

OUR WORK IS EVERYWHERE

**AN ILLUSTRATED ORAL HISTORY OF
QUEER & TRANS RESISTANCE**




**SYVAN
ROSE**

**FOREWORD BY
LEAH LAKSHMI PIEPZNA-SAMARASINHA**

PEOPLE'S MEDICINE

A CONVERSATION
WITH GELANI
FONTAINE



"MY GRANDMOTHER WAS KIND OF A MEDICINE WOMAN IN CUBA & DID A LOT OF HEALING, & LEARNED FROM HER MOTHER & HER GRANDMOTHER, & THESE WERE THINGS I NEVER GOT TO LEARN FROM HER. SO IT'S REALLY PLEASING TO BE ABLE TO PRACTICE A SIMILAR KIND OF MEDICINE & KIND OF CARRY IT FORWARD IN MY OWN LIFE. SHE USED TO PICK HERBS IN PROSPECT PARK IN BROOKLYN WHEN I WAS A KID."



ORIGINALLY THE THING THAT REALLY INTERESTED ME WAS HERBAL MEDICINE, & ACUPUNCTURE WAS SOMETHING I TRIED BECAUSE I WAS DEALING WITH MY OWN ILLNESS. I WAS DEALING WITH REALLY SEVERE ANAEMIA & WAS HAVING REALLY HEAVY PERIODS & GETTING DEPLETED & VERY FATIGUED WHEN I WAS IN MY 20s. AND I HAD ACUPUNCTURE WHICH IMMEDIATELY LIFTED MY ENERGY IN A WAY THAT I WAS ALMOST SUSPICIOUS OF. I WAS DOING ANTI-VIOLENCE WORK & PROGRAMMING WITH YOUTH. AND WHEN I WAS IN BETWEEN JOBS AT ONE POINT I GOT REALLY SICK & JUST CRASHED & COULDN'T DO ANYMORE. I THOUGHT, 'THIS IS THE TIME, LET ME GO BACK TO SCHOOL.'



"THIRD ROOT STARTED IN 2008 AS A HOLISTIC HEALING SPACE WITH THE PRIMARY THING ABOUT IT BEING THAT IT WAS COLLECTIVELY RUN.

OUR SPACE IS IN THE STOREFRONT OF A LITTLE PLACE IN DITMAS PARK WHICH IS ALSO KNOWN AS A FLATBUSH NEIGHBORHOOD IN BROOKLYN & IT'S A REALLY MULTICULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD & THE NEXUS OF A LOT OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES. WE WORK REALLY HARD TO BE A SPACE THAT'S ACCESSIBLE & EMPOWERING & COLLABORATIVE FOR COMMUNITY. THERE ISN'T THE SENSE THAT WE, WHO ARE DOING THE HEALING WORK, ARE THE ABSOLUTE EXPERTS. ACCESS, SLIDING SCALE FEES, SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS ARE CENTRAL TO WHAT WE DO.

thirdroot



IF YOU LOOK INTO THE HISTORY OF THE DIFFERENT HEALING MOVEMENTS, YOU FIND THAT SOCIAL JUSTICE ASPECT & VICE VERSA. ALONDRA NELSON WROTE AN AMAZING BOOK ABOUT THE BLACK PANTHERS & THE HISTORY AROUND CREATING HEALTH JUSTICE MOVEMENTS THAT WERE ACCESSIBLE. AND ACUPUNCTURE HAD A DEEP HISTORY THAT CAME THROUGH THE BLACK PANTHERS & SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS BEFORE THE U.S. OR NIXON EVER WENT TO CHINA. ACUPUNCTURE WAS PEOPLE'S MEDICINE & IT WAS PUT INTO A CONTEXT IN WHICH THERE WERE HEALTHCARE CENTERS, PEOPLE COMING IN FOR FREE, PEOPLE GETTING TRAINED TO DO IT REALLY

QUICKLY & EFFECTIVELY & BE ABLE TO SHARE IT WITH EACH OTHER. THIS WAS ALWAYS COMMUNITY BASED MEDICINE & IT WAS ALWAYS PART OF AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT LIBERATION COULD BE FOR PEOPLE. THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN PEOPLE'S MEDICINE TO ME."

"(DURING) THE LAST NO LOSE CONFERENCE, WHICH ORIGINALLY WAS A NONPROFIT GROUP THAT WAS ABOUT FAT QUEER COMMUNITIES ORGANIZING & CREATING VIBRANT CULTURE TOGETHER, I WAS ONE OF A GROUP OF PEOPLE THAT PUT TOGETHER A HEALING JUSTICE PRACTICE SPACE. THE FIRST COUPLE OF DAYS OF THE CONFERENCE WAS REALLY FOCUSED ON & ONLY INCLUDED BLACK, INDIGENOUS, & PEOPLE OF COLOR COMMUNITIES.

SUPERFAT

NO LOSE HAS BEEN A REALLY LOVELY COMMUNITY THAT'S GIVEN SPACE FOR PEOPLE TO REALLY EXPLORE THE IDEA OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE IN A TRANSGRESSIVE BODY AT A TIME WHEN FAT PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY, ARE SEEN AS DISEASED INCREASINGLY...

I FEEL LIKE ONE OF THE VERY BASIC THINGS THAT BEING A HEALER WITH CHRONIC PAIN DOES FOR ME IS THAT IT HELPS ME BE AWARE OF MY OWN ENERGY IN A WAY THAT'S REALLY HELPFUL. BEING CONSCIOUS OF EVERY STEP, BECAUSE IF I'M NOT, I COULD FALL DOWN OR INJURE MYSELF. I REALLY CONSIDER THE PHYSICAL SPACE I'M IN & WHAT'S GOING TO BE THE MOST COMFORTABLE FOR PEOPLE INCLUDING MYSELF. I DON'T SUPRISE SOMEONE WHO'S MAYBE NERVOUS ABOUT TREATMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME. I USE MY OWN LANGUAGE TO GAGUE MY ENERGY & BRING MY FOCUS IN. 'DO I NEED TO STRAIGHTEN OUT MY LEG?' 'IS THAT GIVING ME PAIN RIGHT NOW?' 'OH, OKAY. I'M GONNA MOVE OVER THIS WAY.'

AS I WAS FIRST STARTING TO DEAL WITH MORE DISABILITY, I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO GET IN THE WAY A LOT, & THERE ARE THINGS THAT ARE DIFFICULT. THERE'S A LOT OF LOGISTICS TO MANAGE, BUT IN TERMS OF ACTUAL PRACTICING ONE ON ONE WITH PEOPLE IT ACTUALLY BRINGS ME CLOSER. THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT MOVING THROUGH PAIN & ILLNESS & DEALING WITH YOUR OWN STUFF THAT HONES YOU TO BE ABLE TO SUPPORT OTHER PEOPLE DOING THE SAME.



GALADRIEL MOZEE LEGARE

TAMERICKA "IFASINA" CLEAR

TAKE WHAT U NEED

'SPACE
'TIME

COMPLY



"THERE ARE A LOT OF ACUPUNCTURE POINTS THAT HAVE VERY POETIC NAMES & HAVE A LOT OF DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS & TRANSLATIONS & MOST OF THEM ARE VERY VISUAL. THE IDEA BEHIND A LOT OF THE CONCEPT OF ACUPUNCTURE IS THAT EACH HUMAN BEING IS THEIR OWN TOPOGRAPHY, THEIR OWN PLANET OR THEIR OWN LANDSCAPE. SO THERE'S HILLS & VALLEYS THAT VARY FROM PERSON TO PERSON.



SO THERE'S A WAY THAT THE PRACTICE ITSELF RECOGNIZES OUR COMMONALITY

& YET ALSO INTRINSIC DIFFERENCE.

THESE POINTS ARE OFTEN GEOGRAPHICAL. THEY'RE OFTEN ABOUT, LIKE, THE 'GREAT MOUNTAIN,' & THEY USUALLY REFER TO A PHYSICAL POINT WHERE IF YOU'RE STANDING AT THE TOP OF THAT PLACE YOU CAN SEE EVERYTHING AROUND YOU. SO PART OF THE NATURE OF THESE POINTS CAN BE ABOUT HAVING PERSPECTIVE. LIKE LITERALLY HAVING A PSY HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE INTO OWN LIFE.



FOR INSTANCE TO DEAL WITH PAIN, NOW YOU CAN LOOK AT IT & YOU COULDN'T BEFORE BUT YOU'VE REACHED THE TOP OF THAT PEAK & NOW YOU CAN SEE THE LANDSCAPE AROUND YOU."

We Give Money To Trans People

A ROUND TABLE INTERVIEW WITH THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF TRANS ASSISTANCE PROJECT (TAP)



"W

HEN TRUMP GOT elected, I WAS SITTING WITH MY FRIEND MARY, & WE WERE JUST LIKE 'TRANS PEOPLE ARE GOING TO LOSE ALL OF THEIR RIGHTS IN THE NEXT 4 YEARS. WE DON'T EVEN HAVE RIGHTS NOW, BUT IT'S GONNA GET WORSE. WE'RE GONNA HAVE LEGISLATION PASSED AGAINST US ACTIVELY. THERE WAS THIS WOMAN ON TWITTER-I DON'T KNOW WHO SHE IS-WHO MADE A POST THAT SAID 'I WILL PAY FOR ANY TRANS PERSON'S PASSPORT UNTIL I RUN OUT OF MONEY. JUST MESSAGE ME.' I MESSAGED HER, & SHE IMMEDIATELY GOT BACK TO ME, & JUST ASKED, 'HOW MUCH?' NO OTHER QUESTIONS. THAT MADE ME THINK, 'OH, THERE'S ACTUALLY A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT TRANS PEOPLE IF THERE WAS AN EASIER WAY TO DO IT. THAT WAS A LIGHTBULB MOMENT, THAT IT'S POSSIBLE TO REDISTRIBUTE FUNDS IN A WAY THAT TRUSTS TRANS PEOPLE.



WE STARTED NOV. 10TH, & BY THANKSGIVING DAY, WE MADE OUR CROWDFUNDING SITE ACTIVE.

AT THAT POINT WE HAD OVER 500 PEOPLE SIGN UP. WE GOT IN WITH THE Q CENTER & PARTICIPATED IN AN I.D. CLINIC THEY PUT TOGETHER, & WE GAVE OUT SOMETHING LIKE \$5000. PEOPLE'S FACES WERE LIGHTING UP, BECAUSE THEY WERE LIKE, 'NO ONE'S EVER JUST GIVEN ME MONEY. EVERYONE

WANTS ME TO PROVE I'M TRANS OR ASKS ME FOR RECEIPTS FOR THINGS I CAN'T AFFORD.' PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS WANTING THINGS FROM TRANS PEOPLE, LIKE LETTERS FROM PSYCHIATRISTS, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING HOW DIFFICULT THEY ARE TO GET."



JULES

IT'S NO SECRET THAT QUEER & TRANS FOLKS HAVE ALWAYS HAD MANY BARRIERS UP AROUND FINANCES. WE ARE REDISTRIBUTING RESOURCES WITHOUT GATEKEEPING. MEANING THAT WE ACTUALLY DON'T ASK PEOPLE THAT WE'RE WORKING WITH THAT MANY QUESTIONS. WE ASK THEM BASIC CONTACT INFO, TELL THEM WHAT WE'RE DOING, BUT MOSTLY THE CALL IS GIVING THEM TIME TO TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT TO SEE HAPPEN. WE ARE REDISTRIBUTING RESOURCES IN A WAY THAT IS BASED IN SELF-DETERMINATION

BUT ALSO, IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US TO BE REAL ABOUT HAVING THAT POSITION, WHICH IS A POSITION OF POWER, TO HAVE ACCESS TO THAT MONEY & TO BE REDISTRIBUTING IT. WE'RE REALLY TRYING TO BUILD THIS PROJECT OUT OF OUR POLITICS, ETHICS, & INTEGRITY. ESPECIALLY AS AN ORGANIZATION MOSTLY RUN BY WHITE PEOPLE, IT TAKES TIME, FEEDBACK, & CHALLENGING ONE ANOTHER TO EFFECTIVELY CREATE PROGRAMS THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, GIVE STIPENDS TO TRANS PEOPLE WHO ARE OR HAVE BEEN INCARCERATED OR ARE SEX WORKERS."





WE HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE DONATE ART OR PUT ON SHOWS FOR US. WE'VE GOTTEN A FEW GRANTS, WE'VE RAISED MONEY FROM SOME BIG SOCIAL MEDIA PUSHES. AND I WANT US TO BE REALLY CONSCIOUS ABOUT THE WAY WE BUILD OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE, LIKE, WHO ARE WE BOOSTING? WHEN WE DECIDED TO DO A FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN FOR TRANS COMMISSARY FUNDS, FOR EXAMPLE, WE WERE REALLY THINKING ABOUT WHAT KINDS OF COMMUNITIES WE WOULD BE IMPACTING. WE ALSO WANT TO BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT HOW WE USE OUR SOCIAL MEDIA TO ELEVATE VOICES & FACILITATE DIALOGUE AMONG THE TRANS COMMUNITY.

IT'S BEEN REALLY IMPORTANT FOR US TO BUILD OUR VALUES & OUR INTENTION FOR LONGEVITY INTO THE VERY STRUCTURE OF THE ORG EARLY ON. FOR ME, RECHARGING IS REALLY IMPORTANT. I TRY TO REMEMBER WHY I'M DOING THIS; IT CONNECTS TO WHY I'M VISIBLY TRANS & QUEER. IT'S NOT JUST FOR MY OWN HAPPINESS, IT'S ALSO BECAUSE THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO, JUST BY SEEING ME, MIGHT BE MORE KIND TO QUEER PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE. OR IF THEY ARE QUEER, THEY MIGHT FEEL LESS ALONE OR COME OUT SOONER."



PHOS

I'M A FORMER SEX WORKER, HIV+, & HAVE IDENTIFIED AS NON-BINARY & FEMME FOR ABOUT 5 YEARS NOW. I GREW UP IN VIRGINIA, WHERE SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION LOOK MORE BLUNT & UNDILUTED THAN THE PASSIVENESS OF THE WEST COAST. THAT SHAPED MY WAY COMING INTO THIS WORK, BECAUSE I'VE HAD TO NAVIGATE THOSE SYSTEMS. A BIG THING WE'RE WORKING ON IS BREAKING DOWN THE POWER DYNAMIC OF HAVING RESOURCES PEOPLE WANT. THE MORE TRANSPARENT WE ARE, THE MORE PEOPLE ARE LIKE, 'THANK YOU FOR YOUR HONESTY INSTEAD OF BEATING AROUND THE BUSH. WE HAVE TO QUESTION & DECONSTRUCT THESE SYSTEMS & BRAINSTORM WAYS TO MAKE THEM MORE ACCESSIBLE. THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX & TRYING TO PLACE YOURSELF IN DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES IS KEY IN DOING THIS WORK IN A WAY THAT BENEFITS EVERYONE.'

BUNNY:

I WANT TO BE CLEAR THAT WE'RE NOT SAVIORS OF THE TRANS COMMUNITY. WE'VE MADE MISTAKES & WE'RE ALWAYS LEARNING. ONE OF THE THINGS I'VE BEEN STEERING US TOWARDS AS THE DIRECTOR IS ACTUALLY HAVING LESS POWER. I DON'T WANT TO BE THE PERSON MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT HOW MUCH MONEY TO ALLOT TO TRANS PEOPLE WHO HAVE SPENT TIME IN PRISON OR FACE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION OR HAVE TO NAVIGATE IMMIGRATION, BECAUSE I'M NOT A PART OF THOSE COMMUNITIES. THAT'S ALSO WHY WE GIVE MONEY TO OTHER ORGS WHO SHOULD BE MAKING THOSE DECISIONS, NOT US. OUR PRIVILEGE NOW IS THAT WE HAVE A FUNDRAISING MACHINE THAT IS ABLE TO GENERATE WEALTH, SO I WANT TO USE THAT PRIVILEGE TO GET TO A PLACE WHERE WE

DON'T HAVE TO BE DOING THIS ANYMORE.


EVERYTHING YOU LOVE ABOUT NEW ORLEANS IS BECAUSE OF BLACK PEOPLE

A CONVERSATION WITH PHLEGM

"IT ALL REALLY STARTED DOING SOME TEST RUNS FOR COSTUMES FOR MARDI GRAS. MARDI GRAS IS MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY BECAUSE IT'S 5 DAYS OF HALLOWEEN. SO I ALWAYS GO IN COSTUME, EVERY YEAR, & I WANTED TO STEP UP WHAT I WAS DOING, SO I SPENT \$116 ON A PALLET OF FACE PAINTS. IF YOU GO BACK ON MY INSTAGRAM (@MYNAMEISPHLEGM) TO THOSE FIRST LOOKS I DID, I USED TO HASHTAG THEM LIKE 'TRIAL #1, TRIAL #2' BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THEY STARTED OUT AS. I'M SELF TAUGHT IN EVERYTHING I DO. I'M A STUDENT OF THE SCHOOL OF YOUTUBE."

I FEEL LIKE WHEN THE WORD 'ARTIST' IS APPLIED TO SOMETHING, IT SOMETIMES PUTS THIS LEVEL OF 'I'M DOING SOMETHING THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN'T DO, & THAT'S NOT HOW I APPROACH WHAT I'M DOING. FOR EXAMPLE, I DON'T MIND CALLING MYSELF A TEACHER, WHICH IS WHAT I DO IN MY DAY TO DAY LIFE, BECAUSE THAT REQUIRES A LEVEL OF TRAINING, EVERYONE CAN'T TEACH. BUT I TRULY FEEL LIKE EVERYONE CAN DO WHAT I'M DOING, SO CALLING MYSELF AN ARTIST FEELS WEIRD. I'M JUST A PERSON THAT MAKES ART. MONEY & 'MAKING IT BIG' IS NOT A GOAL OF MINE. IT'S A HOBBIE, IT'S A RELEASE, IT'S A CATHARSIS."






"I THINK AS A KID WHO GREW UP ON THE INTERNET, I REMEMBER BEING 13 OR 14 IN CHAT ROOMS JUST BEING A TROLL. I REMEMBER BEING ON NEOPETS & BEING ON XANGA & LIVE JOURNALS, SO THE INTERNET HAS ALWAYS BEEN A JOKE TO ME, LIKE I NEVER TOOK IT TOO SERIOUSLY. THERE'S THIS SORT OF FLEETINGNESS. INSTAGRAM COULD THEORETICALLY GO OFFLINE TOMORROW & I HAVE NOTHING ON THE INTERNET LEFT OVER. THERE WAS A TIME RECENTLY WHERE I NOTICED MYSELF BEING LIKE, "I HOPE PEOPLE LIKE THIS, I HOPE PEOPLE ENJOY THIS LOOK." IT WAS AROUND THAT TIME THAT I REALLY STARTED TO NOT LIKE THE WORK THAT I WAS PUTTING OUT & I HAD TO RE-CENTER & REMIND MYSELF WHO I'M DOING MY WORK FOR. AT THE END OF THE DAY THE WORK I CREATE IS FOR ME & ME ONLY.

THAT'S HOW I ALWAYS APPROACH SOCIAL MEDIA AS THIS PERFORMANCE. THE LOOKS THEMSELVES ARE A PIECE OF ART. AND THEN THE CAPTIONS ARE ALSO. EVEN IF IT'S FOR 15 SECONDS WHEN YOU STOP, LIKE THE PICTURE, THEN SCROLL PAST, I JUST WANT YOU TO BE ABLE TO BE IN THAT MOMENT, & NOT BE THINKING ABOUT WHATEVER THE FUCK ELSE IS GOING ON, LIKE IF YOU HAVE FUCKING PUT YOUR BANK ACCOUNT IN THE RED FOR LIKE ANOTHER MONTH, OR SHIT IS SUCKING & IT'S MISERABLE.

FOR THOSE 15 SECONDS I JUST WANT PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO FORGET ABOUT WHATEVER."




"[THE PROJECT 'EVERYTHING YOU LOVE ABOUT NEW ORLEANS IS BECAUSE OF BLACK PEOPLE'] STARTED WITH THIS VIDEO OF THIS GIRL SECOND LINING. HER NAME IS TERRYLYN DORSEY. EVERYONE WAS POSTING THE VIDEO & COMMENTING ON IT LIKE "OMG I LOVE NEW ORLEANS; I LOVE THE CITY, THE FOOD'S AMAZING; EVERYONE'S SO NICE; THERE'S THIS MAGIC IN THE CITY.' EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT ALL THIS & ALL THAT & IT WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A STREETCAR GETTING PUT INTO AN AREA OF THE CITY THAT NEVER HAD A STREETCAR OR RELIABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UNTIL WHITE PEOPLE MOVED THERE, & IT JUST PROMPTED ME MAKING A POST, REPOSTING THAT VIDEO & JUST SAYING, 'EVERYTHING YOU LOVE ABOUT NEW ORLEANS IS BECAUSE OF BLACK PEOPLE. DON'T FORGET IT.'

THEN THIS FRIEND OF MINE THREW THIS DRAG FESTIVAL CALLED BUSHWIG SOUTH. BUSHWIG HAPPENS IN BROOKLYN, WHICH IS ALSO A GENTRIFIED AREA. THEY DID IT HERE IN NEW ORLEANS & WE'RE GONNA HAVE VENDORS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD SELLING STUFF, & WHEN I SAW SOME OF THE VENDORS, I WAS LIKE, 'NONE OF THESE PEOPLE ACTUALLY LIVE IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD & THE PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY ARE SELLING SHIT & DO LIVE HERE FOR REAL ARE NOT HERE & Y'ALL DIDN'T INVITE THEM TO THIS PARTY. SO I DECIDED ON A WHIM TO MAKE AN 'EVERYTHING YOU LOVE ABOUT NEW ORLEANS IS BECAUSE OF NEW ORLEANS' TSHIRT. I WENT TO WALMART & BOUGHT THESE IRON-ON LETTERS. I WORE IT TO THE FESTIVAL & THE SHIRT KIND OF PICKED UP ON ITS OWN. A YEAR LATER, THERE ARE LIKE 250 OF THESE SHIRTS FLOATING AROUND."

EVERYTHING
YOU
LOVE
ABOUT
NEW
ORLEANS

IS
BECAUSE
OF
BLACK

PEOPLE



"AS A NEW ORLEANS
NATIVE, I REALLY REALLY
LIKE BALD CYPRESS TREES
WITH THE HANGING MOSS.
WHEN I SEE THEM EITHER
FURTHER OUT IN THE SWAMPS
OR IN THE CITY ITSELF, I
ALWAYS STOP & STARE AT THEM
BECAUSE THEY ARE SORT OF
SPOOKY & HAGGARD & RAG-
GEDY BUT ALSO PRETTY &
TIMELESS.

SOMETHING VERY SOUTHERN
GOTHIC ABOUT A BALD
CYPRESS. THOSE KINDS OF
THINGS INFLUENCE MY WORK.

THROUGH THE USE OF SELF PORTRAITURE & MIXED
MEDIA FACE PAINTING, I REALLY WANT TO PAY DIRECT
HOMAGE TO NATIVE AFRICAN RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL
PRACTICES. MY WORK IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE RITUAL &
SANCTITY OF AFRICAN RELIGIOUS FACE PAINT & MASKING.
IT IS A CONTEMPORARY VENERATION OF ANCESTORS. AN
OCULAR CALLING OF THE CORNERS. A VISUAL INVOCATION
OF THE SPIRIT. **AN OPTIC RECLAMATION OF SPACE.**"

The Wild Hunt Ride


A CONVERSATION WITH AMBER KIM

"R AINY DAY. COUSINS AT OUR HOUSE FOR A VISIT. SO WE DECIDE TO DO RAINY DAY GAMES. EVENTUALLY SOMEONE HAS THE IDEA TO HAVE ALL THE BOYS DRESS AS GIRLS & THE GIRLS DRESS AS BOYS.



IT WAS MY FIRST CHANCE TO BE A FAIRIE PRINCESS & DAMNED IF I WASN'T GONNA TAKE IT.

I WOULD SPEND HOURS UPON HOURS IN THE WOODS, BECAUSE WHEN YOU'RE ALONE, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU ARE.




IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME THAT I STARTED TO READ THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BECAUSE, EVEN THOUGH I STILL DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING THAT WASN'T PROTESTANT APPROVED, I WAS FINALLY SEEING THE SEAMS WHERE THINGS HAD BEEN ARTFULLY REMOVED FROM THE WORLD.

IT TOOK ME UNTIL MIDDLE SCHOOL TO GET TO THE LETTER 'T.'

I TRIED TO MOVE OUT OF MY PARENTS HOUSE ON MULTIPLE OCCASSIONS. GOT THWARTED BY MY PARENTS EVERY TIME. GETTING BEATEN DIDN'T BREAK ME. BEING EMOTIONALLY TOYED WITH DIDN'T BREAK ME. HAVING TO HIDE MY GENDER, POLITICS, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, MY SOUL, DIDN'T BREAK ME. HAVING THE HOPE THAT I COULD LEAVE & LIVE MY LIFE PROVEN TO BE FALSE BROKE ME. I HAD A FULL PSYCHOTIC EPISODE.

I HAVE NOW SPENT A DECADE IN PRISON.



THERE IS ONE THING THAT I DISCOVERED THAT REALLY FREAKED ME OUT CONSIDERING THAT I HAVE A SPIRITUAL CONNECTION TO THE FAE. DECEMBER 5TH IS THE FIRST NIGHT OF THE YEAR THAT, ACCORDING TO FOLKLORE, THE WILD HUNT RIDES. THIS IS ALSO THE SAME NIGHT THAT I BROKE. COULD BE COINCIDENCE, OR IT COULD BE THAT DUE TO MY WEAKNESS FATE DECIDED TO TAKE A HAND.

MY NUMBER ONE SURVIVAL STRATEGY HAS ALWAYS BEEN 'OBSERVE & UNDERSTAND.' I DON'T DEFINE THINGS LIKE TRUST IN THE SAME WAY MOST PEOPLE DO. MOST PEOPLE WOULD SAY TRUST MEANS KNOWING SOMEONE WILL ALWAYS ACT IN YOUR BEST INTEREST.


TO ME, TRUST MEANS KNOWING HOW A PERSON WILL ACT GIVEN A PARTICULAR STIMULUS. THUS, FOR ME TO TRUST SOMEONE I MUST BE ABLE TO OBSERVE THEIR BEHAVIOR OVER A PERIOD OF TIME

AND UNDERSTAND WHY THEY DO WHAT THEY DO. THE SAME APPLIES TO INSTITUTIONS, SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS, & BELIEF SYSTEMS. THIS WAS SEMI-USEFUL IN SCHOOL & HAS BECOME AN ABSOLUTELY MANDATORY SURVIVAL STRATEGY IN PRISON.

I HOPE TO SOME DAY GET OUT SO I CAN LIVE MY LIFE AS THE STRONG, EMPOWERED, WITCHY WOMAN I AM MEANT TO BE. AND I PRAY THAT THIS TIME THE PRICE (OF HOPE WAS WORTH IT.)"



RECLAIMING & REVOLTING BODIES: FAT: THE PLAY



IN THE FALL OF 2013, A COLLECTIVE OF SELF-IDENTIFIED FAT, QUEER, FEMME PERFORMERS, WRITERS, & COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN AUSTIN, TEXAS, CAME TOGETHER TO VISION, HEAL & CREATE. OUT CAME "FAT: THE PLAY," A PERFORMANCE PIECE THAT SHARES COLLECTIVE MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES WITH BODY OPPRESSION, RACISM, CLASSISM, & MISOGYNY.

THE POWERFUL, INTERSECTIONAL, & EVER-EVOLVING WORK OF PLUMP CONTINUES TO CONFRONT SYSTEMIC & INTERPERSONAL FAT-HATRED BY CENTERING THE NARRATIVES OF THOSE WHO IT IMPACTS MOST.

"FAT: THE PLAY" WORKS SIMULTANEOUSLY AS A CALL TO ACTION FOR OTHER FAT QUEER FEMMES, AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL OF ACTIVISM FOR THOSE WITH PRIVILEGED BODIES, & A GUIDELINE FOR ALL OF US TO WORK TO UNLEARN OUR INTERNALIZED PREJUDICE AGAINST FAT BODIES."



Caleb Luna
PLUMP COLLECTIVE MEMBER





"ORIGINALLY WRITTEN & PERFORMED FOR THE FRONTERA FESTIVAL IN AUSTIN, A ONE-ACT FRINGE THEATRE COMPETITION WHERE IT WON BEST OF THE FEST 2014, WE HAVE SINCE EXPANDED THE PLAY & PERFORMED IT TWICE MORE FOR OUR COMMUNITY. BOTH OF THESE PERFORMANCES INCLUDED ASL INTERPRETERS FOR DEAF/HARD-OF-HEARING COMMUNITY MEMBERS & A SLIDING SCALE PAYMENT SYSTEM, INITIATIVES TAKEN TO ALLOW THE BROADEST ACCESS POSSIBLE. IN JULY 2015, WE FILMED AN EXTENDED VERSION TITLED "FAT: THE FILM," ATTEMPTING TO MAKE THE PIECE AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF AUSTIN & ACROSS THE GLOBE, WHICH IS CURRENTLY IN POST-PRODUCTION."

WE BEGIN THE PLAY BY CONTEXTUALIZING OUR WORK IN EVERY DAY MESSAGES OF FAT HATRED, AND THEN DISCUSS A JOURNEY OF BEING AFRAID OF THE WORD "FAT" TO RECLAIMING IT.

WE TALK ABOUT, AMONG OTHER THINGS, OUR RELATIONSHIPS TO OUR BODIES, OUR CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, OUR GENDERS, FEMME AS A POLITICAL IDENTITY, SEX & DATING, FOOD, MENTAL ILLNESS, & OUR VARIOUS RACIAL IDENTITIES.

DIET magazine
HOW TO LOSE 20 POUNDS IN FIVE M T NUTES
KALE! KALE! KALE!

"THE WAY THE FRONTERA FESTIVAL IS SET UP IS THIS: PERFORMERS BUY SPACE IN A NIGHT, & CAN DO ESSENTIALLY WHATEVER THEY WANT. BECAUSE OF THE TICKET PRICES, THE STRUCTURE OF THE FESTIVAL, & THE NATURE OF AUSTIN, WE KNEW IT WOULD BE GEARED TOWARDS MOSTLY UNWITTING THIN, WHITE, CIS, STRAIGHT PEOPLE... WITH A TON OF INTERNALIZED BIASES. THIS CAUSED A LOT OF ANXIETY FOR THE CAST."



PICTURED:
ALTHEA CLEMONS

OUR INITIAL PERFORMANCE WAS ACTUALLY AMAZING BECAUSE OUR COMMUNITY PACKED THE HOUSE.

IT FELT SO GOOD TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF ALL OUR FRIENDS... WE WERE MET WITH THUNDEROUS CHEERS & APPLAUSE. WE WEREN'T EXPECTING TO ADVANCE IN THE COMPETITION, BUT WE DID.



OUR SECOND PERFORMANCE, AT THE BEST OF THE WEEK, WAS ROUGH... FOR THE MOST PART THE AUDIENCE WAS FILLED WITH STRANGERS & THEY WERE DOWNRIGHT HOSTILE. THEY WERE REALLY UNRESPONSIVE & ICY TO OUR MESSAGES, & LAUGHED AT THE PARTS THAT WERE NOT JOKES. IT LEFT US FEELING REALLY DOWNTRODDEN & DEFEATED.

AND THEN, TO EVERYONE'S SURPRISE, WE MADE IT TO THE BEST OF THE FEST."

"FAT ACTIVISM LOOKS A LOT OF DIFFERENT WAYS."

MY PRIMARY INTRODUCTION TO FAT ACTIVISM WAS THROUGH BLOGGING & SITES LIKE TUMBLR. 'FAT THE PLAY' & PLUMP WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD EVER REALLY BUILT IN-PERSON COMMUNITY WITH OTHER FAT PEOPLE IN AN INTENTIONAL WAY, & IT WAS REALLY BEAUTIFUL & HEALING.



WHAT I HAD PRIMARILY CONSIDERED MY ACTIVISM PREVIOUSLY WAS DAILY VISIBILITY.

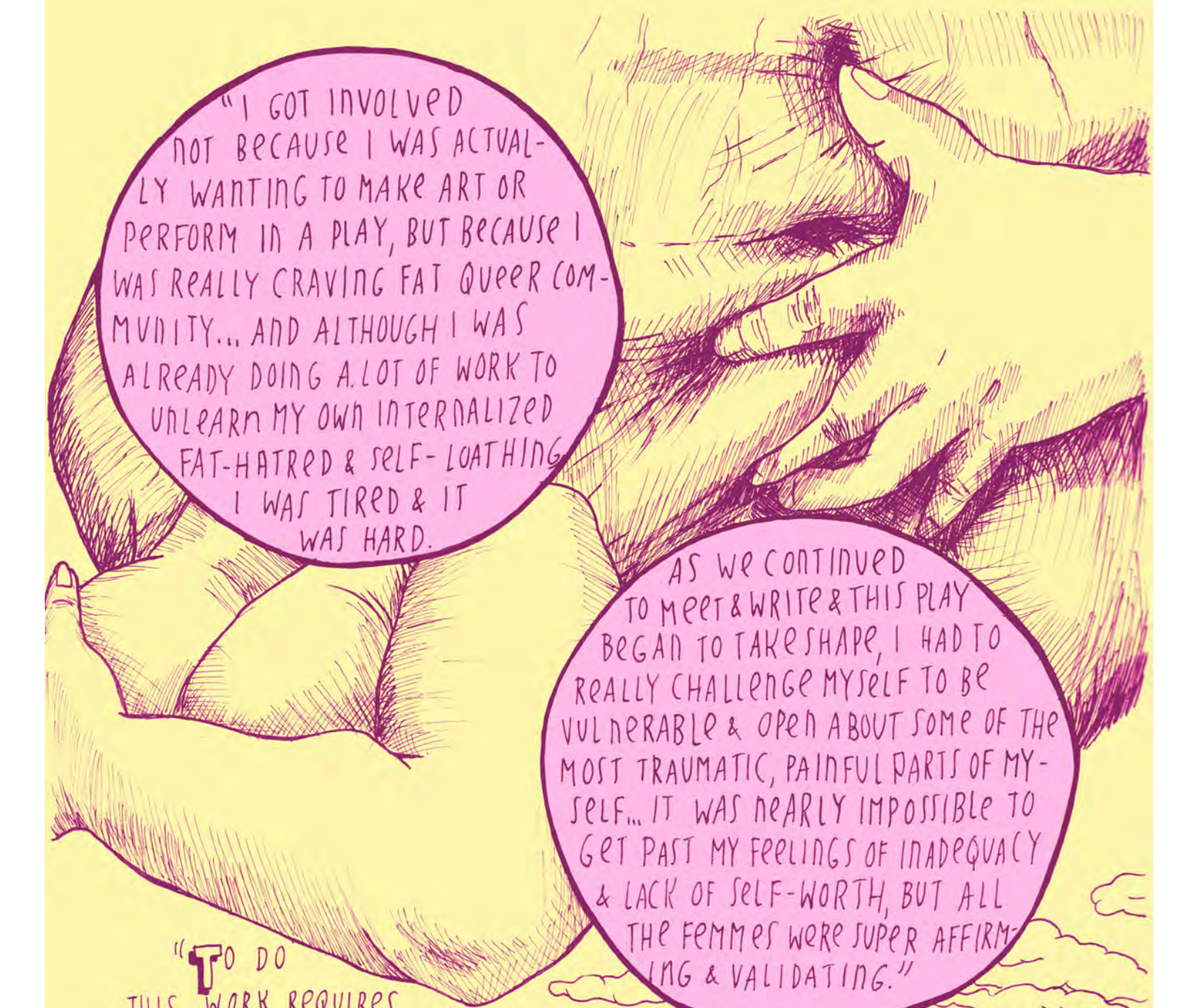
BUT THERE ARE BOOKS WRITTEN ABOUT FATNESS; IT IS AN ENTIRE ACADEMIC FIELD OF STUDY, PROTESTS, DANCES, ETC. I IMAGINE 'FAT: THE PLAY' TO EVEN BE IN A LINEAGE OF FAT PERFORMANCE ART AFTER THE STAGE PLAY 'THE PANZA MONOLOGUES.' "

"I've never experienced ANYTHING LIKE 'FAT: THE PLAY'. IN THE BEGINNING, I WAS JUST SO THRILLED TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING THAT WAS BY & FOR FAT FEMMES. OUR STORIES ARE SO OFTEN ERASED IN QUEER STORIES & HISTORIES THAT IT FELT REALLY POWERFUL TO SIT IN A CIRCLE, TO SHARE FOOD & TO TALK ABOUT THE

JOY, STRUGGLE, & COMPLEXITIES OF BEING A FAT, QUEER FEMME OF COLOR."



nicole arteaga PLUMP COLLECTIVE MEMBER



"I GOT INVOLVED NOT BECAUSE I WAS ACTUALLY WANTING TO MAKE ART OR PERFORM IN A PLAY, BUT BECAUSE I WAS REALLY CRAVING FAT QUEER COMMUNITY... AND ALTHOUGH I WAS ALREADY DOING A LOT OF WORK TO UNLEARN MY OWN INTERNALIZED FAT-HATRED & SELF-LOATHING I WAS TIRED & IT WAS HARD.

AS WE CONTINUED TO MEET & WRITE & THIS PLAY BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE, I HAD TO REALLY CHALLENGE MYSELF TO BE VULNERABLE & OPEN ABOUT SOME OF THE MOST TRAUMATIC, PAINFUL PARTS OF MYSELF... IT WAS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET PAST MY FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY & LACK OF SELF-WORTH, BUT ALL THE FEMMES WERE SUPER AFFIRMING & VALIDATING."

"TO DO

THIS WORK REQUIRES A LOT OF OPENNESS, WILLINGNESS TO OPEN OLD WOUNDS, & A LOT OF STRENGTH. FOR THE FIRST TIME, I FELT REALLY SEEN & HELD IN MY BROWNESS & MY FEMMENESS, & ESPECIALLY IN MY FATNESS. AND THIS ALLOWED ME TO WITNESS THESE REALLY INCREDIBLY POWERFUL STORIES THAT ARE SO DESERVING & WORTHY OF BEING HEARD. AND THIS RADICAL ACT OF BEING VULNERABLE ALLOWED ME TO FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE ON STAGE SHARING MY OWN STORIES. IN A WAY, IT FELT LIKE WE WERE CREATING SOMETHING THAT WASN'T ALREADY OUT THERE.

SOMETHING THAT I REALLY NEEDED WHEN I WAS A YOUNG, FAT, BROWN GIRL"



"I LEARNED MY RELATIONSHIP TO MY BODY WILL ALWAYS BE COMPLICATED & AMBIVALENT & HARD - THAT JUST BECAUSE I PERFORMED IN THIS PLAY ABOUT FATNESS, DOESN'T MEAN THAT I'M ABLE TO LOVE MY FAT BODY UNCONDITIONALLY. THIS WORK IS A NEVER-ENDING PROCESS. I HAVE TO GIVE MYSELF GENTLE REMINDERS THAT I AM ENOUGH & WORTHY & DESERVING OF SELF-LOVE & SELF-CARE."



"I THINK THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING I LEARNED WAS TO NOT CONFLATE OUR EXPERIENCES AS FAT FEMMES, THAT OUR SIZES, GENDER, RACE, CLASS, ETC, ALWAYS INFORMS OUR EXPERIENCES & THE WAY IN WHICH THE WORLD SEES US & INTERACTS WITH US. WE'RE A COLLECTIVE OF FAT FEMMES WHO LIVE AT DIFFERENT INTERSECTIONS & OUR PROXIMITY TO POWER & OPPRESSION IS SPECIFIC TO THOSE INTERSECTIONS."



FROM "FAT: THE PLAY: THE ZINE," WRITTEN BY CALEB LUNA:

"WE REFUSE TO BE AFRAID OF OR DENY THE TRUTHS THAT WE ARE WONDERFUL, BEAUTIFUL, POWERFUL, DESERVING BEINGS. AND SO ARE YOU."

OUR WORK IS EVERYWHERE

An Illustrated Oral History of
Queer and Trans Resistance

SYAN ROSE

OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS, we have witnessed the rise of queer and trans communities that have defied and challenged those who have historically opposed them.

In their own words, queer and trans organizers, artists, healers, comrades, and leaders speak honestly and authentically about their own experiences with power, love, pain, and magic to create a textured and nuanced portrait of queer and trans realities in America. The many themes include Black femme mental health, Pacific Islander authorship, fat queer performance art, disability and health care practice, sex worker activism, and much more. Accompanying the narratives are Rose's startling and sinuous images that brings these leaders' words to visual life.

Our Work Is Everywhere is a graphic non-fiction book that underscores the brilliance and passion of queer and trans resistance.

Includes a foreword by Lambda Literary Award-winning author and activist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, author of *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*.

Full-colour throughout.

SYAN ROSE is an illustrator and comic artist whose work plays with both surrealist and representational imagery to approach topics of personal history, politics, accountability, and healing. She's been published in *Bitch*, *Slate*, *Gay Magazine*, *Truthout*, and *Autostraddle*, and has self-produced many comics and zines.

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ISBN 978-1-55152-815-1

9 x 12 | 72 PP | PAPER

\$19.95 CAN / \$16.95 USA

FULL-COLOUR THROUGHOUT

PUBLICATION DATE: October 2020

Distributed in the USA by Consortium

Distributed in Canada by University of Toronto Press

(sales by Ampersand, Inc.)

Distributed in the UK by Turnaround Publisher Services

Distributed in Australia/New Zealand by NewSouth Books



ARSENAL
PULP PRESS

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