the universe.

I didn't know it at the time, that there was a label for my experience where gender doesn't define who I am—it's non-binary.

I was happy, pursuing the things I loved from childhood through college without thinking about gender.

It wasn't until I entered the workplace that I was surprised to learn that I was a woman. I was told how to be a female scientist, not a scientist.

Every time someone mentions gender, it's been a bad thing for me:

When are you having kids? Right away or later? . . . But I don't want to be a parent.

You get to experience the miracle of childbirth . . . I took biology, hard pass.

Welcome to womanhood, you will bleed, be in pain and feel bad several days of the month . . . is that what being a woman is?

Don't you want to be beautiful? . . . Do I have to? I don't want to spend time and money on it. Men don't *have* to do that.

You make good money, now dress like it! . . . How am I supposed to dress?

Skirts are so nice and flowy . . . But they makes my legs chafe

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Girls tend to major in caring and creative discipline . . . But I like science and engineering.

All the steel-toed boots have pink accents . . . But I like green.

Think like a man, work like a dog, act like a lady . . . I think and act and work like a scientist. Dogs don't work hard.

you should

you can't

you have to

don't

You can be gentle and caring

Women can be strong

Women can be compassionate

Don't you want to support other women?

Lean in

Be strong

but, not too strong

Be bold

but, not too bold

Stand out,

fit in

You can't say "like,"

remove "just" from our emails,

don't start a sentence with "I think"

don't uptalk if you want to be taken seriously

Smart women are intimidating, you'll never get a man like that

Are you sure about those results?

Dress professionally

You can't wear that

You have to have kids, that's what it means to be a woman

Don't you want a family one day?

What does your husband think of that?

Don't make more than him

When are you having kids? Now or later?

We've got pink hard hats

You look prettier when you smile

Women's pants don't have pockets

Be skinny

no, be fit

no, be healthy

no, be happy

STOP

I just want to be . . . me

In the LGBTQ community I found more ways to understand gender. That I didn't have to force myself into a box that says "she/her." I could use pronouns that don't come with burden.

The first time someone used the pronouns they/them/theirs to describe me, I stood up taller, I took a deep breath, it matched



Emily Fisher, self-portrait

me. I had been trying to shove my identity in this female box where it didn't belong, a puzzle piece that was never going to fit. They/them/theirs fit effortlessly.

They/them/their pronouns are a blank slate where I can draw what I really care about.

Emily A. Fisher is a geologist in California. They led the formation of the local bi/pan+ community in Bakersfield and the LGBT+ Allies employee resource group at their place of work. They continue to strive for bisexual representation at work and in their community. They use oil painting and creative writing to express their bisexuality and non-binary identity.

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Biracial, Bisexual, and Silent—The Hidden Life of a Quiet, Academic Queer

By Sarah Jen

My family moved to a small, super white, conservative town when I was five. At least 50% of the population was Dutch, and so was my family: half Dutch and half Chinese. People would ask me and my siblings, “Where are you guys from?” My first memory of kindergarten is that there was only one other little girl on the playground with dark hair and I gravitated toward her out of . . . curiosity, sameness, recognition? I’m not sure why. By the end of the day, three parents had asked us if we were twins. After that day, I avoided being seen with her in order to dodge further questioning.

I was labeled a shy child before I can remember. It’s difficult to challenge the assumption of shyness at that age, to be anything other than what people call you. I didn’t know it at the time, but my gender and the “ethnic” look about me had a lot to do with that early labeling, I’m sure. But the supposed social anxiety that defined my early years stemmed from the fact that there was something I fundamentally did not understand about childhood and how I was supposed to function within it. I spent most of my time watching other kids, internally processing their actions and interactions. As most introverts will understand, it’s not that I couldn’t be engaged; the verbal thing came quite easily once I got going. I just waited to be asked rather than volunteering information and observed more than I spoke, and in many settings, I still do.

By the end of my elementary school years, I learned how to use my supposed “ethnic” appearance as a hook, to draw people in so they’d actually get to know me. My “shy” personality became more interesting when my biracial identity was highlighted among a sea of blondes, giving me an instant boost in popularity. During a second grade lesson sequence ambiguously titled “China,” other students flocked to me, because obviously I was an expert on all things Chinese. I didn’t correct them when I heard them spreading rumors about my pet panda. I taught them to use chopsticks. I didn’t want to let anyone down. I had found a kind of social attention I could not only tolerate, but actually enjoyed.

Despite this learned adaptation, I remained a relatively quiet child who generally faded into the background despite brief moments of spotlight. I longed to grow older because I thought things would be simpler, that I would learn to engage like an actual human being.

But through various developmental stages, these feelings of otherness and separation lingered. In middle school I longed for high school; when I started high school I thought college would be better. As an undergraduate student I spent the majority of my time rolling cigarettes, drinking cheap coffee, and cynically

waxing philosophical about the world in the company of doctoral candidates who I counted as my closest friends.

Along the way, I was finding that not only did my social life feel complicated, but my own internal identities felt jumbled as well and the two were closely intertwined. My biracial background became more nuanced as I learned about my family’s history and came to recognize the structural factors at play that allowed me to appropriate and showcase my Chinese roots. I started to see that my gender deeply impacted my position in my family as the youngest daughter, often deemed too emotional, acquiescing, or timid to function. My attractions to and desire for others grew more distinctive. I was and am attracted to people, people who understand me deeply, however they happen to identify or present. This fluidity found its pair in a man I dated in college who considered himself bi. He was the first person with whom I could put all of my diverse and nuanced attractions into words and there was a mutual understanding that our attractions matched in some way. We used to sit at dark coffee shops for hours, playing cards and noticing all of the beautiful people who came and went. He was the first person I could talk to about how I found all kinds of people to be unbearably beautiful in the most enchanting ways. He understood that. While that relationship was awful in other ways and ultimately doomed to fail, it made an impact on the way I recognize and verbalize attraction, love, and intimacy to this day.

Having been such a quiet child, people generally assumed I was fine and I felt pressure to maintain that fine-ness. There weren’t many people I could turn to in order to sort through things, so I turned to books. Coming from a class position that granted me access to private schools and higher education, academia felt safe and supportive to me. I read anything and everything I could get my hands on, hoping that someone else’s words would describe my experiences . . . *Angels in America*, *Norwegian Wood*, *Mysterious Skin* . . . problematic as novels can be, they, among many others, offered pieces of me.

Beyond the wide world of novels, my sexuality and my biracial family came alive to me in college courses: sitting in the back of a large auditorium, my social psychology professor describes common reactions to childhood sexual abuse and I’m flooded with emotions as I realize just how many other young women hate and blame themselves too . . . Preparing to present on the second Cultural Revolution for my Modern Chinese History course, I realize the Revolution took place just after my grandmother left Shanghai to study in the U.S. My father tells me her home was ransacked and she was unable to return for many years after. I can’t believe they never told us. Reading alone in my apartment late at night, I pore over Sheri Eisner’s *Bi: Notes*

Sarah, continued on next page

Sarah, continued from previous page

for a *Bisexual Revolution* and recognize many of my own feelings: a lack of political trust from queer communities, an assumed promiscuity that promotes sexual violence, a stubborn, constant sense of not being queer enough. It's as though I am reading my own autobiography and I start to cry.

I could share many more moments in which my own reflection became clearer during my time as a student. The sense of recognition I found in my studies kept me in graduate school, almost unsure of what I would be without it. Now, as I embark on a career in teaching and research, I am hopeful that other young people might have the same waves of recognition that once washed over me; that they might see their own stories and futures reflected on the pages I write; that every time I come out to a class as bi and queer in some roundabout way as if it doesn't have to be a big deal, they might believe it; that they might be driven to discover more; that they might know they are not alone.

Sarah Jen is a biracial, bisexual, queer woman who loves knitting. As an assistant professor at the University of Kansas, she studies bisexuality and aging using qualitative and creative methods.



LETTERS

Dear Womyn,

I have enjoyed your publication for several years. I will be moving in June and will not know my address for a while. I plan to switch to an electronic subscription and will no longer need to be on your (snail) mailing list. Please accept this \$50 check to help cover the postage you have endured for me. I do appreciate your work and everyone's words.

Thank you so kindly,
MB, Fort Collins, Colorado

Dear BWQ,

I am the Executive Director of PRIDE in Action, a Jamaican queer-focused NGO that serves students and other youth through SPECTRUM, the LGBTQIA+ resource centre that we run on campus at The University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. Our project assistant, Chris Leslie, and I were first introduced to BWQ when we met Robyn Ochs at Creating Change 2017. We enjoy the publication when it comes out and we've printed and made the last couple years' editions available in our library. For the last edition, Chris and I (both cis gay men) selected our favorite entries and posted copies on the wall of the lounge room as our selected picks. We'll probably

do the same again for the new issue, as it gets folks reading! Thanks again for sharing it with us!

Mark Clifford, Kingston, Jamaica

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our Fall issue will feature poetry and essays from three members of this group!



Jo-Anne Carlson is a writer, artist, and musician who believes that who you love, how you love, and how many you love, shouldn't matter.
joexpressions@yahoo.com

Abstract 40. Acrylic piece by Jo-Anne Carlson.

What It's Like to Have A Period When You Have Gender Dysphoria

By Christi Sessa

I got my period for the first time about a month or so before I turned 14. My twin sister had gotten hers years ahead of me, and I had just shared a bathroom with my mother for the previous year and a half, so I was already familiar with the ever familial cycle. I remember wanting to be excited. I had done everything in puberty up to periods at that point. I started wearing a bra when I was nine, I got curves when I was young, acne by the time I left elementary school, all that jazz. I was ready.

But when I got it, I was terrified. I knew it might hurt sometimes. Yet as long as I have been menstruating, I have always felt uncomfortable when I am on my period. I wanted to carve my uterus out of me, show it who was the real boss, even when I didn't have cramps. A lot of the women around me said those things, too. But here's the thing that sets me apart from most of them: *I actually meant it.*

When I was around 15 or 16 and began to understand the power of the Internet, I discovered nonbinary genders on a forum site. I knew this described me immediately. I have never, once in my life, felt like I was really one of the girls. But I wasn't a boy either. But I was dealing with a lot of shit at the time, so I set it aside, figured that I couldn't be nonbinary because that meant I was trans. Two of my close friends were trans; my experience wasn't like theirs. I didn't feel like my body was working against me all the time. I learned to hide my chest if I didn't want to show it, I loved wearing dresses, and makeup was fun when I wasn't too lazy to wear it. I didn't want hormones or a new name. I liked being called Christi. "She" didn't feel right, but I figured I should just ignore it. If I had to choose, I decided, I was a woman. But I hated the idea of choosing.

Now, at this time it's important to note that I was also in the closet to myself about my sexuality. About a year after I discovered nonbinary identities, I began to identify as bisexual. Even with that I still didn't want to think about gender until I hit college. At my first LGBT group meeting, someone said they identified as "masculine but not a man." I heard that and really, really felt it. When you are assigned female at birth, for at least a time in your life your identity is tied to the traditional ideas of womanhood. I've been catcalled; men have flirted with me assuming I was a cis girl. And, most importantly for this discussion: once a month, I have my period. But I wasn't a cis girl. I was something else. Feminine, sure, but not always. Feminine, but not a woman. Masculine, but not a man. I was something else, *someone* else.

Since I've started to figure out my gender, I've learned the reason I hate my period so much. It isn't just because it hurts like hell. It isn't just because I in no way want biological children. It's because my period is a monthly reminder that my body and

my identity do not exist together, but as almost separate identities. Some of that is a history of the trauma I've experienced in regards to my body. Most of the trauma I've dealt with since puberty, or rather, since I was told I was a woman, was seeing my body, a "woman's" body, as some sort of object. My period is a monthly reminder of everything I'm not. But now I know why I hate my period so much, why I want to claw my uterus out and pretend it doesn't exist. And because I know why, I now have a name for that feeling: dysphoria.

It's really hard to have dysphoria for something you can't *see*. It's just always there. If I were born without a uterus, I would be 100% okay with that. If I could lose this part of my body tomorrow, I would be okay with that. Hell, at this point I'm jealous of my mother for experiencing menopause. I still have 30 years of this. I take birth control every day, which, while it helps with the cramps and acne (and, of course, not getting pregnant), it reminds me that I have something that, I feel, is not a part of me. And it hurts. A lot. Ibuprofen and heating pads stop the pain but they can't make the dysphoria go away. I also feel dysphoria with my chest, but top surgery is on the horizon for me, and there are doctors who will do it. Hysterectomies, on the other hand, are expensive procedures, and no health insurance plan would want to cover such a surgery for someone like me, a twenty-two-year-old at the peak childbearing age with no serious health issues. Dysphoria and periods don't help with sex, either. It feels like my vagina, something I usually see as mine, is being invaded by something that decidedly *isn't*. It's really, really hard to have sex with someone, even if you love them, when you just feel absolutely disgusted with your body.

Gender dysphoria is a real problem. Not all trans people experience it, and it looks and feels different for everyone. What allies must grow to understand is that dysphoria is complicated. It isn't needed to be trans or nonbinary. It's different for everybody. It also isn't always visible and doesn't always impact the whole body. I love the curves of my hips, the feminine features of my face. But I also can't wait for top surgery. I use they/them pronouns now. An I never want another period. More than that, I do not want this uterus. I just want to be my own beautiful, handsome, genderqueer self.

Christi Sessa is a recent graduate of Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana. They love to write and would like to save the world someday.



The Space Between

By Natalie Perry

It took me several years to figure out my sexuality, mostly because terminology for my identity didn't exist when I was younger. I'm pan-demisexual and greyromantic. I initially suspected I was bi when I was in college, but the term didn't seem quite right. I had fallen for a girl for the first time, making me realize that I was attracted to more than guys. But I also had the sense that I didn't experience attraction like most people did. It wasn't until 12 years later that I heard the term demisexual and everything clicked.

My identities in some ways seem in opposition to each other. Gender isn't a factor in who I'm attracted to, so I should have the potential to be attracted to anyone. Yet, as a greyromantic, demisexual, I rarely experience attraction.

For me, it can be strange to be in bi+ spaces. I sometimes feel, due to my greyromantic and demisexual identities, that I'm not really bi/pan enough. Demisexuality is the main component of how I describe my attraction. For me, the "how" has a bigger impact than the "who." However, I've been fortunate that many of the bi+ spaces that I've encountered focus on several non-binary identities. I usually feel that the people I meet in bi+ spaces have a better understanding of the asexual and aromantic spectrum than the general LGBTQ+ community.

Given the choice, I tend to spend more time in asexual spaces, as I feel I relate more to people there. It still isn't always the right fit, as being on the asexual spectrum isn't the same as identifying specifically as asexual. But in the asexual community it's common to hyphenate identities, and there are many people who identify on the asexual spectrum *and* something else. So it's more likely that I'll meet people who hold both of my identities in asexual spaces than in bi+ spaces, and that means people there may understand me more.

Lack of understanding is the main struggle I face with my identities. Having a non-binary identity can be challenging because so many people see things as "either/or" and I'm not solidly in either group. And yet both groups will often question the validity of the identity of those in-between.

Not feeling like I fit in the binary options isn't new to me. I've spent most of my life feeling as if I'm walking along a line with each foot in a different world. I am also queerspawn, an identity term for people with at least one LGBTQ+ parent or guardian. I'm the product of a heterosexual relationship, but my dad came out to my immediate family when I was 12 years old. Due to his position as a high-level judge who had to run for re-election, he didn't come out publicly. So for two decades, I lived in a closeted gay family.



I very much feel that queerspawn could be considered another non-binary identity. Many in the straight community saw me as like them, never knowing my secret, as I hid my family. It was strange to be surrounded by heteronormativity at school and work and then go home to a very queer space. Since my dad came out to me, part of me has always been culturally queer, but as the child of LGBTQ+ parents the queer community has often disputed my place in it.

When I came to suspect that I might be queer myself, it raised even more uncertainty for me: how does one navigate the world as a second-generation LGBTQ+ person? How did I feel about claiming a new space in a community that had questioned my place in it? How accepted would I be? For so long the story around LGBTQ+ families has been, "gay people don't make their kids gay." I couldn't help but wonder how people would treat me if I weren't the "right kind" of queerspawn.

Ultimately, I've learned to navigate queerspawn life by not relying on others to legitimize me. It still hurts when people question the validity of my identity or question my existence in spaces. I get tired of having to explain myself and my right to claim LGBTQ+ space because others aren't familiar with my terminology or don't understand my identities.

I accepted a long time ago that there would always be people who don't understand me and my family. Everything I learned growing up queerspawn has influenced my pan-demisexual identity, and that has helped me move more freely in this world. I think I will always feel like I walk in two worlds: never queer enough, but not straight either. I exist somewhere in between, but at least that space feels like mine.

Natalie Perry is an author, artist, public speaker, and advocate for LGBTQ+ families.

Neither/Nor

By *Mariah Cruz*

I never played with dolls. Okay, I did, but not in the typical way that girls play with Barbies or boys play with robots. I did have a Barbie, but she never went on dates or wore dresses or had tea parties or went shopping. I had a G.I. Joe action figure, but he never saw combat, went on a secret mission, fired a gun, or fought anyone.

Mostly, my dolls piled into Barbie's convertible sports car and got pushed around on the rug in the den, sometimes stopping to drink a special soda (an upside down "Lite Brite" peg) or watch a movie at the drive-in (i.e., the TV). My dolls never aspired to anything. They never wanted to have families or careers. The motley crew was okay as is, even offering a welcome to the strays from my plastic cowboy/Indian playset or the bright green pet-shop turtle escaping its palm-tree-clad bowl.

Mismatched, rag tag, some of this and some of that. It's how I've always rolled.

All the kids in my neighborhood played together each night. There was an open field in the middle of the back streets just perfect for the evening game of kick the can, wiffleball, or tag. I've always loved sports and, though not much of an athlete, was down for whatever game was on tap that night. One evening when my neighbor, Flint, took a pee break in the outfield (for some reason we were both playing right field) and pulled out his small, bald penis, he said "Don't you wish you had one of these so you could be more like a boy?"

Hmmm. Why would I want to be *more* like a boy? And what would I do with a penis? I rode a boy's bike and didn't need a penis to do that. I read my cousin's *Boys' Life* magazine every time I went over to his house. Again, no penis needed. I wore pants all the time, played sports, built model cars, and basically did the stuff that most nine-year-old boys did, all without a penis.

A penis seemed like extra baggage and I'm a minimalist at heart.

Like most kids growing up in the 1970s, I was a huge fan of *The Partridge Family* TV show. Like millions of preteen girls, I had a huge crush on the show's star David Cassidy. But I also had

dreams at night and in those dreams, I was having sex with Laurie Partridge, the teenaged girl character on the show. And I was doing it with my very own dick.

These dreams never emerged during the day, especially not in my David Cassidy poster-infested bedroom, but at night, that's when

this dick-possessing side of myself would come out. I found the dreams to be most confusing. While I didn't mind being a girl, there wasn't anything about becoming a woman that interested me. I didn't want to be a mom. I didn't want to have a husband. I hated shopping. I didn't want to do any of the things I saw women doing.

Being a man wasn't something I had ever considered. Plus, I would make a lousy man. I'm not competitive. I can't watch sports for hours on end. I would hate having facial hair. And I would really hate having to be around other men most of the time.

So I didn't want to be a man or a woman. Was there another option?

And what about my dream dick?

In my prepubescent astral wanderings, it seemed natural and logical to be able to pick up a piece when you needed it and put it down when you didn't without it becoming a part of your identity. Being able to move fluently between, among, and within non-gendered spaces is most comfortable for me. I've never wanted to be male or female if it also meant being on board the long train of associated gender characteristics. I've always felt freest, and most me, when I'm neither/nor instead of either/or.

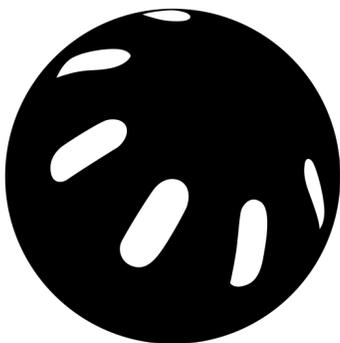
I remain anatomically female, but I identify most with something that hasn't been defined yet and perhaps never will be. Just like Third Space theory offers a fresh way to look at space, so too, I feel the need for more ways to look at gender.

Clothes shopping has always been a nightmare for me. I'm not attracted to the square shapes, dark colors, and plainness of the men's department or to the willowy, billowy, wraps, scarves, and florals of the women's department. High heels and clunky boots are equally distasteful to me. Maybe if I was more comfortable with nudity my problem would be solved, but as it is, flannel shirts, corduroy pants, tight sweaters, and minimalist footwear will have to do. "Tomboy femme" is a label I can live with in regard to finding something to wear.

I remember always feeling jealous of boys. They had strong, athletic bodies which seemed very practical and handy to me. My preteen self couldn't imagine what I'd do with breasts. It seemed like they'd always be in the way of something. And I was certain I'd never be feeding a baby with them. My adult self, however, really likes breasts, both on myself and on other women.

Boys had "buddies." They got together to work on cars, lift weights in the basement, and build stuff. Exactly what I wanted to be doing! Instead, I was stuck in the teenage hell of being with other girls who were waiting around for guys to call (this was before texting), shopping for clothes, talking about prom dresses, and babysitting. Horrid!

Mariah, continued on next page



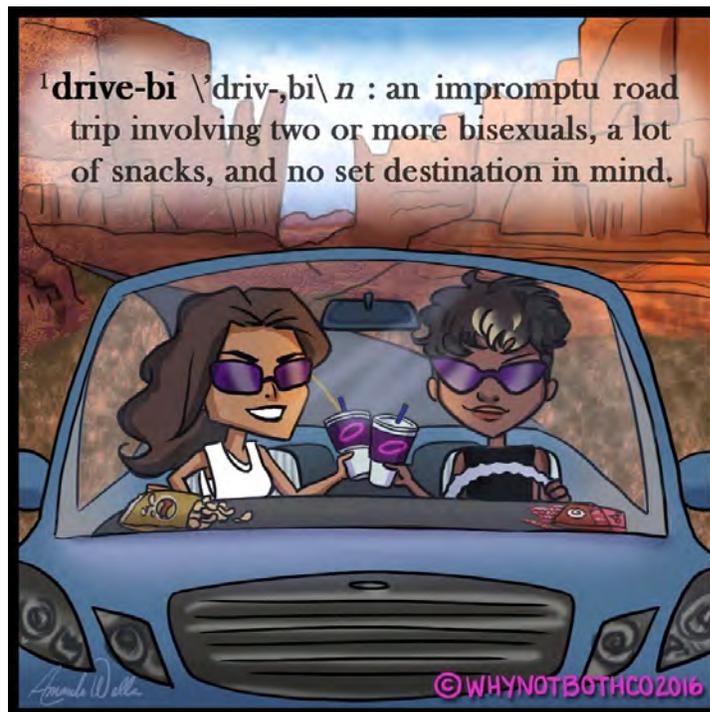
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Thank goodness I survived those years even though I'm still trapped on occasion by chatter about children, grandchildren, husbands, and pets. It's a lot easier to escape now than it was as a teen.

I wanted the kind of freedom and camaraderie that guys had. I wanted to be free from the expectation that I was supposed to live my life around children and men.

I wanted male privilege without having to be a man. I wanted all of the assets—such as women being interested in me *just because*—without any of the dude, the bro, or the dick. Especially not the dick.

Mariah Cruz lives and bikes in Portland, OR.



Why Not Both Co is a duo consisting of bisexual creators AV and Amanda Wells.

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#StillBi

By Buffy Lee

At 19, an ex-girlfriend outed me to my dad.
“I won't tell your mom,” I heard him sigh.
Revealing to me how society would see,
But regardless, I would always be #StillBi.

I bore two children in my late 20s.
So blessed by both, I could only cry.
I grasped hold of my mother's instinct,
As they began to grow? Yes, #StillBi.

Now at 44, divorced to more than one man,
Numerous boyfriends too, I won't lie.
But between them all, always girlfriends,
Even when with only one gender, I'm #StillBi.

No matter the direction my life has led me,
Or even will to come, before I die.
This I know, I'll always love the soul,
Man or woman, I'm always #StillBi

Buffy Lee is a single mother of two, committed to community leadership and volunteering in her hometown. Her passion for writing poetry is often felt in the emotions her poetry creates in the reader.

Wherever I go...

By Lila Hartelius

“... *Tu viens d'où?* (... Where are you from?)

This was not the first time I'd gotten the question.

“*Près de San Francisco*” (Near San Francisco.)

After the wave of initial excitement that predictably lit up my interlocutor's face (does *nobody* in France know about the actual weather in San Francisco?) came the type of comment that, along with a feeling of pride it still stirs in me, evokes an additional layer of impatience each time it is uttered.

“*Je m'attendais à ce que tu me dise de quelle région en France tu viennes! Tu as un très bon accent.*” (I thought you were going to tell me which region of France you were from! You have a very good accent.)

“*Merci. Ma mère est française.*” (Thanks. My mom is French.)

I don't remember what the weather was like that day, nor what I was wearing, but I remember feeling naked inside. My body walked slowly alongside my crush, while my mind fluttered somewhere above my head, wanting to believe this was all a dream. Telling your crush you like them is always easier in fantasies. You never stutter, your mouth never gets so dry you'd swear you just ate tahini, and your palms never get a combination of cold and clammy that renders any prior plots for surreptitious hand-holding obsolete.

“Oh, I thought you were a lesbian,” he said.

One half of me felt offended and the other elated. *Somebody actually believes I am someone whose attraction to women should be taken seriously? Gosh, this feels so good maybe I am a lesbian! But I'm not, and how dare he pigeon-hole me!* Both halves were bewildered: *What in the world made him think I was a lesbian?*

“Well, you're involved in the Queer Student Union, so I just assumed...”

“*Tu veux manger?*” (You wanna eat?)

“No, speak normal to me, Mom!”

How much kid energy I put into trying to avoid the risk of my peers thinking I was “weird,” I don't know. But if I put that energy into running today, I'd be marathon material in no time. Back then, in my eyes, having a mom with a French accent was about as big a threat to looking cool as was having a mom who broke into song in the supermarket (she was both). Being covertly invited to speak with her in the language which caused that then-embarrassing accent was akin to admitting I ate burnt oatmeal for breakfast and had bad breath and frizzy hair in the

morning (which I often did).

Despite my desire to feel accepted, I never felt truly “American” under my skin. Sure, I ate pizza, saw the Rolling Stones in concert—twice (even got a Mick Jagger tongue t-shirt with the U.S. American flag printed on it)—gave friends of friends hugs two seconds after meeting them (Okay, maybe that's just California) and, after a certain age, regularly used the expressions “dude” and “hella.” But growing up in a vegetarian family where Chinese tinctures were my Nyquil, cowboy hat and boot wearers like those we'd pass at the local Fourth of July fair were fodder for dinner table jokes, and a conversation with a grandparent always involved at least an accent if not a language barrier, it was pretty hard to ignore the feeling that I was a bit... different.

Being bisexual didn't help. In fact, looking back, it's hard to say how much of my sentiment that I was “weird” came from that and how much came from being a shy only-child in a multi-cultural family of first- and second-generation immigrants who neither ate hamburgers nor drank beer nor ever watched football. The two factors paralleled each other. Just like I'd never felt a sense of real belonging in the culture of the country I grew up in, I always knew I wasn't like my female peers who constantly talked about boys (mainly because when they did I usually wanted to stare at them, which, I learned from an early age, tended to make them uncomfortable). Yet calling myself a lesbian would have felt as incongruous as saying I grew up in France.

Moving to France was in part a desperate attempt to assuage the feeling of being a misfit. *Maybe in France I'll finally feel like I belong.* Uh, yeah... one word: cultural barriers. (Okay, two words.)

After six years, I still clam up when entering a room of people I know. *Do I really have to go around and kiss all of them on both cheeks? Maybe I'll just reciprocate when someone initiates. But then will the people who don't initiate feel offended?*

“*Bonjour.*”

The greeting came out as the man passed me on the sidewalk. *Do I know him? Does he know me?*

“*Au-revoir.*”

Her voice could have been that of a cashier asking if I wanted paper or plastic. I looked around. Other than the woman who'd just flung the two syllables through the air with the same routine nonchalance as her straight, charcoal hair around the heavy metal door as she left, I was the only person in the bank. The welcome desk lady had gone into a back office.

Lila, continued on next page

Lila, continued from previous page

Actually, I don't remember whether the lady was at the welcome desk or not, nor whether the woman flinging her voice around the door had charcoal hair, nor whether it was a woman at all. What I do remember is that strange things started happening. People I didn't know started saying hello and good-bye to me in public places. If someone did that in San Francisco, I'd think they were either lost, drunk, hitting on me, or trying to steal my wallet.

Fortunately, I quickly learned that in France they were simply being polite. In fact, depending on circumstances, it can even be considered impolite to *not* greet someone. I've witnessed French mothers who seem to instill this particularly well in their children. It's like "thank you" in the U.S.A.

"Qu'est-ce qu'on dit ?" (What do we say?)

"Bonjour."

I've even had individual children, wandering within eyesight of their parents at a festival or village gathering, surprise me with the greeting. They'll be staring up at me like I'm an alien, and then, their eyes still locked on me, I can almost see their manners come back over their face, like an amateur shoved out onto stage who, after the shock has passed, suddenly remembers they have to perform.

Once, when I was travelling around Western Europe after college graduation (making up for the year I didn't take off after high school), an October evening in Denmark had me trudging through cobblestone streets so narrow they would have been alleyways in the U.S.A., trying to follow a map (yes, a paper map—remember those?) to a lesbian bar.

With visions of my inner self tumbling out onto the floor of the place and rolling around yelping, "I'm home, I'm home!" going through my head, I tiptoed into a single, medium-sized room with one long bar and two short-haired women in leather jackets sitting at one end. The backpack whose straps, hugging my shoulders, betrayed my hostel-staying, baggy-jean-wearing culture suddenly came into sharp focus in my mind, becoming very purple and student-like. The women turned and stared at me with a stone look of, "We've never seen you before. You're not from around here. What are you doing on our turf?" It was a look of muted bewilderment, mild wariness, and reserved curiosity.

I ordered sparkling water, drank the cold, aggressive bubbles that scratched at the back of my throat, tried to act like I wasn't attempting to sneak glances toward the women at the other end of the counter, paid the bartender, and left.

As a bisexual, bicultural person, being "both" has often felt like being "neither here nor there." And though being mistaken for one thing can feel gratifying (or not), it ultimately feels incomplete.

Convinced I would find my place in the world by moving to France, or by slipping into an LGBT bar, bookshop, or discussion group (as I've done so many times), what I have in fact found in each encounter with each moment of life is a kaleidoscopic mélange of divergences and points in common with those I interact with. At first, the divergences between another's perspectives or experiences and my own propelled me deeper into feelings of hopeless despair and isolation. Shared interests or laughs would hype up my hopes of finding that feeling of perfect belonging I've yearned for, only to see them dashed by the first difference that reared its unnerving head.

Now, the pieces are starting to fall into place—exactly where they are. Camaraderie is pure sunshine. Differences, though still potentially stressful to encounter, sink me into the warm sand of my own turf—me—by letting me know where it is in relation to other individuals, cultures, identities, and values. What I've discovered is that, wherever I go, I'm exactly where I belong.

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.



than it was when I was growing up. I wondered what it would have been like to not have to wait until 31 to come out as “not this, but not quite that either.”

And, of course, because imposter syndrome lurks behind these non-binary identities regularly, I also wondered if I would have been as aware as that ten-year-old. If non-binary, agender, and genderfluid identities were as mainstream in the ‘90s as they are now, *would* I have known?

Perhaps even more so than sexual and romantic identity, the narrative of trans experience is that people “know” who they are at very young ages, at around the toddler stage. [Recent studies](#) around these issues, for many trans youth (and the adults who were once closeted trans youth), are a godsend that validate what they’d always known deep down in their hearts.

But what if I didn’t know? What if I wasn’t who I think I am? Can that change? Am I allowed to change? Was I cis at 12, curious/questioning at 21, and (mostly) certain now? What does it all mean? It’s been a little more than a year since I came out and I’m still trying to sort it all out. And I’m not all that certain that I ever will.

In the few years before I came out as non-binary/agender, my life was just a series of internalized interrogating questions. As I relayed in my Medium essay (link below), there was a lot of questioning of the concept of gender itself, wondering how I knew who and what I was and where I fit in. Unlike my sexual and romantic orientation, where I knew deep down inside that I was attracted to multiple genders at a young age (though it was just assumed that I was straight—because that’s all that’s supposed to exist), I grew up being referred to as a girl, by adults and children alike, so I just took their word for it. *This is what a “girl” is, you fit the criteria, ergo you’re a girl.* And that was that.

I was a girl; it was all I knew. Until I was no longer sure, because cultural shifts have allowed for more (and more in-depth) conversations in the public sphere about trans experience, gender,

and non-binary identities, and colonization and white supremacy’s roles in destroying the *fullness* of (a)gender that existed in indigenous communities around the world for centuries.

I was given the freedom to look back over my life and reevaluate what experiences did (and did not) speak to me, what felt accurate and true.

And sometimes truth is messy. And sometimes we don’t want to face the truth. I mean, c’mon. I’m already Black, bisexual, (proudly) fat, poor, multiply disabled, femme, witchy in a Christian-centric society, and brown-skinned. Do I really need yet another marginalized, oppressed identity on my crippled back?

But I realized that, after being out as bi for a decade, I literally couldn’t do anything but seek freedom. I wanted to be free to be me, fully. When I came out publicly as bi, in October 2007, I’d come out to *myself* an entire 18 months prior. When I came out publicly as non-binary/agender/exogender last spring, I’d only (finally) come out to myself about a month before.

Liberation begets liberation. *That’s* the agenda.

drops mic

Denarii Grace is a Black, bisexual, non-binary, proudly fat, multiply disabled, poor, femme, witchy woman. They’re a blues singer-songwriter, poet, freelance writer and nonfiction editor at The Deaf Poets Society, screenwriter, and public speaker/educator/activist. They coined the term “exogender,” a term for use by Black people only, to describe their (a)gender experience and founded Fat Acceptance Month in January 2019.

<http://biresource.org/a-reflection-a-decade-of-being-out-as-bisexual/>

<https://medium.com/@writersdelite/the-long-road-to-non-binary-d3bb86ace5b>

This photo was taken at our January bi+ women’s brunch at Maura & Linda’s. 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. Our next event is scheduled for July 20 and is listed in our calendar on p. 24. Reach out to Charlotte (avon.alger@gmail.com) for more info about hosting or attending a brunch.



LGBTQIAPK. I'm not going to open that can of worms right now, but I will say that for me personally my memberships of these different sexual minority communities are very much related. My queerness, my kinkiness and my polyamory are different expressions of the same traits: a taste for novelty, a love of variety, a passion for diversity. I'm miserable in boxes, uneasy with categories, and at home on the fringes of the socially sanctioned. I'm a being of thresholds and edges. I like to stand with one foot on land and one foot in the ocean, amphibious, ambidextrous. I prefer to dual-wield my identities.

I'm not indecisive, but I hate forced choices.

In addition to all this, I'm also a witch. While perhaps less obviously so, witchhood is also an identity that I would call non-binary. Historically, the role of the witch has been the intermediary between this world and the other, the spiritual and the material, the rational and the transrational, the civilized and the wild. Neither one thing or the other, but both, and neither.

For me, magic and witchcraft are also the perfect arena for expressing all my other non-binary-ness. I use ritual to experiment with shifting between genders, sexualities, and roles. I love to see how many different shapes I can bend my mind into.

Have you watched *Avatar: The Last Airbender*? The protagonist must master the energies of all four classical elements before he can claim his destiny. He must be an air-bender, water-bender, earth-bender, and fire-bender. It's heart-warming watching him come to terms with all the parts of himself that he wasn't aware of and learn to use each to its full potential.

I like to imagine my genders, roles and sexualities as different elements I can learn to connect with and control. It makes the process more fun and less arduous.

And as an added bonus, "gender-bender" is a lot of fun to say.

My journey from one to many has not been an easy one. My culture shies away from things that disrupt neatly boxed up categories. There are a lot of pointy words and phrases that get thrown at someone like me: greedy bisexual, Hell-bound whore. Slut, sinner, fence-sitter, freak-show. Confused, fickle, indecisive, unfaithful. Party-lesbian. Pervert. You don't know what you want. It's only a phase. Do bisexual people even exist?

That last one is a kicker. Internalised bi-erasure has led me to spend an unreasonable amount of time wondering if I'm imaginary.

When you grow up in the church, it takes a whole lot of work to undo the training that tells you that your plurality is perverted, pernicious, or nothing but a youthful delusion. I won't pretend I haven't had moments of wishing I were more straight-forward. Or just more straight. It's hard to love yourself when your family

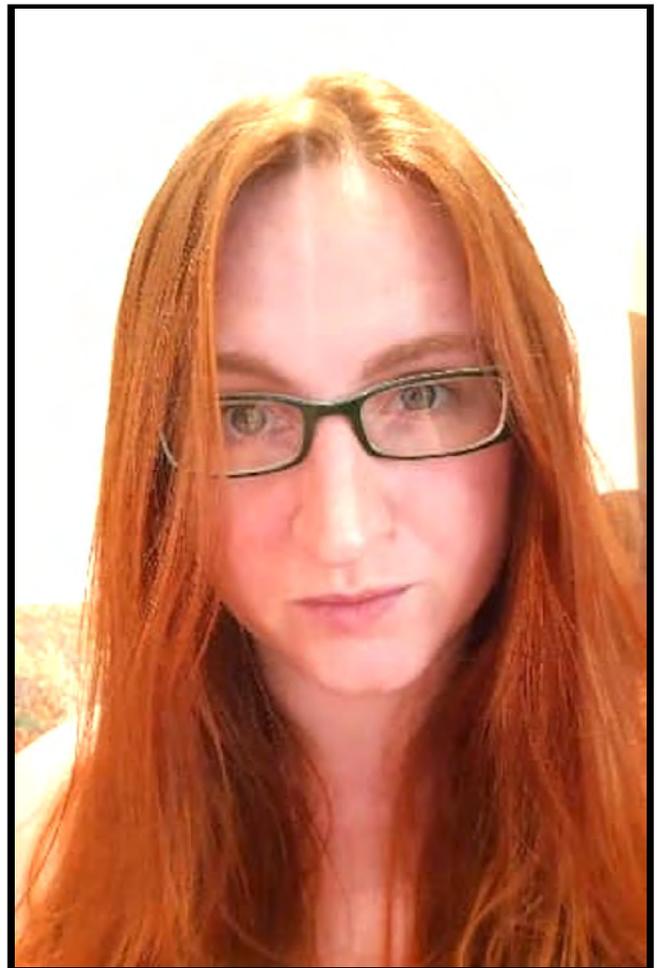
believes that everything you are is a one-way ticket to eternal damnation. I've struggled with mental health issues for most of my life, and the stigma directed at queer people has been a huge contributor to those issues.

Fortunately, love that's hard won is all the fiercer for the fight. It's taken years of pushing, fighting, learning, and growing, but I've finally reached a place where I'm (almost always) truly glad of everything I am, even if it makes life complicated. I'm working on coming out of all my intersecting closets, getting more involved in LGBTQIA+ communities, and trying to be there for other people like me.

So, this is a message to anyone else out there who's a little like me:

You're not alone. Your psychedelic rainbow of identities is valid and beautiful. Keep on burning bright and being you. Keep on breaking binaries, deconstructing dichotomies, and splitting light into a thousand different colours. The world is fuller and more fascinating for your presence in it.

Talitha is a queer witch, budding sexologist, and aspiring writer. Talitha lives in Western Australia with two partners and two cats.



Advice from A Rose Bi



A. Rose Bi proudly identifies as a bisexual woman. She currently lives in New England with her cats who love to sleep on her lap while she spends most of her time watching TV and playing video games while her partner cooks amazing food. In addition to being an out bi woman, A. has a degree in Cognitive Science, has completed trainings for LGBTQIA+ and sexual assault survivor advocacy, and has experience answering calls for an anonymous LGBTQIA+ help line. She is passionate about feminism, the bi+ community, LGBTQIA+ and female representation in the media, and helping others. Her preferred pronouns are she/her or they/them.

Have questions of your own for A. Rose Bi? Email arosebi.questions@gmail.com.

Dear A. Rose Bi,

I've seen a lot of talk on social media recently about the bisexual and pansexual labels. It seems like by calling myself bisexual, I'm transphobic or enforcing the gender binary—which I don't want to do at all! I've just always used bisexual as my label since coming out a couple years ago and didn't realize it was offensive.

I guess what I'm trying to ask is—should I start calling myself pansexual instead of bisexual to be more inclusive?

Sincerely,

Bisexual or Pansexual

Dear Bisexual or Pansexual,

I think it's safe to say that you are not the only person feeling this way right now. I feel like fairly recently this bisexuality vs. pansexuality debate has come to a head, especially on social media. To quote *Bi Women Quarterly* editor, Robyn Ochs, bisexuality is “. . . the potential to be romantically and/or sexually attracted to more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree.” Bisexuality is not inherently transphobic or encouraging of the gender binary, however there can be transphobic people who identify as bisexual, just like any orientation.

Part of this debate comes from the idea that “bi-” means two and “pan-” means all, so bisexual must imply just men and women—only two genders. In reality, both terms mean attraction to more than one gender. In some definitions, bisexuality is defined as attraction to people of more than one gender, and pansexuality is defined as attraction regardless of gender. Some people identify strongly with one distinction or the other.

For example, a close friend of mine, who identifies as pansexual, and I were having this exact discussion recently. (I identify as bisexual.) For me, I'm attracted to people of all genders, but

their gender is a part of my potential attraction to them. For my friend, her potential attraction to an individual has nothing to do with their gender. Maybe that's a difference in the labels?

However, we also had a long conversation about why we chose the labels we did and the knee-jerk biases we had had against the other label. For her, a key part of her identity and coming out process was the kink community. She very much “grew up” in her queer identity as part of this particular community, a community that predominantly (to my understanding) uses pansexual over bisexual to refer to attraction to multiple genders. For me, I “grew up” in my queer identity on a college campus where bisexual was a more often used (and more palatable) term than pansexual. In hearing the other person explain what their label meant to them, we realized that for the most part, we could see ourselves identifying as that label, too. I could see that my orientation could be described as bisexuality or pansexuality, but bisexual was the label that I first tried on and felt like it fit, and that means a lot to me. To her, it was the same thing but pansexual was that for her.

I know cis people who identify as pansexual and have cis partners, I know nonbinary people who identify as bisexual, I know cis people who identify as bisexual and have trans or gender-nonconforming partners. Your label is what you choose—what fits right when you try it on. Maybe pansexual does feel better for you after learning more. Maybe bisexual is the right fit because you feel most comfortable with that label. Maybe both feel right, and you can wave a pink, yellow, and blue flag along with your pink, purple, and blue flag. No matter what you decide, know that choosing a label that feels good to you, including bisexual if that's the case, is not transphobic or enforcing the gender binary. And if you're worried enough to ask, I highly doubt any of your behaviors are either.

Lots of love,

A. Rose Bi

Incisions and Sutures:

Like Flesh Covers Bone

by Jan Steckel

Reviewed by Robin Renée

When you read Jan Steckel's *Like Flesh Covers Bone* (Zeitgeist Press, 2018), be prepared. This, however, is a trick prescription. To be prepared for this journey is to be prepared for turns of phrase and jagged edges you will never quite see coming. The book is arranged into sections that mirror the steps of surgery—Incise, Dissect, Ligate, Excise, and Suture—which serves as the best indicator of what is to come.

The *Incise* section cuts from its first words. It peers unflinchingly at the tragedy of murder for the crime of living while black (“The Fall”). It sees imperialism, anti-Semitism, and pulls back the drapes to witness pain endured by women behind great men’s glory (“Mrs. Pap”). Word-play, sadomasochism, sexual intrigue, and real-world horror are bound together in an exciting, impossible knot in “Carnal Barker.” These poems embody politics but do not preach. Messages to be found are blended into and alongside lines of deep insight into human nature and loved ones in particular. There is precision word play throughout that disguises and reveals the poet’s scalpel.

Part two, *Dissect*, maintains the work’s intensity with a bit more remove. It is, overall, a section of close observation. In the wonderfully queer “Intersection,” words that may judge in other contexts occur by simple way of description:

*I am a woman, but there's a man in me
He's a bit of a fop, sort of a pansy . . .*

*. . . Why shouldn't everything about me be fluid?
I'm a squishy skin-bag of water and salt,
ocean inside and out.*

In *Ligate*, we find ourselves moving deeper into the experience. Some bits are tied up together, though they are not made discrete. Instead, we find ourselves in the middle of messy lives of sex, death, desires, pain, private joys, and desperate violence. It all intermingles uncomfortably in true-to-the-world accuracy. See “Bisexual Pixies” followed by “The Last Word” and “Just Black.” *Excise* cuts away in moments with plain-spoken truth as in the devastating “Why They Got Deported” and the stark metaphor of “Frog Soup.” “Too Hot for Band Camp” opens with terrific lines that beg for an immediate reread: “They wanted their daughter to go to Stanford/where they had met, but she loved fire.”

As with the five stages of grief, darker expressions such as rage and confusion give way to a greater sense of acceptance and healing in this book’s fifth section, *Suture*. Life’s complications haven’t gone anywhere, but the ways of seeing have shifted. In “Dinner Party,” we read:



*It's streams of conversation
coalescing and separating.
It's yellow forgiving light
instead of hard fluorescents.
It's the candle in the painting,
the streetlight in the fog,
that moment shining skew to time
when we were all together, laughing.*

The collection of poems ends with the unifying, “We the People.”

Like Flesh Covers Bone is interspersed with humor (“I Was the Chick with the Tambourine”), fun references to the work of artists including T.S. Eliot, Marvin Gaye, and Nirvana, a wealth of intriguing, recurring images, and out and proud bisexual love. Take the invitation into these tough, inspired, fleshy, bony poems.

Performing songwriter Robin Renee's recordings include In Progress, All Six Senses, Live Devotion, spirit.rocks.sexy, and This. More at www.RobinRenee.com.

As a co-host of The Leftscape podcast, Robin spoke with Jan Steckel in “[Like Flesh Covers Bone: Words with Poet Jan Steckel \(Episode 43\)](http://www.leftscape.com/words-with-poet-jan-steckel-episode-43/)” (leftscape.com/words-with-poet-jan-steckel-episode-43/)

“The King was pregnant”: Gender and Politics in *The Left Hand of Darkness*

By Casey Lawrence

No discussion of gender in science fiction is complete without Ursula K. Le Guin’s ground-breaking 1969 novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, just as no review of *The Left Hand of Darkness* would be complete without a discussion of gender. Le Guin’s novel is many things: a thought experiment (“What would a world be like without gender?”), a survival story, a romance, an epic, political fiction, science fiction, feminist fiction. It does it all, and it does it well.

The protagonist, Genly Ai, is a human man sent as envoy to the planet Gethen, a winter-world inhabited by ambisexual hominids. Gethenians are genderless for 24 days of a 26-day lunar cycle and adopt a sex during kemmer, their fertile window. All Gethenians can become male or female during kemmer, and can father children during one cycle only to later get pregnant and give birth in another, leading to the peculiar phrase with which I have titled this review: “The King was pregnant.” The announcement of the King’s pregnancy sends his subjects atwitter, for the heir would not be “another kemmering-son, of which he already had seven, but an heir of the body” and many people “said he was too old to be bearing children, and they got hilarious and obscene on the subject.” The King’s pregnancy is one of many moments which blur the line between sex and politics, a theme which the novel handles with sensitivity, intellectual curiosity, and, inevitably, stumbling human awkwardness.

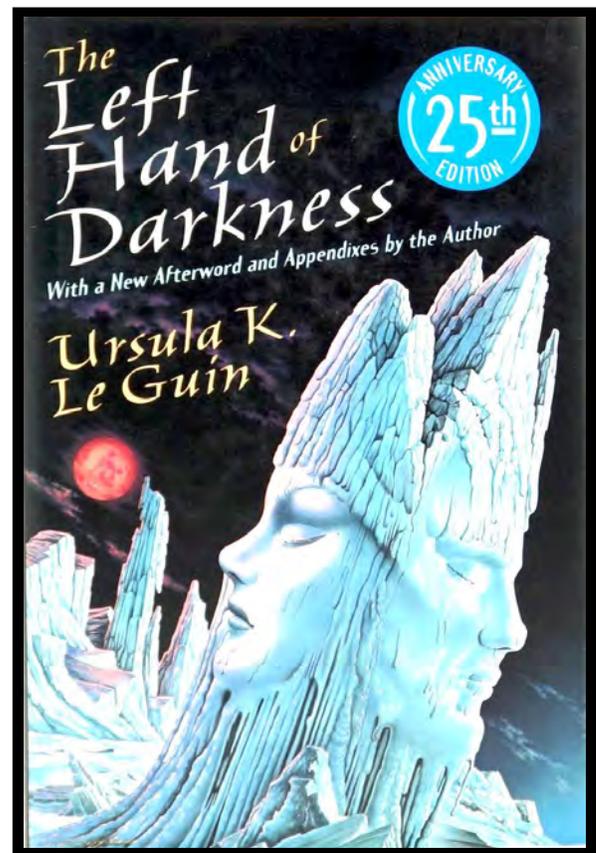
Le Guin explores the social and political possibilities of a society without sexism—in a society without gender as we know it—through the eyes of an outsider. At the start of the novel, Genly finds it difficult to see the Gethenians through their own eyes, instead “self-consciously seeing a Gethenian first as a man, then as a woman, forcing him into those categories so irrelevant to his nature and so essential to [Genly’s] own.” Genly is forced to confront his internal biases and assumptions through his relationship with Estraven, a Gethenian politician with whom he makes a dangerous 80-day trek across a frozen wasteland. Le Guin’s novel is particularly relevant today, as society is making the same stumbling steps as the Terran envoy toward understanding gender as a spectrum rather than binary.

What Gethen lacks in sexual politics it makes up for in a complicated social etiquette made up of unwritten rules of formal courtesy that govern Gethenian behaviour. As an autistic person, I find myself relating to Genly’s stranger-in-a-strange-world outlook on these rules, which, like his ignorance surrounding the nonbinary Gethenians, helps readers question the status quo. The book’s political themes about tribalism, treason, and underhanded politics also continue to be poignant, anticipating

political alliances and resentments that will be familiar to modern readers.

Perhaps the book’s only weakness is its reliance on male pronouns rather than neutral pronouns for Gethenians, who live beyond the binary—a weakness that, had she a modern vocabulary, Le Guin could have moved beyond. However, for a book written in 1969, Le Guin’s novel not only holds up, but is more important now than ever. It raises the right questions and pushes them toward new and exciting answers. For lovers of intelligent, feminist sci-fi, *The Left Hand of Darkness* is a must-read.

Casey Lawrence is a Canadian grad student studying English Literature. She is the author of two bi+ YA novels, Out of Order and Order in the Court, and the co-editor of an anthology of poetry and short prose, 11/9: The Fall of American Democracy, all proceeds from which benefit RAINN and the ACLU. Follow her on Twitter: @myexplodingpen or like her on Facebook: casey-lawrenceauthor.



Bisexual Haiku (#biku)

By Tania Israel

I am biracial
Chinese American Jew
And bisexual

Tania Israel is a Professor of Counseling Psychology at UCSB who embraces bisexuality in her research, community service, public speaking, creative work (#biku), teaching, and fashion. TaniaIsrael.com.



Natalie Morales Represents

By Robyn Ochs

NBC's sitcom, *Abby's*, has an out bisexual lead character played by Natalie Morales—herself an out bi Latina, just like the lead character. (Is anyone else seeing a pattern of out bi-fabulous Latinas playing out bi Latinas? Think: Sara Ramirez in *Gray's Anatomy* and *Madam Secretary*; Stephanie Beatriz in *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*.)

The character is already out to her friends and co-workers, and on April 11 she came out as bisexual to yet another person in the show's third episode, "Alcohol Free Day."

In an interview on *Out.com*, Morales states, "I think it's important to represent bisexual people in a very clear way and in a very big way, in that, this is the main character of a TV show. You meet her ex-girlfriend in this episode, you see the relationship with her friends and her ex. You see what it's like to live that life and it's important for the idea of bi erasure to show that this does exist."

Morales emphasizes that Abby's bisexuality is just one aspect of a multifaceted individual, and that they intentionally waited until the show's third episode to put focus to this subject. "There are a lot of things about Abby. She was in the Marines. She's a Latina. She's bisexual. But those are just some things about her. She's also a bartender, she's also sometimes mean. She likes the Beach Boys. Her sexuality is one thing about her."



Consider this: If you rarely (or never) see people like you represented in print, your voice is especially important. When you lift your voice, someone, somewhere will FINALLY see their own experiences reflected, perhaps for the first time. (See our call for writing on page 2.)

CALENDAR

June

2 (Sunday) 4-7pm, Stuff-n-Stuff at Robyn's in JP. Bring a potluck dish & help with the mailing of *Bi Women Quarterly!* There are about 5 steps to enter the home & 2 cats. Info/RSVP: robyn@robynocho.com

5 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). All bi & 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. bliss@biresource.org

7 (Friday) 6pm, Boston Dyke March. Gather at the Boston Common Gazebo for a night of frolicking & marching with the queerest women in town. 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, & everyone in between. boston-DykeMarch.com

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

10 (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. Info/RSVP: kate.e.flynn@gmail.com

13 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). For folks in their 20s or mid-30s identifying somewhere along the lines of bisexual/omni/pan/fluid/questioning, etc. Join us 2nd Thursdays for a few hours of discussion, support, &/or the eating and drinking of delicious things. Info/RSVP: youngblissboston@gmail.com

15 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch. This mixed gender bi group brunches at Foundry on Elm St. in Davis Sq., Somerville. Meets 3rd Saturdays. Info: http://www.biversity.org

15 (Saturday) 12-7pm Rhode Island PrideFest & Illuminated Night Parade. On S. Water St. ,

& the Illuminated Night Parade begins at sundown in Providence, RI. prideRI.org

July

3 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See June 5th)

8 (Monday) 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See June 10th)

11 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). (See June 13th)

20 (Saturday) 11-2pm, Bi Women's Brunch at Frances' in Roslindale. Bring a potluck item to share. This a great way to meet Bi+ and bi-friendly women in the area! There are steps leading up to this home, & cats. RSVP: okelle@gmail.com

20 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch. (See June 15th)

21 (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, & gender in a supportive safe space for trans & cis women & non-binary folks of all races and ethnic backgrounds. RSVP: www.meetup.com/Bi-Community-Activities/events/259707014/

August

1-4 (Thursday-Sunday), BiCon UK in Lancaster, England. A weekend-long educational & social gathering for bi+ people, friends, partners, & others with a supportive interest in bisexuality. BiCon has been held in different parts of the UK each year since 1984. https://2019.bicon.org.uk/

7 (Wednesday) 7-9pm, Bisexual Social and Support Group (BLiSS). (See June 5th)

8 (Thursday) 7-9pm, Young Bisexual Social and Support Group (Young BLiSS). (See June 13th)

12 (Monday) 7-9pm, Straight Marriage, Still Questioning. (See June 10th)

16 (Saturday) 11:30am, Biversity Brunch. (See June 15th)

25 (Sunday) 4-7pm, Stuff & Stuff at Robyn's in JP. *This one's a barbecue!* (See June 2nd)

The "Bi Office"

is the Bisexual Resource Center Check www.biresource.org for address.

Ongoing Events

Come to our monthly bi+ women's brunch! See calendar for dates.

2nd Mondays:

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

Tea with Bi Women Partnered with Men. 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:

Young BLiSS Group. (20s & 30s) 7pm. For bi folks 20-29. Info: Gabby at youngblissboston@gmail.com.

3rd Saturdays:

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

More about Boston-area groups biresource.org/boston-groups/

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

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