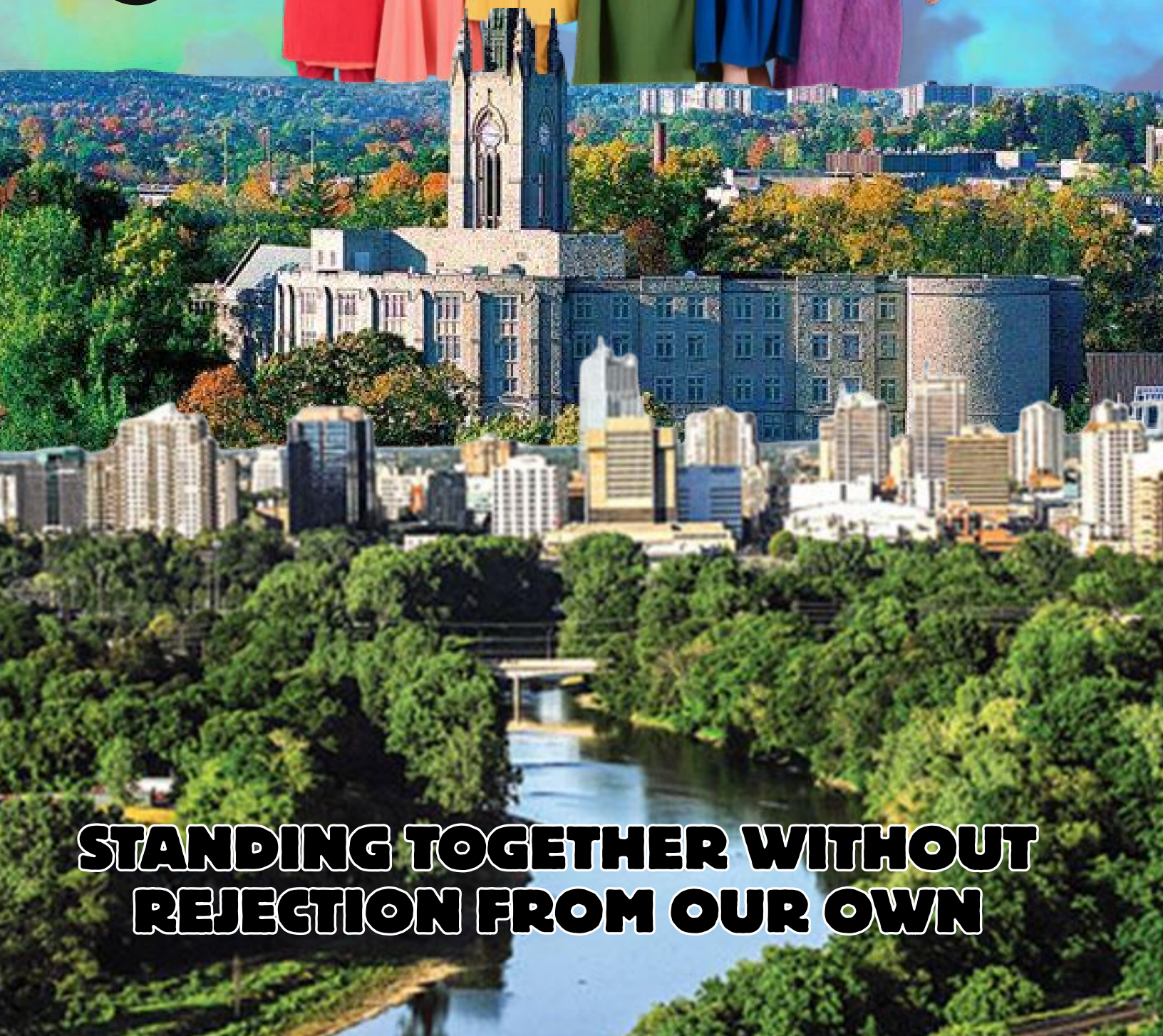


2SLGBTQIA+ THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

September
2026

Queerhive Magazine



**STANDING TOGETHER WITHOUT
REJECTION FROM OUR OWN**

Be Bold. Be Unique. Be You.



Here for a lifetime! A space dedicated to sharing real stories, supporting the community, and illuminating every form of queer expression.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers, Contributors, Supporters, and Friends,

Welcome to another edition of Queer Hive Magazine.

As the founder and editor, I am incredibly proud of what we continue to build together. Queer Hive Magazine was created with a simple but powerful vision: to provide a platform where 2SLGBTQIA+ voices, stories, creativity, businesses, artists, and communities can be seen, heard, and celebrated.

Our community is filled with extraordinary people doing extraordinary things. From emerging artists and fashion designers to performers, entrepreneurs, writers, activists, and community leaders, there is so much talent and passion within our community. Our goal is to shine a light on those individuals and give them the recognition they deserve.

A Message About Unity

There is something I believe our community needs to talk about more: unity.

The 2SLGBTQIA+ community needs to stand together more strongly. We need to understand that not everyone is going to agree with us—and that is okay. Disagreement does not necessarily mean resistance, disrespect, or hate. Sometimes, it simply represents individuality.

We are a diverse community made up of people with different identities, experiences, opinions, backgrounds, and perspectives. We will not always see things the same way, and we don't have to. What matters is how we treat one another when we disagree.

We need to stop rejecting our own community members simply because of differences, misunderstandings, or miscommunication. Before judging one another, we should make an effort to listen, communicate, ask questions, and understand where the other person is coming from.

Fighting against each other is not a way to demonstrate love, compassion, or understanding.

When we turn against one another, we risk sending the world the wrong message. While we continue fighting for equality, acceptance, dignity, and our rights, we should not allow division within our own community to become what defines us.

Unity does not mean that we all have to agree.

Unity means that we can disagree while still respecting one another.

It means recognizing that we are stronger when we support each other, communicate with compassion, and make room for different perspectives. It means understanding that our differences do not have to divide us—they can make our community stronger.

We should be able to challenge each other without tearing each other down. We should be able to have difficult conversations without immediately rejecting one another. And we should remember that behind every opinion, disagreement, mistake, or misunderstanding is a human being.

Remember: we are all human.

Not one of us is perfect. Not one of us is better than another. We all make mistakes. We all have things to learn. We all have moments when we could have communicated better or treated someone differently.

Let's give each other the opportunity to grow.

Our community has fought too hard and come too far to allow internal division to tear us apart. We may have different voices, but we can still share a common commitment to creating a community where people feel safe, valued, respected, and included.

Looking Forward

This year has also brought exciting opportunities through Lumina 2026 — Canada's Queer Fashion & Culture Experience. Lumina represents everything we believe in: creativity, individuality, fashion, culture, self-expression, and the power of bringing people together. It is more than a fashion show—it is a celebration of who we are.

I want to sincerely thank everyone who has supported Queer Hive Magazine and Lumina, whether you have contributed an article, shared our posts, attended an event, purchased a ticket, volunteered your time, partnered with us, sponsored our work, or simply encouraged us along the way.

Every contribution matters.

As we continue growing, we remain committed to creating opportunities for queer voices and supporting the people who make our community so vibrant. We know there is still much work to do, but with the support of our readers, contributors, partners, and community, we can continue moving forward.

I encourage every member of our community to remember the importance of supporting one another. Support queer-owned businesses. Support independent artists, designers, performers, writers, organizations, and community members. Celebrate one another's successes. And when disagreements happen, choose communication before condemnation.

Because at the end of the day, we are a community.

Let's show the world that our differences can coexist with respect, that disagreement does not have to become division, and that compassion can be stronger than conflict.

Thank you for allowing me to share this journey with you.

Keep being bold. Keep creating. Keep telling your stories. Keep supporting one another. And most importantly, never be afraid to let your authentic self shine.

With pride and gratitude,

Barry Lawrence
Founder & Editor
Queer Hive Magazine

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Announcement



LUMINA IS COMING TO HAMILTON

DEAR LUMINA COMMUNITY,

ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, FROM 3:00-6:00 PM, LUMINA WILL PRESENT A SPECIAL FUNDRAISER SHOWCASE IN HAMILTON, FEATURING LIVE PERFORMANCES, QUEER FASHION, CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY.

THIS INTIMATE EDITION WILL FEATURE PERFORMANCES BY DANNY VYNOVA, JADA HUDSON AND SANJINA DABISH, ALONGSIDE RUNWAY PRESENTATIONS FROM PARTICIPATING DESIGNERS.

RATHER THAN STEPPING AWAY FROM OUR VISION, WE ARE ADAPTING IT. THE ORIGINAL FULL-SCALE LUMINA 2026 EXPERIENCE IN LONDON HAS BEEN POSTPONED. IN ITS PLACE, WE ARE TRANSFORMING SEPTEMBER 27 INTO A SMALLER FUNDRAISER DESIGNED TO CELEBRATE THE ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS STILL PARTICIPATING, WHILE HELPING LUMINA SECURE THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO REBUILD AND RETURN AT ITS INTENDED SCALE.

HAMILTON WAS SELECTED BECAUSE IT PROVIDES THE STRONGEST LOGISTICAL FOUNDATION FOR OUR TEAM AND PARTICIPANTS AT THIS TIME. FOLLOWING THE RECENT ONLINE CONVERSATIONS AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS SURROUNDING THE EVENT IN LONDON, WE BELIEVE THIS CHANGE OFFERS THE MOST CONSTRUCTIVE PATH FORWARD—ONE CENTRED ON THE ARTISTS, THE WORK AND THE PURPOSE BEHIND LUMINA.

THIS WILL STILL BE A MEANINGFUL AFTERNOON OF QUEER FASHION, LIVE PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY—JUST IN A MORE INTIMATE FORMAT.

CURRENT TICKET HOLDERS, SPONSORS AND PARTICIPANTS WILL BE CONTACTED DIRECTLY WITH INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRANSITION AND AVAILABLE NEXT STEPS. ADDITIONAL VENUE AND TICKET DETAILS WILL BE ANNOUNCED SHORTLY.

THIS IS NOT THE END OF LUMINA. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REGROUP, RAISE SUPPORT AND MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER.



LUMINA: A FUNDRAISER SHOWCASE
HAMILTON, ONTARIO
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026 | 3:00-6:00 PM

MORE DETAILS COMING SOON.

SINCERELY,
THE LUMINA TEAM



Welcome to Lumina 2026 — Canada's Queer Fashion & Culture Experience

The Vision
Where Identity
Meets Artistry



Lumina will present a special fundraiser showcase in Hamilton — featuring live performances, queer fashion, creativity and community. This intimate edition brings the runway closer, inviting you into an evening where artistry and advocacy share the same stage.

This intimate edition will feature performances by Danny Vynova, Jada Hudson and Sanjina DaBish, alongside runway presentations from participating designers. A high-fashion celebration of 2SLGBTQIA+ identity — elevated, cinematic and unapologetic. Produced by Queer Hive Magazine, Lumina brings Hamilton a fashion experience comparable to the world's most prestigious runways — but built by and for our community. We bring together designers, performers, creatives, and our community to inspire, elevate, and create change.

Be Seen. Be Heard. Be Remembered. Be Lumina



Private 1:1 Location by appointment only
Muse Beauty Bar in Wortley Village
130 Briscoe St E, London, On
Instagram: @they.spa
Facebook: They Spa
Email: hannah.theyspa@gmail.com
BOOKING APP: Link in IG Bio

**Eye brow Wax, Tint,
Lamination
Eyelash Lift & Tint**

**Full Body Massage
Full Body Waxing (no
bikini areas at this
time)
Facials**

**Pedicures
Builder Gel Manicures**

They Spa was founded in 2020 during Aesthetician school here in London, Ontario. I fell in love with helping folks feel at home in their body, and found there was a lack of safe spaces for fellow queers to go to for aesthetics. Six years later I am still loving this journey and look forward to meeting more wonderful clients!

Custom Handmade Press-On Nail Sets



Gay Men 50+



If we, as older queer men, want more age-positive narratives in 2SLGBTQIA+ culture, then it is up to us to start changing the narrative.

Queer Hive welcomes older gay men!

**Email us at
queerhivemagazine@gmail.com.**

THE LONGEST RELATIONSHIP YOU'VE BEEN NEGLECTING?

The One With You.

By Rick Clemons



You've been ghosting yourself for decades.

It's time to knock that off. Let's start with the really uncomfortable truth. Get ready to squirm in your Nasty Pig jock

You have been a devoted, attentive, endlessly patient gay to practically everyone in your life. Your boss. Your ex. Your drama friends who call you at all hours. The poor guy on Grindr you have no interest in but texted back anyway. And let's not forget your family members, OY VEY, who still don't fully get you, but for the love or holiday's do you still show up and dread every moment without fail.

Where are you in all of this chaos? Ignored. Managed. Kept at arm's length. Given the leftover oxygen on the respirator, about to expire. WTF! That's not an accident sweetie. That's a losing strategy that would get you written up on the job. One you learned a long time ago, before you knew what to call it, when being too honest about who you were felt like the most dangerous thing in the world.

Be honest. You learned to reject yourself before anyone else could. Right?

Here's the thing we didn't talk enough about while growing up gay. Yes, we grew up gay and we didn't just hide from other people. We hid from our damn selves. There I said it, loud and clear...

The moment most of us sensed we were different, something clicked and we donned the prettiest little armour and stepped into survival mode. That truth about who we were, what we wanted, those stolen glances across the locker room at penises, abs, and asses, was something to be managed, buried, and under no circumstances examined too closely or said out loud. Examining it made it real and God forbid meant someone might find out. And we all knew where that led to; rejection, isolation, bullying, or worse – accepting we were gay in a society that didn't want us..

So we pushed the rejection button on ourselves first as a preemptive, efficient strike to find “peace.” Ironically, we became experts at not knowing ourselves because that was safe, or so we thought.

We came out eventually. Most of us. And we thought that was the end of it. Yippe! Rainbow flags, barechested gay men in jocks, and more Cosmopolitans than we'd ever thought we'd drink at Sunday Drag Brunch. Alas. It wasn't. Just the first layer. No, no, no. Those betrayal layers go deep.

Our habitual self-rejection doesn't pack up and leave the moment you say the words “I'm Gay,” out loud. It sneaks underground. Gets sophisticated in its moves and is no longer about sexuality and starts being about everything else. Your health, sex life, relationships, friendships, career, family, spirituality. Should I go on? You know your list.

It's your secret little stash of what you want most that is blatantly being ignored. And what you want most is almost always what scares the crap out of you.

That is NO coincidence.

Your Outside World Is a Very Convenient Distraction In Drag...So to speak!

Fill the calendar. Stay busy. Focus on everyone else's needs, drama, life. Scroll the apps. Obsess over the guy who didn't text back. Pour energy into the job, the gym, the group chat, the next trip, the next anything that keeps you blindly focused away from the one conversation you've been avoiding.

The conversation with yourself.

Year of Queer Joy

By: Wil Osbourne-Sorrell



For years I've struggled with the idea of being disabled. When I was 23 I slipped and smashed my back, had a slipped disc and have considered myself able bodied despite needing specialized chairs at work, events and conferences. More recently I've noticed that my hearing on my left hand side has been decreasing and it is very hard to hear on my left hand side. But I did nothing about it because I couldn't be disabled. Not me.

Finally, in regards to my hearing, it reached a breaking point in March of this year and I went to an Audiologist finally ready to take the step I've been dreading: Getting a hearing aid. Fixable and, in my mind, not a disability (though it is). To my surprise, my left ear actually hears as well as my right ear, and instead sound just takes longer to process through my left ear (I can hear things, just slower). This is called an Audio Processing Disorder. And while I could seek therapy to help improve it, the reality is that this is permanent. And a disability.

Over the past few months I've slowly accepted myself as being disabled. I've talked to my cousin a bit about it and she's indicated that our British roots have us always thinking about a 'Stiff-upper-lip' and that my fear is based in internalized ableism. Thanks to her, I've been slowly able to examine that part of myself.

How is this journey connected to queer joy? It all comes back to intersectionality and how we are more than just one thing at one point in time. I cannot claim to be fully in my body without accepting all parts of myself. I accepted my queerness when I was 19, but have had some kind of disability since I was 23 (slipped disc) and have been unable to fully accept myself as such. Have I experienced joy in the past 20 years? Yes. But not living fully in my body has certainly affected how I experience joy in any given situation.

There is a certain amount of joy that comes from accepting who you are. It also opens up opportunities that you may not have considered in the past. Suddenly I'm a part of a community that loves and accepts me for who I am and many who understand what it is like to need accommodations. Suddenly I can find more people who have experience like me and build a community outside of completely able-bodied people.

My union President — JP Hornick — always says that they currently live able-bodied, but recognizes that age or circumstance may change that. Any one of us could develop a disability related to age or circumstance at any time. This has really hit home for me the past few months as I've navigated my new reality with my hearing, and has also brought me a source of joy – knowing that there is support from the top and that I am a valued worker for who I am and how I interact with the world.

I hope this, in some way, helps people examine their own world-view and that we can all remember – able-bodied or not, we all deserve sunshine!

The Firing Squad in Fabulous Shoes

By Michael Shawn Sanders

Take your seats, children. The library is officially open and Twunk Zaddy is reading. When we sit around scratching our heads, wondering how communities fall apart, the answers we usually come up with are as tired as last season's fast fashion. We blame politics, we blame the algorithm, or we blame shifting cultural tides. But if you want to know what is truly curdling the oat milk in our iced lattes these days?

It's the sheer, unadulterated speed of our modern outrage. It is the ability to fire off a nasty text, a snarky email, or a venomous little comment online with absolutely zero accountability. We have the sum total of human knowledge at our fingertips, and what are we doing with it? We are tearing our own people to shreds because someone used a label from five minutes ago instead of the one minted this morning. We are so busy policing each other's vocabulary that we've lost the plot.



Stop fighting over meaningless labels, for the love of Madonna and all that is holy. You are all pretty! But take a breath and be grateful we even have a community to argue in. Building a healthy community doesn't start with a hashtag it starts with you. Let's get a little sober reality here from one GenX Twinky Twunky Drag Leather Daddy Zaddy Club kid Raver to the rest of the 2SLGBTQIA+ family. Some of us survived an actual literal wilderness. We fought for the basic right to exist without being carted off to jail or cast out or even murdered. We fought the whole bloody world. And now? Now we are fighting each other in the comment section of a Tik Tok video over who gets to hold the umbrella. It's exhausting, and frankly, it's ruining my mood.



Community is not about sharing a flawless, perfectly updated acronym. It is about standing together without rejecting our own. The real threat to our survival isn't the guy who calls himself "gay" instead of "queer." The real threat is the isolation we create when we decide our own people aren't pure enough to sit at our table. We sit behind our screens and type things into the digital ether that we wouldn't dare say to someone's face. Where is the grace? Where is the integrity?

If your activism requires you to snipe at your brother, sister, or sibling from behind a smartphone without having the nerve to look them in the eye, that is not a community. That's just a firing squad in fabulous shoes.

We need to log off, take a deep breath, and remember that we are all dancing to a similar beat. So, the next time you feel your thumbs twitching to deliver a perfectly crafted, passive-aggressive takedown of someone in our own community... just don't. Put the phone down. Go look in the mirror, remind yourself that you are fabulous, and extend that same grace to the person you were about to eviscerate.

We need each other way too much to let a wifi connection tear us apart.



Queer Dating Then and Now

**Has finding love become
easier, harder or just
different?**

Shaun Lee
they/them



Photos credit: Barbara Anne
Photography

This is an age-old question (pun intended) that deserves some attention. As a self-identified Gen X queer elder, I have had countless conversations around this question, particularly over the last year.

It's been quite a roller coaster ride since I broke up with my last partner of seven years – for reference, that was 2.5 years ago. I say this because I had never dated before! That's right, I had never dated in the sense of 'friends first, romance later.'

I was new to Vancouver Island and didn't know very many people so I felt limited in my reach. I truly didn't know what to do so I took to Facebook, Pink Cupid and Match. The roller coaster continued. Endless texts and online conversations. Although I was getting out more and meeting new people, few interested me enough to ask on a date.

In my younger days I was used to meeting people through friends, bars, community events, or local LGBTQ+ spaces. Truth be told, when I was in my 20's and 30' online dating apps were non-existent. Facebook wasn't even invented until 2004, the same year my son was born!

Online vs Offline dating

I stopped using the apps early on as they were expensive and poor at 'matching'. I did however, have some success with social media in general. The queer Facebook groups became a 'safe' place to 'meet' people and my Tiktok profile was getting a fair bit of attention. In full transparency, I dated 4 women I met on Tiktok and my now partner, Carrie and I met there – friends at first then followed by romance. Here's a brief breakdown of advantages and disadvantages of online dating.

Advantages to online dating:

- Dating apps and social media have expanded opportunities to meet people.
- Online apps can create greater access for people in rural areas or those who aren't connected to local queer communities.
- Can offer a 'safe space' for those more intimidated by face-to-face.

Disadvantages of online dating:

- Challenges exist like endless swiping, ghosting, and judging people by photos or short bios.
- The convenience of technology can override the potential loss of deeper, face-to-face connection.
- The poor representation of queers on some apps leaves us wondering if that other person is straight or not.
- Fake profiles and catfishing are a new level of crazy!

Although I met women on these platforms, I was soon to ask for an in-person 'date' as I needed the real connection only afforded through a face-to-face meet up. I think of this as using online to start a conversation and then moving into a face-to-face meeting to determine if the 'vibe' was right.

What Hasn't Changed

I have always felt that building connections through conversation rather than profiles was key. Whether online or in person, everyone wants to feel seen, respected, and accepted.

- Healthy relationships are still built on honesty, communication, and authenticity.
- Technology may change how we meet, but not what we ultimately seek.
- The human need for connection hasn't changed.

Reflection

Regardless of the process there is value to all generations' experiences. I encourage you to stay open to connection, regardless of how it begins.

“Love doesn't care whether it starts with a smile across a room or a message on a screen—it grows through genuine human connection.”

Bio

Shaun is a queer writer, visual artist, and performer whose work explores authenticity, identity, and the courage to live unapologetically. Through thought-provoking writing, original artwork, and engaging performances, they create spaces for conversation, connection, and belonging. Their creative practice celebrates the beauty of unbecoming who the world expects us to be and embracing who we truly are.





ABOUT ME / THE BUSINESS / VISION :

Hann Solo Photos was created during Fine Art College in 2019 (Fanshawe, London, ON). I studied multiple art disciplines during that certificate program, and one class that I particularly loved was the photography program. I used to model, so it was refreshing to be on the other side of the lens.

The business name comes from my drag performer name, Hann Solo, which is named after my name (Hannah) and gives a nod to Star Wars *cue light saber noise*

Services I Offer:

A lot of things!!!

I'm super flexible and love to work with fellow creatives. I love trying new skills and exploring new themes and concepts.

A few of my specialties & favourite styles are:

Portraits, Outdoor Photography, Indoor Backdrop Photography, Branding Photoshoots, Alternative, Activism, Art

Contact Info:

Please feel free to reach out for any inquiries at all! More of my portfolio can be viewed on my Instagram & Facebook

Email: hanncreates@gmail.com

Instagram: @hannsolophotos

Facebook: Hann Solo Photos

Thank you so much to those that have supported my journey so far and are staying tuned in for more!

Venus D-L



Wonder Tyts



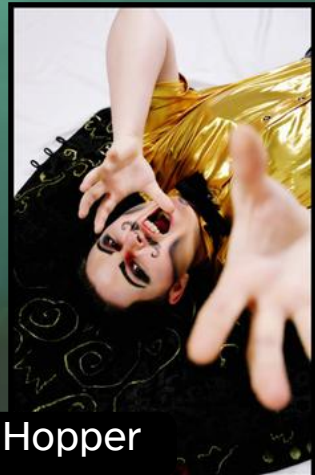
Faedrawyn



Jerry Atrix



Richard Hopper



Rob

By: A Gay Guy Incognito

How many times can a gay guy write about being gay? For me, it feels like I could write a million times and then a million more. But I think I know why...

I'm a gay man. I've been gay all my life, but I've also been quiet about it, mostly hiding that yearning, that personal and sexual bond I craved for so many years. I thought I found it with women. There were some I cared about deeply, but when I developed feelings for a man for the first time, I knew that was it for me. Nothing was the same again.

His name was Rob. He was a man – beautiful, kind, and sexy. He was all I ever really wanted, and I had him for the taking.

To be able to write about this feels amazing. That people might read this and understand – people like me – gay people, others who may have felt what I felt, or feel what I feel, others who have needed intimate attention from another gay man for far too long, only to suffer in silence instead.

Although I've had my occasional experiences, I never got the chance to build a relationship, to really test the boundaries of love – gay love, the only kind I understood.

Being with a man is something I will constantly require, and always desire. The times that I've done it, I'll remember forever. There's nothing like man-to-man contact – all of it, every bit.

Those feelings I once felt, I think about often. His body was a work of art. His attitude was just right. His face was adorable, and yet, he was strong and intelligent. I'd never actually gone out with a man until I went with Rob one Saturday night. I wanted him to know how I felt, that even though it was only our second meeting, I liked him. I really did. This was all so new for me, but I went for it. I swam in the deep. I braved all those rolling waves.

I reached for his hand at that busy sports bar, right over the table. Straight people turned and gawked, and as I trembled, I think I loved that we were seen like that. And I also loved the feeling of his fingers entangled with mine. When our waitress smiled at us, I smiled right back. I was real, genuine, honestly happy for maybe the first time ever. I was exactly where I wanted to be. He was the only one I wanted to see.

It wasn't long before he gave me a choice. He wanted a relationship, wanted nothing to do with sharing me. I have to admit, what he said made me like him even more. I visualized finally beginning my life – with Rob, a gay man just like me. I thought about it in my bed that night, imagining, with my eyes closed, a long, beautiful experience, one that would have allowed me to stop hiding my true self like I had since I was a teenager. I wanted to be with him, but I was afraid. I was just much too afraid.

Rob, if you're out there, you were the one, the “only” one.

I'm a gay man. This is me. See, I finally did it – I told the whole wide world – well, sort of.

Embrace the

LUXURY



@shakerz_candles
shakerzcandles@gmail.com

with each light

Hand poured and locally made by a local artisan. Made with **premium soy wax** (with soy additives) and **clean** fragrance oils (with **no parabens & phthalates.**)



Photos taken by
Hann Solo Photos

The journey of building my own brand began as an experiment. When I failed to find a clean candle that was either not too subtle or overwhelming. The first batch was made with whatever ingredients and materials I could find and the whole batch was a dud. But, after some meticulous research and acquiring some premium quality materials the following batch turned out to be beyond amazing. I made the next batch as a gift for some of my close friends. After receiving their amazing reactions and support, I started crafting these for a larger audience. So, come and choose your scent today.

Photography by: Hann Solo Photos

WE CANNOT ASK THE WORLD TO ACCEPT US WHILE REJECTING EACH OTHER



By Tyson Pete,
Award Winning Author of *Courageous Love: A Self Help Guide for Gay Fathers*

There is something deeply painful about fighting your entire life to be accepted by the world, only to walk into your own community and discover that acceptance still comes with conditions.

Too gay.

Not gay enough.

Too feminine.

Too masculine.

Too Black.

Too white.

Too loud.

Too quiet.

Too religious.

Not religious enough.

Bisexual, so somehow your identity is questioned.



Transgender, so suddenly your existence becomes somebody else's debate.

Nonbinary, and people demand that you explain yourself before they are willing to respect you.

Two-Spirit, and far too many people within our own community have never taken the time to understand the history, culture, and sacredness behind those words.

Older.

Younger.

Married.

Single.

A parent.

Child-free.

Living openly.

Still trying to find the courage to come out.

Somewhere along the way, a community built from people who knew what rejection felt like began creating its own rooms of rejection. And we need to talk about that. Not because I believe the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is broken. I believe we are powerful. But powerful communities still have wounds. And wounded people, when we are not careful, can sometimes recreate the very environments we once prayed to escape.



Community Has Never Been Optional

For generations, queer and transgender people survived because somebody decided to make room.

Someone opened a door.

Someone offered a couch.

Someone shared a meal.

Someone became family when biological relatives refused to.

Someone stood outside a hospital room.

Someone marched.

Someone organized.

Someone raised money.

Someone defended a stranger whose name they did not even know.

Someone looked at another person who had been rejected by the world and said, You can stand beside me.

That is community.

It is bigger than Pride Month.

Bigger than flags.

Bigger than social media.

Bigger than parties, parades, hashtags, and corporate logos that suddenly become rainbow-colored every June.

Community is what remains when the celebration ends.

It is who answers when

someone calls at two in the morning. It is who speaks when legislation threatens

somebody else's family. It is who notices when one part of our community is being

attacked and refuses to say, "Well, that doesn't affect me."

Because history has taught us something very clearly:
“What begins with one group rarely ends with one group.”
When transgender people are targeted, gay people should care.
When lesbian families are attacked, bisexual people should care.
When queer youth are endangered, every adult in this community should care.
When Black and Brown LGBTQIA+ people are disproportionately harmed, white members of our community should care.
When Two-Spirit people are erased, the rest of us should care.
When elders are forgotten, younger generations should care.
And when someone is struggling quietly behind a smile, all of us should care.
Our letters may be different.
Our stories may be different.
Our cultures, genders, relationships, experiences, and journeys may be different. But
our liberation has always been connected.



**Article Continued on our Blog Page @
queerhivemagazine.ca**

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&
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UNCLOSETED JOY:

A Conversation with Comedian Rae Lockdust

By: **Rachelle Hill (She/They)**

In a landscape where finding authentic community can sometimes feel like a struggle, Hamilton-based comedian, actor, and producer Rae Lockdust (he/they) is building something truly iconic. As the mastermind behind Uncloseted Comedy, he has spent the last four years curating vibrant, inclusive, and "brave spaces" for queer Canadian performers.

Speaking of iconic Hamilton moments, we love to see some chaotic political energy—shoutout to Hamilton mayoral hopeful Scarlett Gillespie, whose recent viral sock puppet interview literally had Fox News across the border losing their minds. Honestly, we stan an unconventional approach! That same unapologetic, out-of-the-box energy is exactly what Rae brings to the local comedy scene.

I sat down with Rae to chat about his journey into stand-up, navigating the evolving comedy scene, and why spreading queer joy through his "storytelling chaos" is exactly the vibe we need right now.

About the Author

Rachelle Hill (She/They) is an award-winning Radio Producer and Host dedicated to platforming independent talent, open-format conversations, and queer art. You can hear her regularly on **Trans Radio UK** and **Pride Radio Canada**. You can also catch up on her past shows at [**mixcloud/midnightecho**](https://mixcloud.com/midnightecho). Next month, Rachelle chats with **Selee**, an angelic singer from Niagara.

If you have a story to share, please contact her at [**rachelle@midnightechoproductions.com**](mailto:rachelle@midnightechoproductions.com).

Finding a Voice in Storytelling Chaos

Rachelle Hill: You've had quite a journey before landing in Hamilton. When did comedy first become your outlet?

Rae Lockdust: Growing up, I was bullied and never thought I was good at anything, so I initially went to school for nursing. I was in a really dark place until I impulsively signed up for an improv class in Toronto. It was the first time my weirdness was encouraged, and I felt confident in my own existence. Later, after experiencing a sexual assault on stage in an improv group, I realized I needed a safer environment where I could control the narrative. I still had funny stories, so I wrote a routine, tried an open mic, and realized, "Oh, that's how stand-up works".

Rachelle: How did your identity shape those early sets?

Rae: During my very first routine, I referred to myself as a "25-year-old woman," and as the words came out, I realized on stage that it just felt completely incorrect. That was the moment I accepted I was non-binary. I also spent hours on YouTube watching queer comedians like Josh Thomas, Hannah Gadsby, and DeAnne Smith. Finding them helped me realize there was an audience who would listen to my voice.



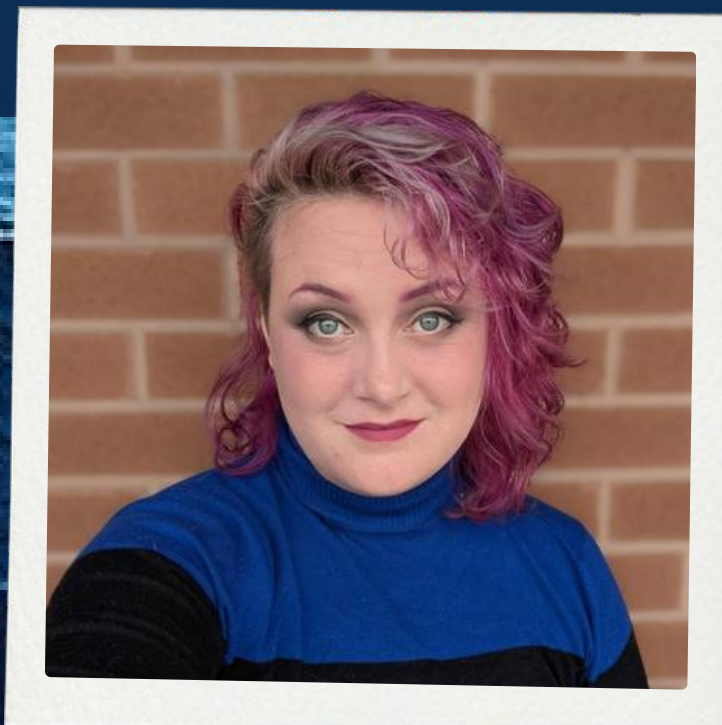
Building "Brave Spaces"

Rachelle: What sparked the creation of Uncloseted Comedy?

Rae: It was born out of straight panic before Pride month! I saw a packed queer comedy show in Hamilton and asked a club owner what they were doing for Pride. When he didn't have an answer, I jumped in. I knew I needed a safe, queer space to grow my voice, and I wanted to build it locally so others wouldn't have to travel. We now incorporate "Queer Coffee Hamilton" socials before our shows to help audiences and comics connect. We aim to create a "brave space"—a place where you are safe enough to be your authentic self.

Rachelle: We are in a tense political climate right now. How are you handling the current landscape as a trans performer?

Rae: We are in a queer comedy renaissance where we aren't apologizing for taking up space anymore. When it comes to online hate, Uncloseted responds with love, understanding, or by simply deleting the comments to protect our community. The anger we feel is valid, but it's about using that anger to make a change. You don't have to change the whole world; you just have to change someone's world.



Surviving Hecklers and Biker Bars

Rachelle: What's the most chaotic gig you've ever done?

Rae: When we expanded Uncloseted to my hometown of Welland, my family came out to support me, and my dad sat in the front row and heckled me through my entire 20-minute set! I just had to turn the whole set into a bit about our relationship. Another wild one was my first live show in Hamilton at a biker bar. The comic before me got on stage and proudly announced he was "super straight" before going on a transphobic rant. I went up right after him and just focused on being funnier than him, eventually joking that my self-esteem used to be so low I probably would have dated him. He looked like he had a rain cloud over his head for the rest of the night.

Upcoming Shows & Uncloseted Updates

If you're looking to catch Rae in action or jump into the Hamilton creative scene, here is what's next for the Uncloseted Comedy community:

Next Uncloseted Comedy Showcase: September 10th at The Staircase Theatre in Hamilton, ON. Follow them on socials for the official lineup announcement!

Weekly Write & Sip: Every Sunday from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at The Wallflower in Hamilton. Join the community for a brand-new creative theme each week.

Unscripted Open Mic Night: Held every third Sunday of the month at The Wallflower.

Sign-up: 6:30 PM

Showtime: 7:00 PM

Cover: \$5 or PWYC (Pay-What-You-Can), featuring a booked headliner every show!

Follow Rae on all platforms at **@RaeLockdust** and keep up with show announcements at **@UnclosetedComedy**.

Therapy

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Therapy shouldn't require you to translate your identity, defend your experiences, or shrink yourself to fit someone else's expectations.

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As a Registered Psychotherapist, I provide affirming, culturally responsive therapy for BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+ and neurodivergent individuals, couples and families. My practice is rooted in the belief that healing begins when you are genuinely seen - not as a diagnosis or label, but as a whole person with unique strengths, experiences, and stories worth honouring.

Whether you're navigating mood challenges (anxiety, depression, BD I/II), trauma (PTSD, cPTSD, ACE), burnout, masking (ADHD, ASD, AuDHD), perfectionism/people-pleasing, disordered eating, substance use/behavioural addiction challenges, relationship challenges, identity exploration, grief, life transitions or other mental health diagnoses (OCD, OCPD, BPD, NPD, PMDD), our work together will be collaborative, practical, and centred around your goals - not someone else's idea of who you should be. I also have extensive experience and training in supporting individuals and families through fertility journeys, donor conception, pregnancy, postpartum experiences, and the many paths to building a family. I recognize that these experiences can be uniquely complex for marginalized individuals and I strive to provide care that honours those intersecting identities with compassion and curiosity. You don't need to have everything figured out before starting therapy. My hope is to create a space where your identities are respected, your experiences are believed, and your strengths are recognized alongside the struggles you're carrying. Together, we'll work toward greater self-understanding, healthier relationships, emotional resilience, and a life that feels more aligned with who you truly are.

I welcome clients from all backgrounds and identities, and I am committed to providing care that is affirming, anti-oppressive, trauma informed, and grounded in evidence-based practice. Seeking therapy isn't about becoming someone different. It's about finding the freedom to become more fully, and freely, yourself

Currently accepting new clients in-person in London, and virtually throughout Ontario.

I'd be honoured to support you on your journey.



QUEER WITCHES

Queer Hive is now accepting submissions for gay witch content! If you have a passion for exploring the intersection of queer identity and modern witchcraft, we want to hear from you. Whether it's spells, rituals, or personal stories, we are eager to showcase the diverse voices within the queer witch community.

If you're interested in contributing, please email us at queerhivemagazine@gmail.com.

BASIC SPELLS: PURIFICATION

Purification, in the magical sense, is about returning things to their original state with an added blessing, and also about removal. We talk about cleansing when we talk about purification, because in many ways, they are interchangeable. What follows will be a series of suggestions and advice. You are free to explore this topic further to gain a better understanding as well. Draw your own conclusions.



By Adrien Clarke

Ritual purification, for instance, involves physically cleaning a space, object or person first. Second comes the spoken exorcism along with sound (generally a bell, sistrum, rattle or clapping). Lastly, the blessing and consecration is spoken along with more sound (and depending on the subject) this can involve sprinkling or asperging an object with liquid or salt. Salt is a unique substance because it is said to be one of the alchemical Tria Prima (three primes), and does not need to be exorcised. If asserted with blessed water (which has been exorcised), a blessing should be placed upon the salt beforehand.

To continue, I should speak about burning, fumigating, suffusing, bathing, baptizing, and submerging or burying something as a ritual act. All these acts use one of the four elements to affect a change on something. This principle can be adapted to a target depending on what step in the process you are interested in changing. Combining as many methods as possible is the surest way to success here. Each elemental type affects change at different time intervals as well, so be sure to choose a process that speaks to all elemental types.

Here is an example: I want to ritually purify a golden ankh necklace. To do this I must light white or gold candles (fire), burn incense and herbs (air), asperge the jewellery with Florida Water (water), and finally bury it in a box of salt for a month (earth). To make sure the jewellery isn't damaged I keep it in a cloth bag, within the salt inside the box. As a part of the consecration process I may have consecrated this object (dedicated) to a particular God, asking for its power and strength for the target by first reciting a hymn, and a prayer. To finalize consecrating it I would have dressed it in ritual spell oil (water) prepared beforehand (probably something SOLAR). I would choose the appropriate day (Sunday) and hour (Dawn) to perform this spell to gain maximum effect.

Another example: I want to ritually purify a person. To do this I must light white candles (although any colour will do) (which represents fire), burn incense and herbs (air) to fumigate the surrounding area and also smoke cleanse the body before and after, take a cleansing shower or bath (water), scrub the body with mineral salts (epsom salt, sea salt, baking soda) (which represents earth) or add it to bath water (water). After the salt bath I would bathe the person in milk or buttermilk, then pat dry gently. I would dress the body in spell oil for purification — something like sesame oil and dry herbs and spices suspended in the oil, and a few drops of essential oil for aroma (water) — and spiritual cologne to seal the magic within and pat dry again.

Last example: I want to ritually purify a space. To do this I must light white and red candles (fire), burn incense and herbs (air) to fumigate the surrounding area as much as possible, wash the walls and floor with spell water (water), and sprinkle and sweep dry herbs and spices across the floor or carpet (earth). Please be sure to open windows, or doors if necessary, to properly ventilate all smoke! Afterward you could sprinkle sea salt and black salt onto the baseboards and floor, in small amounts, to seal the area in question. Be sure to incorporate sound cleansing into this model as well. Singing, praying, clapping and playing bells (water) or drums (earth) will aid the purification process. Woodwinds (air) and string instruments (fire) are excellent for white light meditations, which will purify through visualization and energy work. You could draw sigils and different symbols of power on the walls and floor using the spell oil as well. If the place is destined to serve a particular spirit you may also burn a handwritten petition to them, asking for purification as well.

As with any good spell work, divination must occur before and after. Reserve a journal and test yourself for short increments. Intense spellwork should be done in swift succession over planned intervals to avoid burnout. Running out of energy during the spellwork will tamper results, so work within your limits and adapt. Through time your reserves of magic supply will increase; it's like any muscle that way. Practice this weekly, in some form, for best results. Take the time to magically reset and pause.

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I LIVE IN A HOUSEHOLD OF SPIRITS



by **Betsy Marie and The 21
Spirits of Faith Ministry**

They leave their imprints all over my house. I am constantly being channeled by my spirits. They join their energy with mine.

It is a feeling of oneness and shared love. The feeling of channeling spirits can be compared to having an IV in your arm. When having an IV, you can feel the liquid flowing throughout your body.

Spirit energy feels quite similar without having a needle stuck in your arm. Each spirit has their own unique energy when channeling. The spirits are basically using my body as theirs.

This is how I do automatic writing.

I may say jokingly, "who forgot to close that cupboard door" or "who left that drawer open." I actually know who did it. I can feel them holding my hand when sitting in my chair while watching TV.

It is a mutual decision of what we want to watch. I do not mind. It makes me feel loved for who I am. Psychic without expectations of appearing to fit in on a daily basis.

They are my roommates and my best friends. I laugh. I am happy for the invisible company. We can feel and see them if we allow ourselves to be vulnerable. Being a psychic is not easy. There is a certain resignation of trying to fit in. Should I act normal and try to pass today? Can I really be accepted being this psychic? I just try to be kind and respectful.

Kindness is contagious.

I am a psychic medium and the founder of Faith Ministry. Faith Ministry is a non-denominational spiritualist ministry based around the goal of ending domestic abuse. I work towards this goal with the 21 Spirits of Faith Ministry through art, writing, and counseling services.

MY PATH AS A GAY WITCH

I am a cis gay white man; your mileage may vary.

Much has been written recently of Christopher Nolan's film *The Odyssey*, especially his portrayal of women. Despite casting a star-studded female ensemble, the film faces heavy criticism for reducing the screen time, divine agency, and psychological complexity seen in Homer's original epic or Emily Wilson's 2017 translation (a landmark achievement as the first complete English translation of the epic poem by a woman).

The film has reignited long-standing criticisms that Nolan struggles to write deeply layered, prominent female characters, often reducing them to plot devices for the male lead's trauma.

While Penelope (Anne Hathaway) is depicted as a strong queen, Nolan focuses heavily on her role as a faithful wife, omitting any marital tensions present in Wilson's translation. Athena (Zendaya) is significantly diminished in screen time and importance; instead of a powerful goddess driving the entire plot, she is reduced to a standard mentor with minimal lines. Helen is stripped of her complex mythical background and functions largely as a tragic victim of a soldier's rage. Calypso is a passive sounding board for Odysseus's memories, while the beloved character Nausicaa is completely removed from the storyline. But instead of the goddesses and wives, I'd like to focus on the witch.



Thred Ardor, an active community organizer, holds a master's degree in social psychology with a research emphasis on LGBT+ prejudice and stigma.



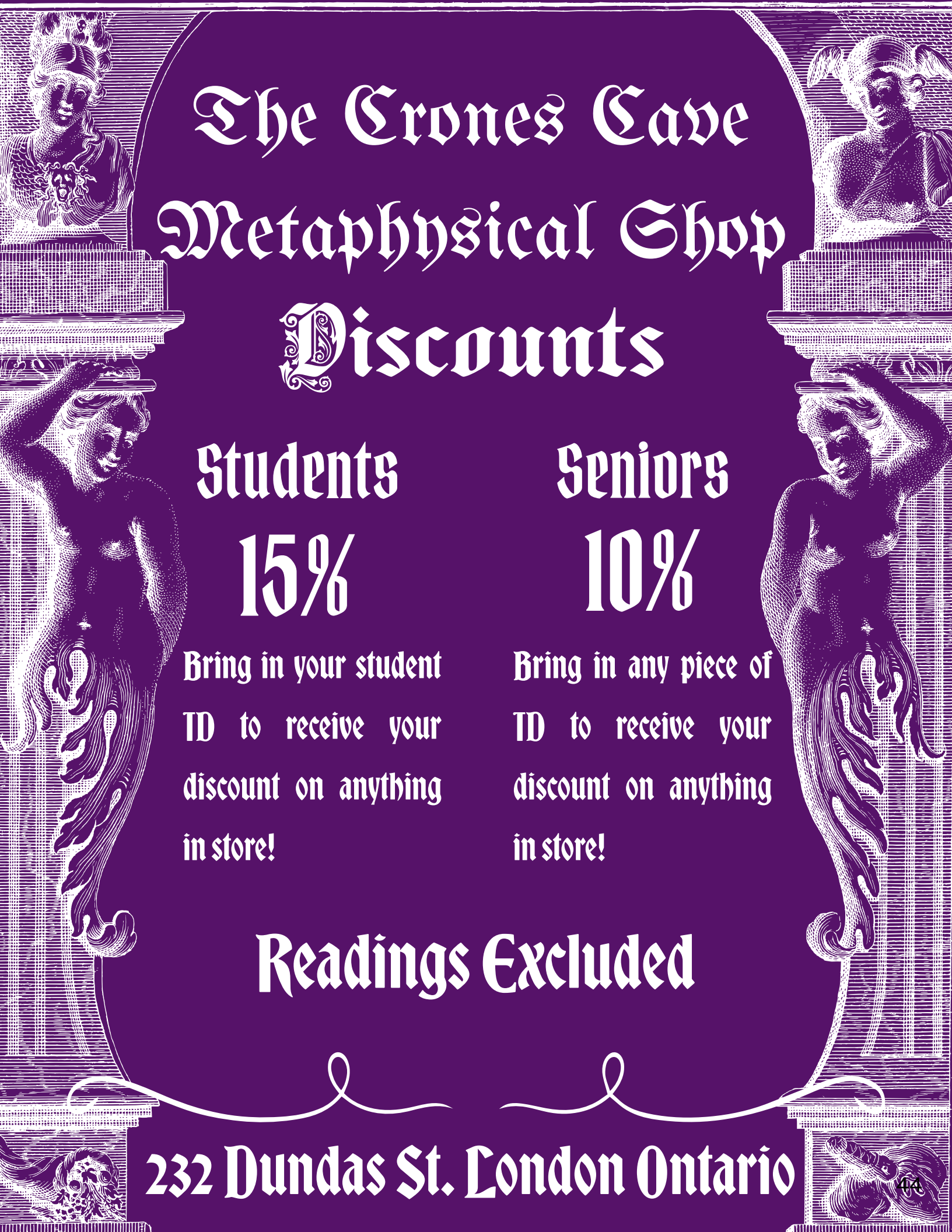
In traditional interpretations of Homer's *The Odyssey*, Circe is often cast as a dangerous temptress. She is the classic wicked witch, turning Odysseus's crew into literal swine. When viewed through a feminist lens, however, Circe emerges as a much more complex and revolutionary figure. She is not a villain, but rather a powerful, self-sufficient woman who subverts the oppressive patriarchal norms of ancient Greece. Her isolation on the island of Aeaea is not an exile, but a sanctuary of autonomy where she holds absolute authority over her domain.

One must first examine the nature of Circe's magic. In ancient Greek society, women were strictly confined to the domestic sphere: submissive daughters, faithful wives, and silent weavers. Circe flips this dynamic entirely. While she does weave at her loom, she accompanies her work with a divine song that captivates the natural world. Her witchcraft, or **pharmakeia**, represents a specialized form of knowledge and control over nature that exists completely outside of male supervision. By turning men into pigs, Circe exposes their true, base natures. It is an act of self-defense and an assertion of power against a world dominated by male conquerors.

Furthermore, Circe's interactions with Odysseus reveal a profound shift in power dynamics. When Odysseus confronts her, he does so armed with the magical herb moly, provided by the male god Hermes. This intervention shows that the patriarchy must literally mobilize divine male authority to neutralize a powerful woman.

Unlike Calypso, who holds Odysseus captive out of desperation, Circe actively helps him on his journey. She exists as an equal to Odysseus, offering him counsel that saves his life. When it is time for him to leave, she does not weep or beg him to stay. She lets him go freely, maintaining her dignity and her independent rule over Aeaea.

Ultimately, a feminist reading of Circe reclaims her from the margins of male myth-making. She is a woman who lives entirely on her own terms, free from the constraints of marriage and male ownership. Her story is a powerful narrative of female independence, intellectual authority, and self-determination in a world designed to suppress women.



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HAINTS, HARBINGERS, AND HOPE: QUEER ECOLOGY IN APPALACHIAN FOLKLORE

We grew up learning that the land had rules. Don't whistle at night. Don't leave offerings out for the wrong spirits. Don't wander too far from the road after dark. And if you were queer, you learned another rule, spoken or not: you don't belong here.

But the land remembers us anyway.



By: Kenneth Cunningham

Appalachian folklore is full of beings who live on the margins—haints, cryptids, omens, and tricksters who refuse easy categories. For queer Appalachians, these figures aren't just spooky stories. They're mirrors, protectors, and teachers. Reading them through a queer ecological lens reveals how the land itself holds space for those who don't fit binaries, and how folk magic can be a way of collaborating with that land rather than dominating it.

What queer ecology means in the hills

Queer ecology, in plain language, is the idea that nature is alive, relational, and non-binary—and that queerness is part of that web, not separate from it. It's animist without needing the academic label: the natural world isn't an object to dominate but a community of persons (trees, rivers, spirits, ancestors) we're in relationship with. This framing draws loosely on the broader field of queer ecology (scholars like Catriona Sandilands and Nicole Seymour have written on this at length), though what follows here is my own application of that idea to Appalachian folk tradition rather than a summary of their academic work.

In Appalachia, this matters deeply. This is a place where land, labor, and belief have been deeply entangled, often violently—where coal companies and preachers alike told us what the land was for and who we were allowed to be. But it's also where resistance and resilience bloom in hollows and on ridge tops, where people saved seeds, songs, and stories even when they were told those things were worthless or wicked.

Queer ecology asks us to see ourselves as part of that living landscape. Not as outsiders trying to survive a hostile place, but as kin to the haints, the harbingers, and the land itself.

Haints: ancestors on the edge

In Appalachian ghost lore, a haint is more than a ghost. A haint is someone who died with unfinished business, who crossed over wrong, or who was pushed to the edges in life and refused to stay quiet in death. Some haints are dangerous. Some are protective. Many are both, depending on who's asking and why.

For queer folks, haints can be read as ancestors who, like us, were pushed to the margins—and who now offer guidance or warning. Maybe it's the great-aunt who never married, who left her house to the neighbor's kid instead of her own family. Maybe it's the uncle who died too young, whose name got whispered but never spoken at dinner. Maybe it's the nameless ones whose stories got lost in the telling.

Working with haints in a queer ecological framework means approaching them with reciprocity, not extraction. Instead of demanding protection or answers, we ask: "What do you need from me? What can I offer you?" An offering might be as simple as a candle lit at dusk, a handful of cornmeal left at the edge of the yard, or a story told aloud so it doesn't die with us.

Harbingers: Mothman, Indrid Cold, and queer kinship

If haints are our ancestors on the edge, harbingers are our allies from the in-between. And in West Virginia, no harbinger is more beloved than Mothman.

Mothman was first widely reported in November 1966 near Point Pleasant, West Virginia, when two couples described encountering a large, winged, red-eyed creature. Just thirteen days earlier, on November 2, 1966, a traveling salesman named Woodrow Derenberger reported a roadside encounter on Interstate 77 with a humanoid figure who telepathically identified himself as "Indrid Cold." Cold was later described in the growing folklore as an extraterrestrial visitor, and over time storytellers began linking his story to Mothman's, treating the two as connected figures moving through the same strange season in the Ohio River Valley. The following year, in December 1967, Mothman sightings became associated with the collapse of the Silver Bridge, which many in the folklore believe he had come to warn people about.

**Article Continued on our Blog Page @
queerhivemagazine.ca**

ACE SHOULD BE ENOUGH

By: VJ Prime



What's Wrong with Me?

For years, I treated my sexuality—or my lack of libido—as a symptom of stress, depression, damaged self-confidence, and trauma.

Psychologists, psychiatrists, and sexologists all told me that it was in my head and that the right therapy would eventually fix me. Their certainty kept me trapped in the same cycle for years: trying to repair myself, failing, then trying again.

Discovering asexuality offered me something far more precious than a precise definition: the possibility that I was not shattered, not ill, and not waiting to be fixed.

That relief deserved to remain whole.

Finding Grace in Ace

The ace label finally allowed me to stop looking for a diagnosis.

Understanding that I was valid—and that my sexuality was no less legitimate without spontaneous desire—made me realize I was not alone.

More importantly, it allowed me to believe I could stop justifying something so deeply intimate.

Queer Enough?

Finding a microlabel that describes my experience precisely can be deeply reassuring. It tells me that someone else feels what I feel. That I am not alone in the details.

But the ace flag should already tell me that I am not alone at all.

A microlabel may help me recognize myself more clearly, but it should never become the price of belonging. I should not need to locate the smallest possible box before I am allowed to feel represented.

Ace should be enough.

Saying I'm gay is generally received as a complete statement, even if it sends shock waves through a family.

Saying I'm ace, however, is too often treated not as an answer, but as an invitation to cross-examination.

So, do you need lubricant every time?

Have you tried sex toys to increase your desire?

Does porn help turn you on?

Aren't you simply frigid? How many orgasms can you have in a row?

Why do you even need a partner if they do not turn you on sexually?

Maybe you are actually attracted to another gender. Have you tried?

Do you need to watch your partner have sex with someone else to become aroused?

Some of these questions have nothing to do with understanding asexuality. They investigate my body, challenge my ability to recognize my own attraction, or invent increasingly elaborate scenarios to explain how my relationship could possibly work.

Apparently, accepting that I am ace is less plausible than believing I somehow missed an entire gender—or need to watch my partner cheat on me to feel anything.

People stop asking whom I love or what intimacy means to me. Instead, they audit my lubrication, my orgasms, my fantasies, and even my faithfulness.

Why do people suddenly expect such lurid details from an ace person? Perhaps because asexuality remains misunderstood. Or, more painfully, because our lack of spontaneous desire can make others feel inadequate—as though their worth depended on making us climb the walls and beg for more.

But what makes me tick belongs in my secret garden.

I am not frigid. I love deeply. I can have sex and enjoy it. Just do not expect me to ask for it, initiate it, or pretend that I crave it. A touch and a few well-chosen words can still set fire to the rain, but that code only needs to be deciphered by the person with whom I choose to share my intimacy—not by an entire community.

Would you ask a lesbian whether she only uses her fingers for penetration, whether she owns a strap-on, or why she would need a Womanizer if she loves women?

Of course not.

Her orientation tells you whom she is attracted to. It does not grant you access to her bedroom inventory.

So why do we tolerate the same intrusion within our own community simply because asexuality is such a pain in the ass for anyone desperate to figure us out?

My orientation is not permission to investigate my body, my fantasies, or my faithfulness.

If our community asks an ace person to reveal the most intimate details of their sexuality before accepting them as one of its own, then we are recreating the very rejection we were meant to protect one another from.

Standing Together

Standing together means refusing to turn our differences into reasons for rejecting one of our own.

A community should offer recognition and care, not demand proof or intimate confession.

Belonging should not depend on complete understanding. I should not have to prove that I am queer enough, explain exactly how my asexuality works, or find the smallest possible label before my own community welcomes me.

The ace flag will remain my beacon—not because everyone beneath it understands me completely, but because it reminds me that none of us should ever have to stand alone.

I am not broken. I am not a riddle to solve. I am not alone. I belong.

Ace should be enough.

IZALEA DOES EVERYTHING

volume 6



By Izalea Bradaigh

I think most folks out there should be fine and good with this article. But I am going to put an addendum right here up front because I have felt something in the past and I want to highlight it before anyone out there experiences it. There will be mentions of self-harm and suicide, but in a negative 'I don't want' context. Be very careful here if you have issues with that, please.

Community can feel very distant to some. Whether there are comorbid issues such as agoraphobia and mental health or whether the distances are simply too great. It can also feel distant for financial reasons. If you can't even afford a bus trip to get to where the community is, are you truly a part of it?

The answer is of course you are. You remain a member of our community whether you are struggling alone or closeted or unsafe to be out and proud. You do not need to be loud and vibrant and engaged with everyone and everything to belong. There have been times when I have stared out my window at things happening that I desperately craved being a part of and felt like I would be shunned or unwelcome. It was in my head, and it was doubt and anxiety and a lack of control.

That is my content warning this month. I am going to talk about the joys of belonging to a community. If you feel like you aren't part of one and suffer from that pain I mention up there; know that you aren't even alone in that feeling.

For the person I'm pointing out directly, and for every other reader out there, if you are okay then so am I. Let's get into it. Once comes when it comes, regardless of what is happening outside.

I'm excited for this month's theme: Queer Community. Anyone who sees my occasional posts on Instagram or my coverage of some distinctly queer events, community is the thing I revel in. Being so relatively new to all of this is interesting as a woman in her mid-forties. Especially since I'm a trans woman.

There isn't much out there that feels as good as walking into a place and knowing that probably every damn person in there will have your back. Or that everyone at very least will understand enough of your situation and who you are to simply understand.

That's what I think the feeling is, being understood. We all, queer folks I mean, know that feeling of being othered. Of being just a little to the left of what some folks call "normal." "Normal" in quotes because we aren't playing that game, but that is what some folks think. Pfft, I don't need to explain that; you folks get it.

Community tends to be seen as an additional benefit by some people, like an add on to the queer experience. And frankly, I cannot disagree harder. I do also think that when we first accept ourselves it really does feel like an extra benefit. Like you paid for the "+" subscription on LGBTQIA+.

But it truly isn't an add-on, it's part of the base package. Community is integral to the experience. I don't think I need to explain this to anyone reading this but having other queer folks around who have been through the same experiences you have is so very helpful in navigating all the feelings that crop up.

**Article Continued on our Blog Page @
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ADVICE WITH A TAB OF ACID

EXPERT
ADVICE FOR
EVERYDAY
PROBLEMS

Dear Tabitha,

Everyone in my friend group is in our mid thirties and seems to be moving forward in life except for me. One friend just got married, another bought a house, another is having a baby, and another got a huge life altering promotion. I'm happy for all of them, but lately I feel like the odd one out. I still don't know what I want to do with my life, and sometimes I avoid seeing them because I don't want to sit there feeling like a failure. How do I stop comparing my life to theirs?

Stuck in the Middle



Dear Stuck,

Honey, put down the measuring tape. Nobody is handing out trophies for who accomplished goals in life first.

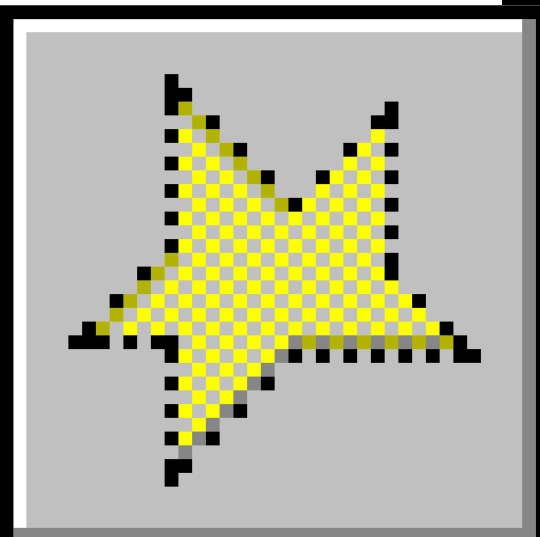


And life is not a group project, even though sometimes it feels like everybody else got the assignment and you're sitting here wondering who hates you enough to purposely not give you a syllabus.

Your friends aren't necessarily ahead of you. They're just standing in different places. I promise you, some of those people you think have everything figured out are lying awake at two in the morning wondering if they've made a terrible mistake. A wedding doesn't guarantee happiness. A house doesn't guarantee security. A promotion doesn't guarantee that somebody isn't crying in the office bathroom day after day.

You don't need to catch up. You need to find your own rhythm.

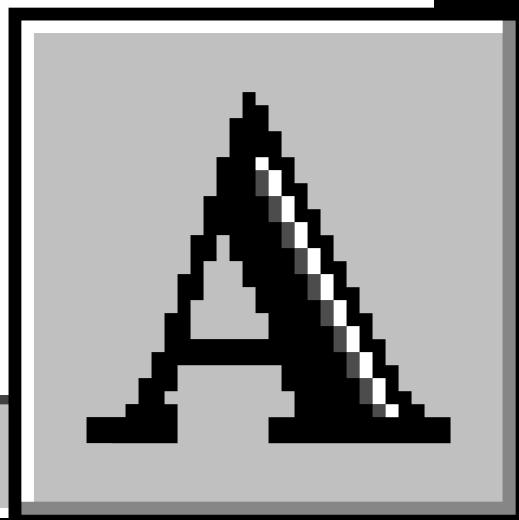
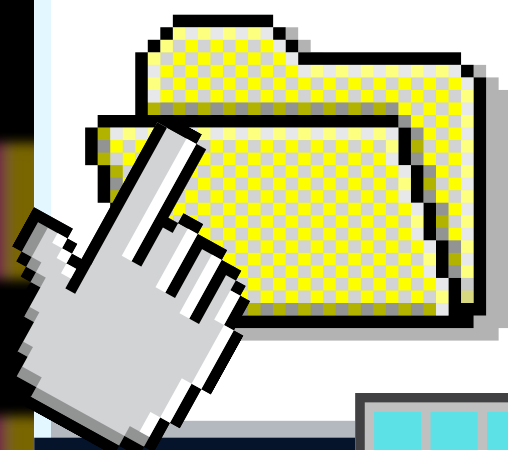
And you need to start a conversation with your friend group about how you feel.





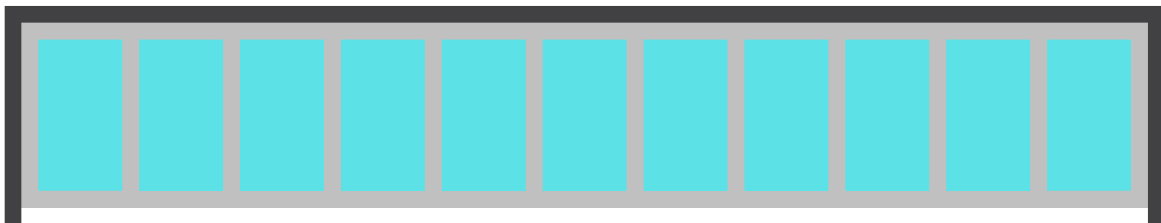
They will let you know that they probably don't have it figured out either and that even though these celebrations for them are exciting they will probably still be magnanimous and might even let you know that they feel like they are missing out in life in different ways too!

And please don't disappear from the people who love you just because you're embarrassed that your life doesn't look like theirs. Let them celebrate you. Maybe right now you don't have a house or a baby or a six-figure salary. Maybe what you have is some really good friends, a funny story, a half-finished dream, and enough courage to admit you're still figuring it out.



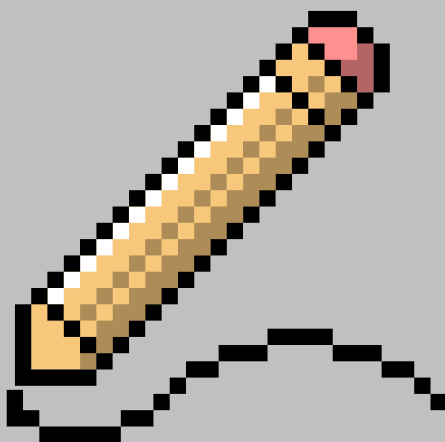
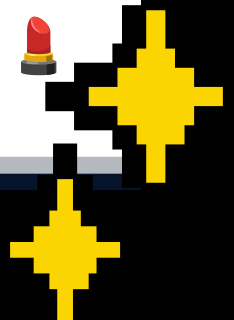


That's not nothing, darling.
That's a life in progress.
And someday, when you're sitting around that same
table and looking at all the strange, beautiful
directions everyone's lives have taken, you'll realize
you weren't behind them.
You were just becoming yourself at your own damn
speed.
And honestly? That's usually the more inspiring
story.



With love and hope for your future,

Tabitha Acidz

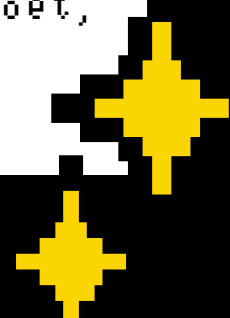




Send your questions to
tabithaacidz@gmail.com.

Tabitha Acidz is a psychedelic drag queen who enjoys writing music, reciting poetry, telling stories, and playing dress up. She has graced the audiences of The Clinton Street Theater and The New Music Gathering, and has been awarded grants from both the Oregon Arts Commission and the Regional Arts & Culture Council. She is also a writer of the witty and heartwarming column, Advice with a Tab of Acid.

Out of drag, when she isn't drowning in makeup brushes and blush, Tabitha is the phenomenal composer, poet, and author Timothy Arliss O'Brien.



WHY MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS AS A QUEER PERSON



By Noah "The Stigma Fighter"

Being queer is only one part of a person, but it can shape how someone moves through the world in ways that are difficult to explain unless you have lived it.

There can be a lot of beauty in discovering who you are. Finding language that finally makes sense. Meeting people who understand you without needing an explanation. Becoming more comfortable in your body, relationships, sexuality, gender, and identity. There is something powerful about reaching a point where you can look at your life and recognize yourself in it.

At the same time, getting there can be complicated. The mental health challenges queer people experience do not come from being queer. They often come from trying to live authentically in environments that have not always made authenticity safe.

Sometimes that pressure is obvious. Discrimination happens. Families reject people. Relationships change after someone comes out. Healthcare can become frustrating or frightening when a provider does not understand LGBTQIA+ experiences. Political conversations can suddenly feel incredibly personal when people are debating rights that directly affect your life.

Other times, the pressure is much quieter. You learn to pay attention to the room before deciding how much of yourself to reveal. You notice how someone talks about LGBTQIA+ people before mentioning your own identity. You think twice about correcting someone. You become aware of your surroundings before showing affection to a partner.

After a while, constantly making those calculations can become exhausting.

When protecting yourself becomes automatic

One thing I think deserves more attention in conversations about queer mental health is how easily self-protection can become automatic. People adapt.

If being quiet kept you safe growing up, you might have learned to stay quiet. If achievement earned acceptance, being successful may have become incredibly important. If conflict threatened a relationship you depended on, you may have become skilled at keeping everyone else happy.

Those patterns can follow someone long after the original situation has changed. This is where mental health work can become incredibly meaningful. Instead of immediately asking, How do I stop doing this?, there is value in becoming curious about why the behavior developed in the first place. Maybe there was a reason you learned to read people's moods so carefully. Maybe there was a reason rejection feels especially threatening. Maybe there was a reason you learned to hide certain parts of yourself. Understanding those patterns does not mean allowing them to control your life forever. It means recognizing that healing is more complicated than simply telling yourself to think differently.

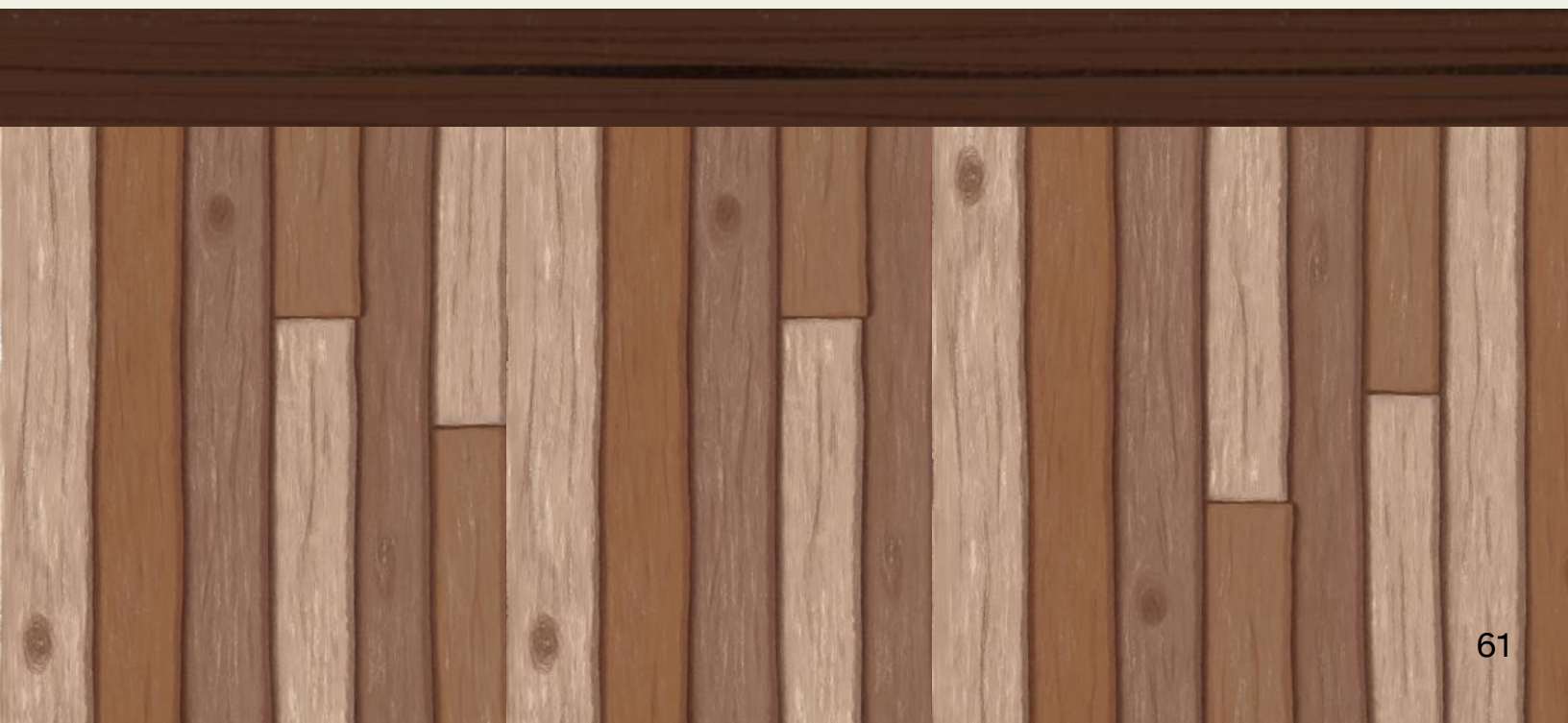
Sometimes healing starts with understanding what you had to do to get here.

Article Continued on our Blog Page

@ queerhivemagazine.ca



Jamie Corry is a 57 year old lesbian artist located outside of Buffalo, New York.





UNASHAMED

when truth doesn't need defending

By: Skip Sams

A few weeks ago, I hosted the Gay Men of Integrity Leadership Summit. In my session, I talked about what integrity means to me: integrating all the parts of who I am, allowing myself to be seen, and being willing to speak my truth without seeking validation. For me, that means being confident and vulnerable at the same time without preaching my truth as if it is the truth for everyone or becoming so careful about how I might be received that I stop saying what I actually believe.

I don't need anyone else's approval to feel whole. When I'm standing in integrity, I don't need validation because I'm already validated.

After one of the summit conversations, I received an email from an author and longtime leader in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Something one of my guests said concerned him. He heard the statement that gay men and trans people "aren't the same community" as potentially divisive.

Before I responded, I went back and listened to the conversation again. What my guest was pointing to was real — the trans community is being demonized right now, much like gay men were when I was coming out. He wasn't suggesting that we separate ourselves from one another. He was recognizing that the trans community has its own experiences and challenges that are specific to that community. Gay men aren't part of the trans community, but we're allies, we're family, and we're part of the same larger 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We have to stand up for each other.

My instinct was to explain where my guest was coming from, but I also wanted to remain open to what the writer was saying rather than immediately defend the conversation.

In my response, I clarified that I believe we are one 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and I also believe each letter represents its own community, with its own history, experiences and needs. Having spaces centered on those individual experiences does not mean separating ourselves from the larger community.

When he wrote back, he clarified that his concern wasn't about me or about having a summit specifically for gay men. Once we clarified our perspectives through conversation, we came to understand we were using the same words, but with slightly different meanings. Clarification, not conflict, helped us see that our ideas and values are actually very closely aligned.

The conversation could have ended very differently if either of us had decided we already knew what the other person meant, but instead, we stayed in it. We connected. He has even agreed to join me as a guest for an upcoming Masterclass Series to share this experience and our shared values.

It is easy to stand confidently in my truth when nobody is questioning it, but the real work comes when I feel challenged. Integrity didn't automatically keep me from misunderstanding, but it did help me stay open and give space for the misunderstanding to become clear.

It is none of my business what someone thinks of me, but that doesn't mean I stop listening to what they have to say. When I stand in integrity, I don't need validation, because I'm already validated. Perhaps this is what allows me to be confident enough to stay curious about someone else's truth too.

I can choose to set my perspective aside long enough to hear someone else's truth. I don't have to abandon or change my perspective, and at the same time, I can admit where I may have been wrong. In any case, I don't have to make the other person wrong so I can feel right.

This is a process, and sometimes it comes easier for me than at other times. Sometimes, I still don't get it right. Honestly, I have to make a conscious effort not to react immediately, take a breath, and give myself enough space to be thoughtful about how I respond. That is the goal, anyway.

Skip Sams is a certified professional coach, musician, and writer. Through his coaching, speaking, and writing, he explores authenticity, recovery, leadership, and what it means to live a life aligned with one's truth. He is the founder of the Gay Men of Integrity in Leadership Summit. For more information, email skip@skipsams.com.

Skip Sams
Be the Music



2SLGBTQIA+ MENTAL HEALTH

Key Mental Health Factors & Statistics:

- **High Prevalence:** 2SLGBTQIA+ people are over twice as likely to experience a mental health condition, with transgender individuals nearly four times as likely.
- **Youth Vulnerability:** 2SLGBTQIA+ youth are at elevated risk for self-harm and suicidal ideation, with trans/nonbinary youth 2-2.5 times more likely to consider suicide than cisgender LGBTQ peers.
- **Minority Stress:** Chronic stress from stigma, discrimination, bullying, and fear of violence contributes heavily to these disparities.
- **Intersectionality:** 2SLGBTQIA+ youth of colour, particularly Indigenous and Black youth, report higher rates of suicide attempts compared to their white LGBTQIA+ peers.
- **Access Barriers:** Fear of discrimination or receiving inappropriate care can prevent individuals from seeking help.



Raven Hearth is a Certified Recovery Mentor and Death Doula/Death Worker based in Oregon, USA. Identifying as non-binary and queer, they are passionate about supporting the mental health of LGBTQIA2S+ communities. When not engaging in activism or writing, Raven enjoys reading, listening to music, baking, photographing nature's wonders, and interacting with local wildlife, always encouraging it to flourish. Their commitment to mental health advocacy is vital in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all.



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FALL FOR YOUR HOME:

2026's Sexiest Autumn

Decor Trends

By Daniel Cayer

647-290-7361

danielcayerinteriors.com

Let's be honest, by the time late September rolls around, we are all a little fatigued by the endless summer. The linen shirts are looking tired, the iced matcha lattes have lost their thrill, and our living rooms are begging for a glow-up.

Fall 2026 is officially here, and it is bringing a design vibe that is equal parts high-drama sophistication and cozy intimacy. This season, we are moving away from sterile, hyper-minimalist "sad beige" aesthetics and leaning hard into rich textures, moody palettes, and curated maximalism.

Whether you're looking to totally overhaul your condo or just want to give your guest bedroom a sultry upgrade before the holiday hosting season begins, here is your definitive, professional guide to decorating for fall 2026.



The Palette: Ditching Pastel for "Pour-Over" Tones

If last year was about Barbie pinks and bright tomato reds, fall 2026 is all about the coffee shop and the wine cellar. We are seeing a massive shift toward deep, intoxicating neutrals and rich jewel tones.

Espresso & Cardamom: Think deep, dark browns that border on black, paired with warm, spicy undertones.

Merlot Wine: A sophisticated, bruised plum/burgundy that adds instant drama to any room.

Olive & Moss: Grounding greens that keep the space feeling organic rather than suffocating.

Pro Tip: Don't just paint a feature wall. If you're going for a moody hue like espresso, paint the baseboards and the ceiling too. "Color drenching" makes a room feel like a seamless, high-end boutique hotel.

Velvet, Corduroy, and Suede (Oh My!)

Texture is the secret sauce of interior design. If your space feels flat, it's not because you lack furniture; it's because everything has the same texture. Fall 2026 is hyper-tactile. We are seeing a massive resurgence of 70s-inspired corduroy on accent chairs, heavy silk velvets for drapery, and brushed suede on pillows.

The "Curated Eclectic" Lighting Revolution

Please, we beg of you: Turn off the overhead "big light." Fall is all about vibe curation, and nothing ruins a mood faster than being illuminated like a grocery store dairy aisle. This season, lighting is treated like sculpture. Look for mushroom lamps in amber glass, travertine stone base table lamps and low-wattage warm LED bulbs (2700K or lower). The goal is to create pockets of warmth throughout your space. If you don't have dimmers installed yet, make that your Saturday morning project.

Tablescapes Built for Entertaining

Let's face it, fall is prime dinner party season. The patio days are over, and it's time to bring the boys inside for a multi-course, wine-fueled evening. Your table should look as good as the menu.

Ditch the Paper Napkins: Invest in heavy, washed linen napkins in shades of rust or mustard.

Mismatched Vintage Glassware: Hit up your local thrift shop or vintage market for amber, smoked grey, or amethyst wine glasses. They don't need to match; eclecticism is the point.

An Earthy Centerpiece: Move away from traditional floral arrangements. Instead, use a low travertine tray filled with dark figs, pomegranates, and asymmetrical branches for a dark-academia, Dutch-painting vibe.

The Fragrance Layer

Interior design isn't just visual; it's sensory. Your home shouldn't just look like fall — it needs to smell expensive. Step away from the synthetic pumpkin spice candles that smell like a mall bakery. Instead, opt for complex, sophisticated home fragrances with notes of hinoki wood, tobacco leaf, amber and black pepper. A high-quality reed diffuser in the entryway ensures that the moment guests step inside, they know they've arrived somewhere chic.

The Bottom Line

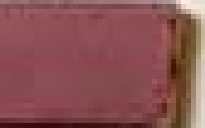
Decorating for fall 2026 isn't about buying a bunch of plastic pumpkins or plaid blankets that you'll throw out in December. It's about leaning into a lifestyle that embraces warmth, luxury, and a little bit of drama. Pick one or two rooms to elevate, focus on rich textures and low lighting, and get ready to host the best autumn of your life. Your home is your sanctuary — make it look spectacular.

1. THE PALETTE

POUR-OVER
TONES



PRESSO



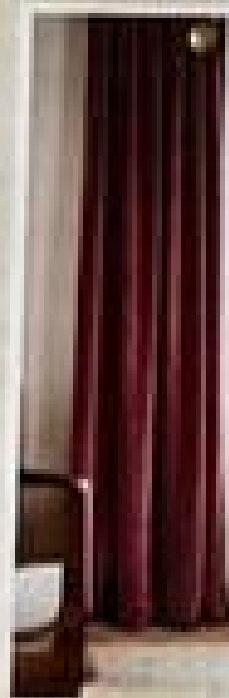
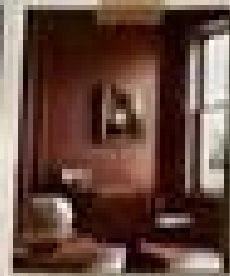
LOT WINE



VE



2. VELVET, C



3. THE "CURATED ECLECTIC" LIGHTING REVOLUTION



POCKETS OF
WARMTH

T, CORDUROY, & SUEDE

HYPER-TACTILE



70s RESURGENCE



TURN OFF
OVERHEAD
LIGHTS!

POCKETS
OF WARMTH

DIMMERS IS A
SATURDAY
PROJECT

4. TABLESCAPES



BUILT FOR ENTERTAINING

S OF
ATH

PROUD
to be ME!

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& sleep, so why aren't
you tracking your
connection?



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Finding Home on the Road:

Why 2SLGBTQIA+ Community is Our Ultimate Destination

Let's be honest: packing three oversized suitcases for a four-day getaway is an art form. As your resident Pool Queen, I'll always demand 5-star views, 5-inch

heels, and mimosas flowing before 10 AM. Serving main-character energy across time zones is practically a public service!

But once you strip away the airport lounge mimosas and passport stamps, travel is really about **belonging**. It's about finding places where your nervous system can finally drop its shoulders, exhale, and exist without a filter.

My real, unfiltered travel secret? Feeling safe on the road is about how we show up for each other. Our biggest flex must be radical, unconditional community: zero gatekeeping, zero interior judgment, and zero rejection of our own family. Every single letter



By Tasha Morrison, Travel Consultant



Kanaka Maoli (Hawaiian) History – Indigenous Agroecologies

Hawai'i: 10 Trips Later, My Blueprint for Connection

When people ask where I feel most grounded, my mind flies straight to Hawai'i. Having visited 10 times, the islands redefined what travel means to me.

Hawai'i is where I've shared quiet moments with local monks, caught waves with North Shore surfers, and gotten lost in a maze of pineapples for 4 hours - dream come true!

This spirit of inclusion runs deep in Hawaiian history. Long before rainbow flags existed, traditional Native Hawaiian (Kanaka Maoli) culture held profound reverence for the **Māhū**—individuals embodying both male and female spiritual traits, celebrated as sacred keepers of culture, healers, and teachers. Within traditional Kanaka Maoli society, gender and identity were fluid. Individual worth was tied directly to spirituality, talent, and service to the community (lāhui), rather than strict male or female binaries.

The Takeaway: Stepping onto the islands means encountering genuine Aloha—a non-judgmental embrace that proves family can be found anywhere.

Amsterdam: Liberation on the Canals

If Hawaii was a lesson in connection, my two trips to Amsterdam were a masterclass in open-minded liberation.

During one visit, I sat down directly with workers in the Red Light District, gaining deep respect for the city's commitment to dignity and autonomy. On another trip, I experienced Pride and the legendary Canal Parade—and honey, my life was forever changed! Watching the historic waterways turn into a floating runway of trans icons, queer elders, and allies was an unforgettable reminder of what visible, unapologetic travel looks like.

As the first nation to legalize same-sex marriage in 2001, the Netherlands built a culture where living authentically is just the default setting. The message across the city is simple: *If you're here, you belong. Now pass the stroopwafels!*



Canal Pride Amsterdam Saturday 1 August 2026

Temptation Cancun Resort: Instant Liberation

Sometimes belonging takes ten trips to uncover, and sometimes it hits you the second you check in. That was my experience at Temptation Cancun Resort.

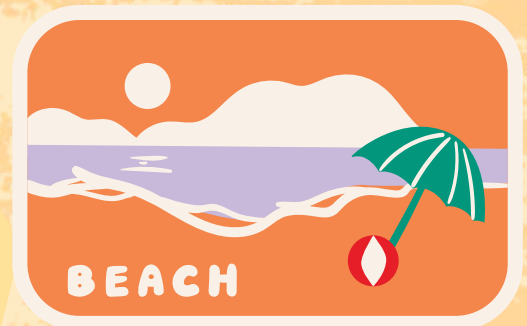
The moment I stepped onto the grounds, I felt an electric connection. Temptation is a sanctuary of total, unfiltered freedom—zero awkwardness, zero rigid expectations, and no pretense.

Whether lounging by the Sexy Pool or diving into night events, you never have to tone down your outfit or apologize for taking up space.

I will say this...it is the resort I sell the most. My clients book in advance to visit 3-4 times a year on average. It is true that once you go to Temptations, you ALWAYS go back.



Temptation Cancun Resort - All Inclusive - Adults Only,
Cancun | 2026



What's Next in The Hive

Get ready to elevate your itinerary! In our next issue, we're serving High-End Without the Hangover, exploring how top-tier resorts and luxury cruises are ditching basic sodas for artisanal, zero-proof botanical mixology and sober social lounges. Who says you need booze to serve main-character energy? Stay tuned!

Ready for Your Own Reset?

Global Queen Getaways is currently booking amazing, tailored adventures to Hawai'i, Amsterdam, and of course our top seller Temptation Cancun, in addition to accessible hotels & resorts. Let us handle the logistics while you focus on the joy. VISIT www.globalqueengetaways.com





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Misguided Ghosts

By Skyler Fury



The LGBTQIA+ community has endured many struggles, both emotionally and physically. Many of us live with permanent scars that continuously haunt us. It's sad to know that some of those scars have even come from within our own community. In a world where we constantly must battle for our right to exist, it's strange that we would also go out of our way to make others in our community feel this way. Especially when it's already hard enough to fight those outside of it.

So what can we do to provide support to one another? It doesn't always require something big. Sometimes the smallest changes make all the difference. It can be as simple as working on communicating with one another in a respectful way.

Communication is one of the most important foundations of a healthy relationship. A concept that seems increasingly lost in the modern world. Even with the ability to instantly reach someone on the other side of the globe, we still struggle with finding the right words or the courage to say what needs to be said. Instead of communicating, many people choose what is commonly known as ghosting as their escape.

Ghosting is the practice of ending a personal relationship by suddenly withdrawing from all communication without explanation. It can happen at any stage of a relationship, no matter how close you may be to the person, and it is often used in situations ranging from minor disagreements to severe conflicts.

At first glance, ghosting may not seem harmful. People often justify it as a way to escape a toxic or abusive person, to avoid moral conflict, or simply to avoid hurting someone's feelings. But ghosting carries consequences far deeper than most ghosters realize.

My partner and I have experienced ghosting many times while dating. We are HIV positive undetectable, polyamorous, and have been looking for a third partner, something I'm sure has scared plenty of guys away. In many cases, the conversation felt warm and promising before the person would suddenly disappear and block us without explanation. Some even went as far as setting a date, choosing a meeting place and time, leaving us sitting and waiting only to realize they were never coming.

In what world could anyone think that disappearing without explanation, even a fake one, would be harmless?

Ghosting causes more damage than the ghoster knows. The Newport Institute, a young adult mental health and substance abuse treatment center, has linked ghosting to low self-esteem, low self-worth, depression, anxiety, trust issues, rejection-sensitive dysphoria, relationship OCD, and even trauma triggers. Why would anyone want to cause another person to feel this way? Most people don't give it a second thought. As a society, we've become selfish; things only seem to matter if they negatively impact us directly.

Dr. Alexandra Solomon, a leading therapist specializing in relationships, believes that one cause of ghosting is a growing lack of empathy. She explains that humanity is stuck in survival mode, which triggers our fight or flight response and shifts attention away from higher parts of the brain, like the prefrontal cortex, the seat of empathy and compassion.

She also offers several messages for those who have been ghosted:
The person who ghosted you is not emotionally mature enough for you.
Their ghosting reflects their inability to communicate.
They are cowards; you dodged a bullet.
They do not deserve you.

She further explains that people may ghost due to self-esteem issues, discomfort with causing hurt or disappointment, fear of seeming cruel, or a history of conflict avoidance.

For those who ghost others, her advice is simple: Be respectful. Choose words that feel comfortable for you. Explain in two or three sentences that you do not want to hurt the person, that you are still a work in progress, but that the situation is not right for you. This small act can provide closure. Something far better than leaving someone with only questions. The solution starts with us. We in the LGBTQIA+ community owe it to ourselves to be more empathetic, not only toward ourselves, but toward everyone in our community. If we cannot treat one another with respect, empathy, and compassion, how can we expect anyone else to?

Why LGBTQIA Authors Should Market Their Books to the LGBTQIA Community

Queer Hive Magazine and True Voice Review are launching a new book review feature created to spotlight books written for, by, and about the LGBTQIA community. This collaboration is more than a promotional opportunity. It is a reminder that queer stories deserve visibility, thoughtful review, and direct connection with the readers who are most likely to understand their value.

For LGBTQIA authors, marketing a book is not only about selling copies. It is about finding the people who need the story. It is about reaching readers who may have spent years searching for books that reflect their lives, identities, families, questions, struggles, humor, love, history, and joy.

The LGBTQIA community is not a side audience. It is a strong, diverse, and engaged reading community. It includes readers of fiction, memoir, poetry, romance, fantasy, young adult, nonfiction, history, children's books, and more. These readers are not all looking for the same thing, but they are often looking with purpose. They want stories that feel honest. They want representation that respects them. They want books that do more than include queer characters as decoration.

That is why marketing directly to the LGBTQIA community matters.

Publishing a queer book and hoping readers stumble across it is not enough. Today's book marketplace is crowded, fast-moving, and difficult to navigate. Thousands of books compete for attention every week. Social media algorithms are unreliable. Online bookstores are overloaded. Reviews are harder to secure than many authors expect.

A book needs pathways to readers. Reviews, magazine features, interviews, newsletters, book clubs, podcasts, library recommendations, and community publications all help create those pathways. A review feature in Queer Hive Magazine through True Voice Review gives authors another way to place their books in front of readers who already care about LGBTQIA stories.

[...]

[...]

Instead of simply saying, “Buy my book,” an author can say, “My book was reviewed by True Voice Review and may be featured in Queer Hive Magazine.” That gives the outreach more weight.

It also helps authors build a long-term platform. Readers who discover one book may follow the author’s future work. They may sign up for a newsletter, attend an event, recommend the book, request it at a library, or share it with a friend. Marketing to the LGBTQIA community is not only about one sale. It is about building a relationship with readers who may stay with the author for years.

That is why LGBTQIA authors should not wait for permission to promote their work. Do not wait for a major publisher, mainstream reviewer, or social media algorithm to decide your book is worth attention. Start with the community. Start with the readers who understand why the story matters. Start with the platforms willing to make space.

Queer Hive Magazine and True Voice Review are creating one of those spaces. LGBTQIA authors and authors of LGBTQIA-centered books are encouraged to submit their work for review consideration. Selected reviews may be featured in Queer Hive Magazine, helping connect authors with readers who value authentic storytelling, queer visibility, and community-centered voices.

To submit your book, email:

truevoicereview@outlook.com

Please include:

- Book title
- Author name
- Genre
- A short description of the book
- Relevant purchase or website links

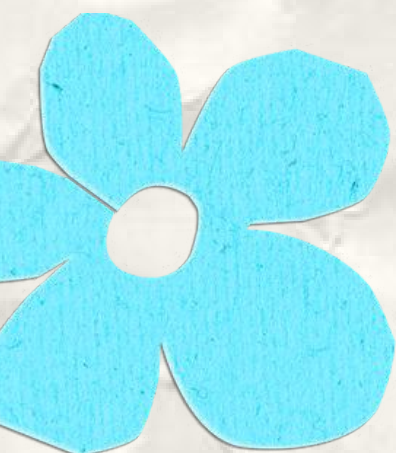


Queer stories matter. Queer authors matter. Queer readers matter.

When we make space for those stories to be seen, reviewed, and shared, we

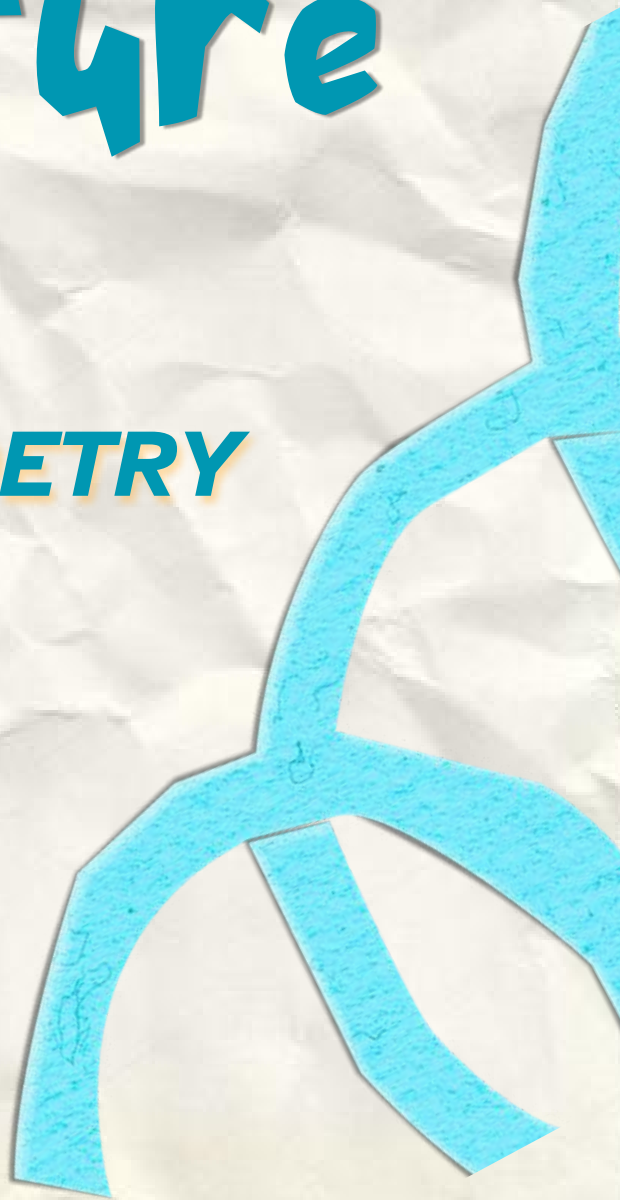
strengthen not only individual authors, but the larger literary community we are building together.

**Read the Whole Article on our Blog Page @
queerhivemagazine.ca**



Literature

FICTION & POETRY



HOME

By: Nick Harpham

I used to think
family was something
you were born into.

Blood.
A last name.
A seat at a table
you were expected to belong to.

But sometimes
the people who share your blood
are the ones who make you
feel the most alone.

And then we find each other.

A community of people
who know what it means
to hide pieces of ourselves
just to survive.

People who have cried
in bedrooms with locked doors,
wondering if the world
would ever love
the person they truly are.

And somehow,
we become family.



Not because we are the same,
but because we understand
the parts of each other
that don't need explaining.

Here, I don't have to leave
pieces of myself at the door.

I can bring all of me,
the beautiful,
the broken,
the complicated,
the scared.

And someone will still say,

“Come sit with us. You belong here.”

God, what a beautiful thing
it is to finally belong.

To hold someone's hand
and remind them
they aren't alone.

To become the person
you once needed.

That is why we have to
hold onto each other.

Because somewhere,
right now,
someone is terrified
that they will never find
a place where they fit.

And maybe all they need
is one person
to tell them,

**“We found you. You're safe
here. You're loved here.
You're family.”**

So when I look at this
community,
I don't just see a rainbow.

I see every person
who refused to disappear.

Every heart
that survived being broken.

Every soul
that chose to love anyway.

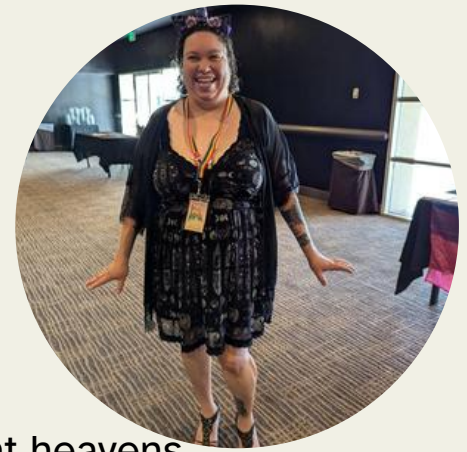
And for the first time
in my life,

I don't feel like
I'm looking for a family.

**I feel like I've finally come
home.**

Of Dreams and Ruined Fireflies

By: Layla Dorine



Chain smoking dreams on the hood of my car
We paint dragons in smoke against an azure sky
Waiting for the stars to chase the sun from too bright heavens
Everything sparkles a little different after dark
Tattered edges of glittery wings hide the fray in swirling neon
We feign amusement in face of scorn
Crawl home and puke our sins in porcelain bowls
The dregs of last night's misery oozing from our pours
There's no escaping the long shadows that creep across our
lives
Shadowing the fall of all we once held dear
Is there no end to the pantomime of life we endure
This silent, black and white movie
that makes us laugh at the broken clown
ashes fall like ruined fireflies
A rain of white against tanned skin
What careful disassembly of life the fire brings
Reducing form to a barely recognizable mold, like our dreams
The whispers of them still echo on nights like there
When we lay beneath ancient moons
remembering all we'd hoped to be

Layla got hooked on writing as a child and hasn't stopped writing since. Hard times, troubled times, the lives of the characters are never easy, but then what life is? The story is in the struggle, the journey, the triumphs, and the falls. Layla writes about artists, musicians, loners, drifters, and dreamers. Sometimes writing urban romance and sometimes its aliens crash landing near a roadside bar. When not wandering, or writing, Layla can be found curled up with a good book, amazing music, and a kitty.

NIGHTMARE

By: Tiff

I slip, I fall
You stand there and watch
I'm chained to the floor
You walk out closing the door
You take the rest of the light with you
It starts, the wailing, the crying
Of things that are dead
I scratch at the cuffs
Try to tear them off
Instead, I tear skin
Tear it till my arms bleed
Break every nail till they bleed too
But the cuffs are still on
I cry out to you
"Open the door
Come back, don't leave me here!"
The taunts come in then
Why do you bother?
No one cares! You're worthless!
No one wants you!
Everyone neglects you
And those that don't
They use you!
Then they leave you!

I twist and turn
But the cuffs cut in
New blood is drawn
No one cares! No one cares!
They left you here to drown
To drown and die alone
Die alone in your fears

The horrors rise up
The dark chokes
Panic sets in
The smell of blood thickens
Attack once, twice,
Three times struggling
To break free

Pain breaks though the din
Sharp but sweet
It wakes me up
The only reminder
Of the nightmare that
Plagues me when I sleep

DREAMS OF HOME

By: Tiff

I dream of places fairies roam
And of places elves call home
And griffins roar
Where harpies hunt
And dragons soar
I dream of places where the grass
flows
And trees hold cities
Where Mer-people rule the seas
A place full of magic and mystery
But feels like home to me

I dream of shadows
And other things
Vampires, wolves, and other shape
shifters too
Of imps, orcs, dwarves and goblins
So many mythical creatures
Some good
Some bad
And some that could be considered
evil
But still this place is home
I find it every night
Whenever I close my eyes

I see it when I wake
Glimpses through a veil
That seems to separate
This world from theirs
Belonging to both
Longing for one
And so I'm plagued
By dreams of home



Tiffany Ambrose is a Queer, Neurodivergent, writer and stay-at-home parent living in Ontario. They prefer to be called Tiff and per is also polyamorous. Per writes from the heart when it comes to poetry and from life experience, letting the thoughts flow out raw and often untouched same with when writing other pieces. Other genres per enjoys writing are fantasy, romance, and a little hint of mystery woven in.

A large, distressed, black 'X-RATED' stamp is positioned diagonally across the upper half of the page. The letters are thick and blocky, with a rough, hand-painted appearance. The background of the stamp is white, contrasting sharply with the black ink. The overall effect is one of boldness and edginess.

Ahead:

Nude

Photography

from the

Rainbow

Boudoir

Short Stories

and Personal

Essays

And More!

Come as you are...

Leave

iconic



We are an empowering, positive experience-driven photographer in Buffalo NY. We focus on representation of all gender identities in boudoir & kink art.

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RainbowBoudoir.com
Buffalo, NY

Club Taurus

By: O aka Otoniel Trujillo II



The Building was created in 1938. Smack dab in the city, heart of the slum downtown area. It had a Belltower on the top of the roof facing the street. It must've been an old church or firehouse. It's the first thing you'd see driving into the parking lot. There was no Quasimodo who tolled the bell at midnight. Here at Club Taurus we had the gorgeous bold blond Ken, the drunkard who would cautiously climbing from the outside up to the rooftop in order to get into the spa. He was told not to come in drunk when guests were here but after a night of heavy drinking Ken was allowed. Ken was Rick's boyfriend. Rick was the Gay bathhouse owner of Club Taurus, who was also my dear grandpa looking boss. Club Taurus was a dance club on the weekends and a bathhouse 24/7. Three floors. Lambda report levels of sex, drugs and dancing debauchery. In the center of the entire building was a massive courtyard where men frolic in the sun or under the stars. The exterior was red brick. All the walls inside were solid what seemed like ten inch concrete. The first door in was the check-in desk. Through plexi glass and a microphone there was the big guy with a beard.

"Hi, I'm BigJohn, I.D. please....Thank you now sign this, it states we are not reliable if you are harmed or items stolen."

The horny guest quickly interjects. "Hmm one would think before but what the heck a night of naughtiness never hurt anyone!"

Half the members were either bisexual or straight gladly enjoying certain kinks that can only be facilitated at a place like a Gay Men's Bathhouse. Each bathhouse has it's own stories that each one of us can tell. Liberated by lust. It is then that we know this moment in time it was our slice of heaven full of little devils ready to play at any time. Consensual and just call it done. Call home and tell mom if you want. At 19 years old I started working at Club Taurus and when I applied for the job I didn't know such a place existed.

The summer of 1985 was unique. Something eerily erotic in the air of something ending and something big and bold beginning. My legal name is Octivus Holmes. I have been working at the men's club for two solid rock hard on years. At first here, on the job I was hired to do a 15 minute strip nude dance show. Right after the performance I would head home after 4am in the morning. At home i still lived with my parents Fortunately. I was asked to move out the house for being a cocksucking lovin' homosexual standing on three legs. No problem I am old enough to be on my own. On forbidden territory called home I was gone in 24 hours àfter a long ass graduation at age 19. The club was a sex club but a safe zone for not just me a new orphan. But a whole buttload of men who had no one to call their own or was somehow alone in the world. Eventually promoted to front desk, I got first view of every dude coming in the building to the bathhouse. I felt like a DJ in control of the whole house rhythm.

The music was bumping "Push it" by Salt & Pepa when this tall white beard man walked in up to me completely nude with towel in hand. Behind the counter in the office I stare up and down his body making it fully apparent. Smiling like he knew me, he said.

"Are you go free later?"

I smiled and said , "I'll be around". He stuck his hand out to shake mine which was very butch of him I thought to do so. Hmm I like a real gentleman.

To my surprise he pulled me in and whispered in my ear, "If you're open to it I want to make you mine".

"Haha have fun mate let's catch up later. " In my head I thought what a nut job, cute, but probably just another horny man at the sex club trying to mark his territory. In the dim lit hallways he disappeared like a knight in shining armor off to battle. The night went on and on with men coming and going all night.

"If it feels good do it!" said the neon sign that hangs on the wall in the lobby.

Continued on our Blog Page

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What's for Lunch, Baby?

By: Lev Raphael

"You know, all my other middle-aged gay friends are griping about their saggy butts." Nicole slides into the cracked pleather booth seat opposite me in the diner filled with laughter and the savor of 20th-century house specialties--paddy melts and spicy fries--which we both always order.

It's noon and the servers seem to glide between tables as if they were wearing inline skates, making the big square room feel somewhat hip despite its worn, bland brown-and-beige décor and mock-terrazzo floor in the same colors. They're all twentyish men and seem ordered from a catalogue: tall, lean, beautifully morose. And they all go commando so you can tell who's cut and who isn't. I've never asked the manager if this was his idea or the servers' but it makes lunch an extra-enticing meal. Nobody has ever complained.

Nicole and I check the servers out each time without, I hope, being obvious. My favorite is the only blond and he looks naturally fit. Six feet or a bit more, he's newish and his eyes are green and blue. That's right, one of each. His name tag says he's Dustin and he has the high, tight round butt of a hockey player. It makes my mouth water every time I think about it at home and I jerk off sometimes three times a day imagining lying on top of him and rubbing my cock along his super-tight ass crack. Frottage is my current kink—and nobody's tried to make that illegal. Not yet anyway.

Dustin is also clearly uncut and that intrigues me. My ex- taught me how to handle a sweated cock and despite our years together, I relished what felt like a surprise or gift whenever he was hard and I started on the very long foreskin that still covered the head even when he was fully erect. It was like an unveiling as I would slide his foreskin back slowly, so slowly that it sometimes could made him cum before I could even start to lick and suck.

A former dancer and model-turned-decorator-turned-AI mitigator, whatever that means, Nicole is a blast of color today: frothy, shoulder-length red hair, lime-green skirt and twin set worn ironically (how does she do that?), pink cheeks, blood-red nails. She's a Leo and always makes a show-stopping entrance.

"So tell me about your butt." She's arranging her old-style cutlery and unfolding the black cloth napkin in her lap with precision. We love nostalgia and never have virtual lunches. I blush at her question. Lately, despite years of working out with a trainer and even getting a Brazilian butt lift, I feel like my ass is somehow drifting away from me like beach sand in a subtle breeze. It's a quiet calamity that I've kept to myself. Even though I've always been skinny, for some genetic reason my ass developed into very squeezable globes when I was a teenager, and running kept it that way for years. Until now. My late forties.

Men have loved my ass since I was legal, wanted to drag me into a shower to lovingly soap it up, slip a finger or two inside, then fuck me right there, *hard*, as they pinned me to the shower wall, grabbing my hips like this was their Last Chance Fuck.

I loved being dominated that way, but it was even better when we were dried off and they would use their tongues to make me as wet as possible with licking and probing, and boy, some dudes have really powerful, long tongues that help you mount that stairway to heaven. A tongue like that can be as hot as a great cock--if the guy knows what he's doing (somebody should publish *Rimming for Dummies*).

“Where’d you go?” Nicole asks, frowning, which only makes her more delectable. I reply to her previous request with what I hope is a quip: “You can’t put in what God left out.”

She nods and starts to gripe charmingly about her job, using words and phrases that could be Hungarian for all their comprehensibility. Then she shifts to clearer territory: her boobs and gravity. I commiserate.

We can say anything to each other. Well, almost. I subscribe to a number of froterotica listservs under a pseudonym and from an end-to-end encrypted email service. She doesn’t know any of that.

When lunch comes, I dive into the fries that are so flavorful and crisp you could weep. My ass be damned. I’m with my best friend for twenty years, eating the best diner food in our town.

We eat silently for a while, awash in pleasure. Then Nicole leans forward and says, “I think Dustin has been checking you out since I sat down.”

Eyeing Dustin discretely, I realize it’s time for me to dominate. I guess that’s called an epiphany. I need to find out when his shift ends, if he’s into what I am—or even close—and I already see him lying face down on my purple sheets with my cum splattered all up his back and into his hair. I may be middle-aged but I can still shoot quite far, and when I jerk off lying down it even goes flying past my head. Maybe I’ll just straddle him when he’s on his back and show off my fireworks. And then knock on his back door because I have always like second helpings.

Dustin is suddenly at our table asking if everything tastes good and when he glances to my plate he says, “It looks like you need more fries.”

Oh yes, I do, I really do.

My queer work has appeared most recently in Nomad's *Microscopic* anthology, *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, and is due out in *Wicked Gay Ways* and *Hello! Queer World*. Many other stories and personal essays have appeared in online and print magazines since the summer of 2021. I'm a winner of a Lambda Literary Award and escaped academia ages ago to write and review full time. My husband and I authored *Coming Out of Shame* for a queer audience.

DEFORMPHOTOS

Bio:

deformphotos is a gay artist in Seattle, WA exploring photography with a focus on illustrating the inherent beauty, sensuality, hilarity and joy in the candid. He shows his subjects as they truly are in a way that seems often ignored in erotic art. Curated with the belief that everyone deserves to be celebrated for their own beauty, he maintains an openness to cultivating authentic representation while maintaining a minimalist style.

My links:

<http://deformphotos.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/deformphotos/>



Model: Jacob Holden

<https://linktr.ee/jacobworships>

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