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## More Than

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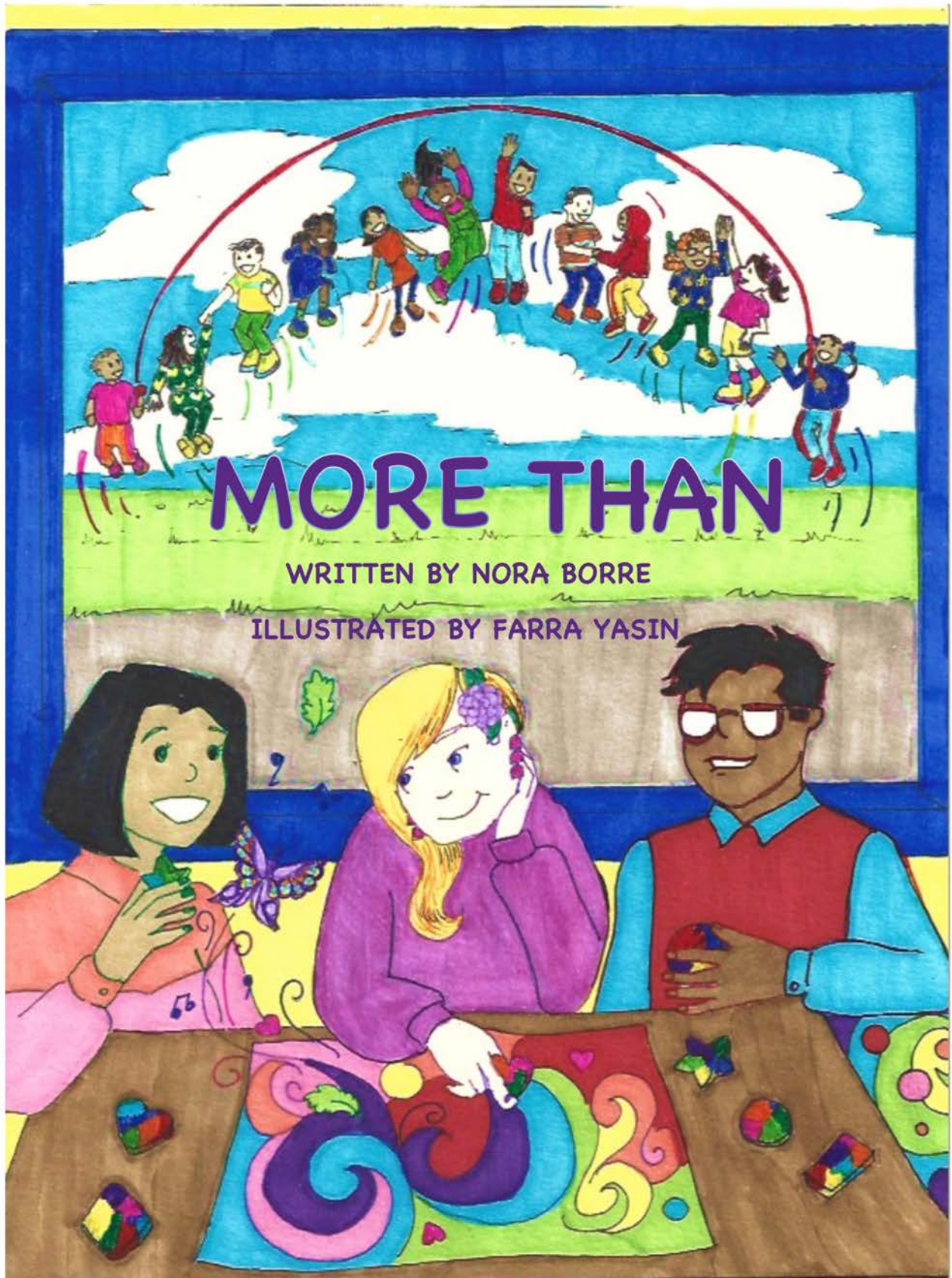
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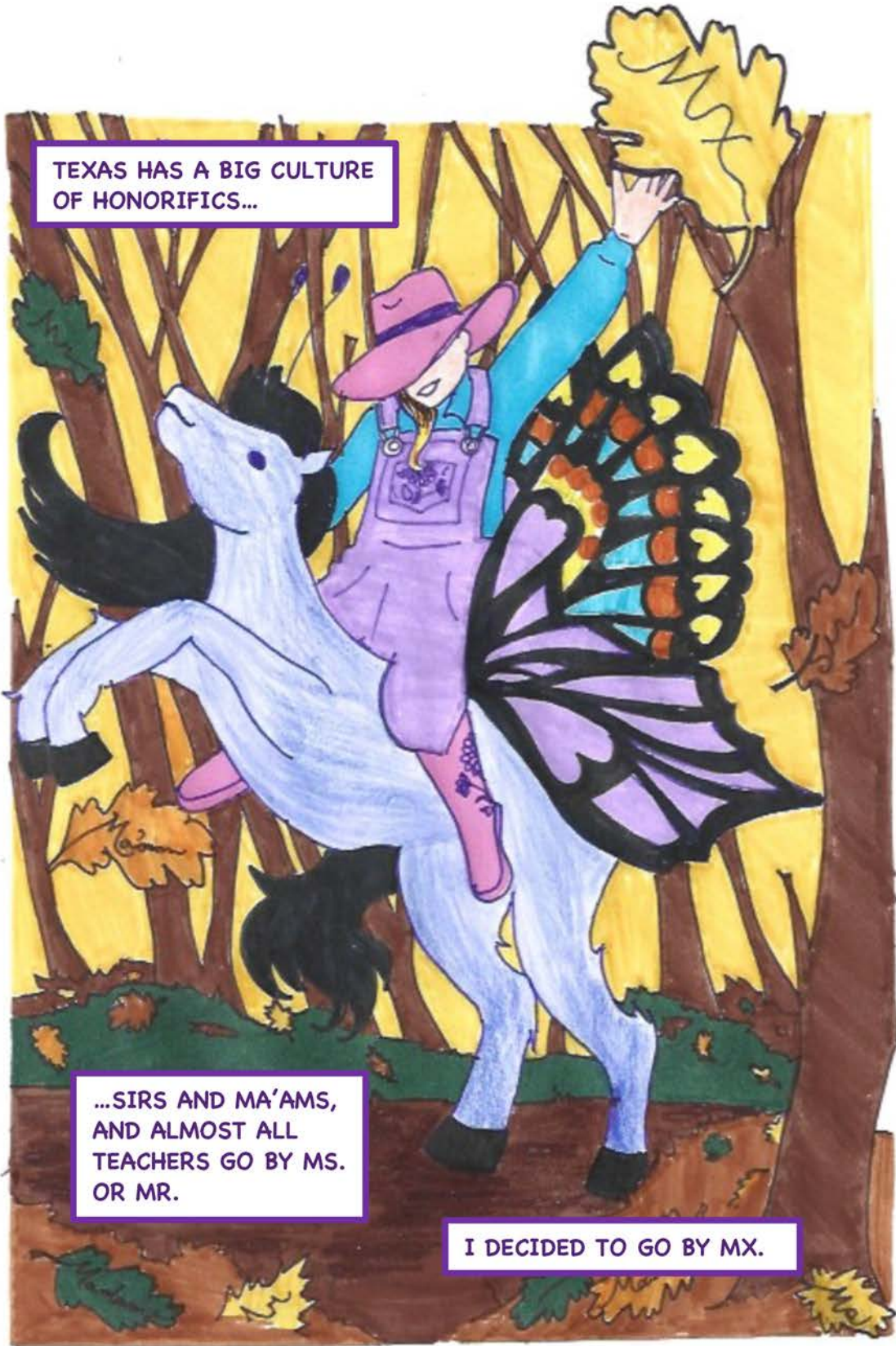
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# More Than

*Nora Borre and Farra Yasin*



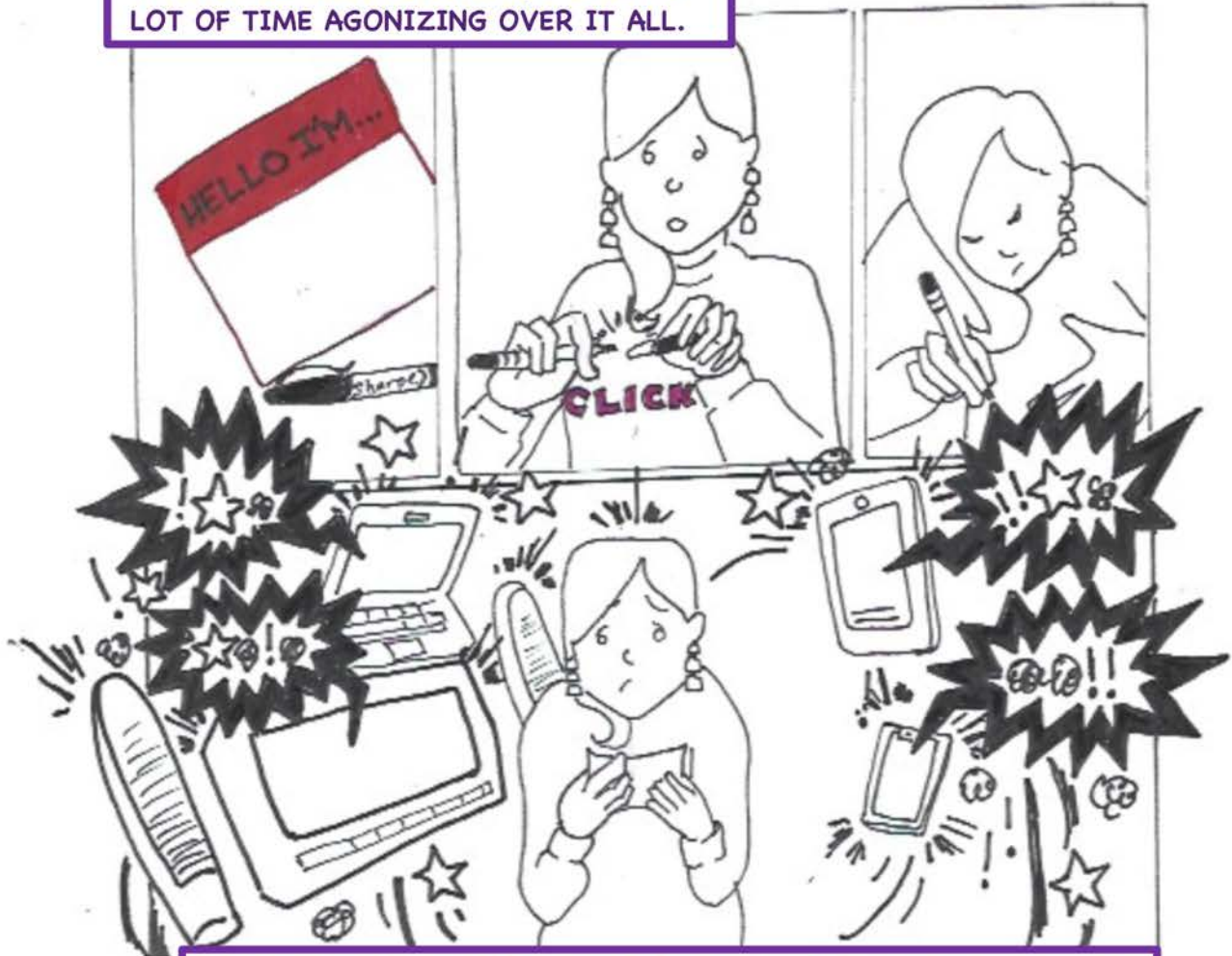


TEXAS HAS A BIG CULTURE OF HONORIFICS...

...SIRS AND MA'AMS, AND ALMOST ALL TEACHERS GO BY MS. OR MR.

I DECIDED TO GO BY MX.

WHEN I STARTED TEACHING, I SPENT A LOT OF TIME AGONIZING OVER IT ALL.



IT'S HARD FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT THIS AGONY NOW-- IN THIS MOMENT WHEN ANTI-TRANS RHETORIC IS BEING RAMPED UP BY POLITICIANS IN MY STATE ONCE AGAIN.



I WONDER WHAT KEPT ME FROM BEING BOLDER BACK THEN.

WHEN I RETURN TO THE PRESENT, I FEEL SO MUCH GRATITUDE FOR THE TRANS LOVE I'VE FOUND. IT BOLSTERS ME EVERY DAY.

WORKING IN EDUCATION WAS A CAREER SHIFT FOR ME. MY NEW WORKPLACE HAD PRONOUN CHECK-INS AND TALKED ABOUT INCLUSION.

THESE WERE GOOD PEOPLE WHO CARED. THEY TALKED ABOUT ALLYSHIP AND CONFRONTING OPPRESSION THROUGH ART.

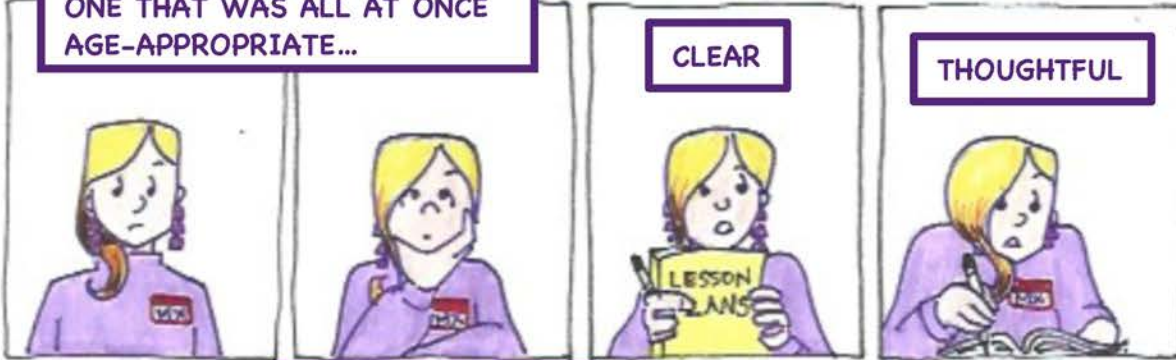
STILL, I DIDN'T SEE ANY TRANS PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS.



MX. FELT RIGHT, SO I CHOSE MX. I FELT HAPPY AND PROUD BUT STILL SOMEWHAT SHY AND UNCERTAIN.



ONE THAT WAS ALL AT ONCE AGE-APPROPRIATE...



CLEAR

THOUGHTFUL

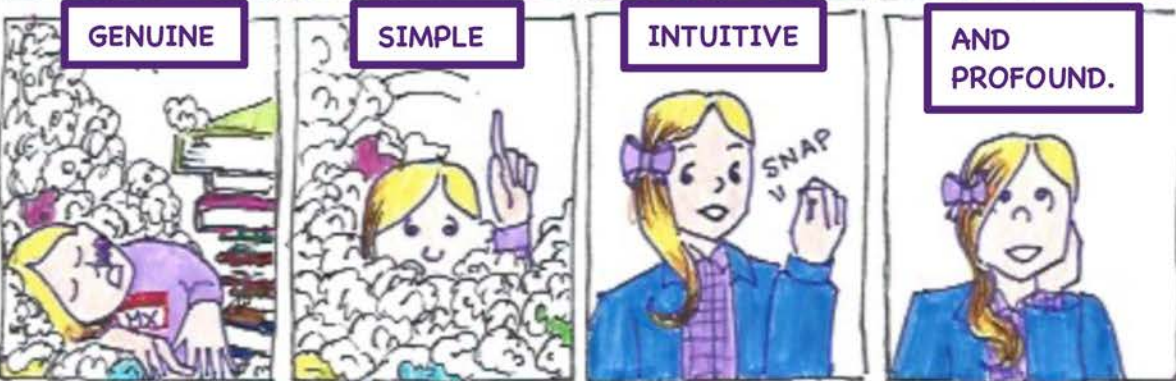


CONCISE

COMPASSIONATE

HONEST

ACCURATE



GENUINE

SIMPLE

INTUITIVE

AND PROFOUND.



AND WHILE I'M USED TO SPEAKING UP ABOUT MY DISABILITY, IT WAS NEW TO TALK ABOUT TRANSNESS.

THERE'S A LOT OF RESPONSIBILITY IN TRYING TO ADVOCATE FOR AN ENTIRE GROUP OF PEOPLE...



ESPECIALLY WHEN IT FEELS LIKE I CAN'T TELL MY STORY WITHOUT FIRST EDUCATING OTHERS.




TO AID THE CONVERSATION, I BROUGHT IN STORYBOOKS SUCH AS *NEITHER* BY AIRLIE ANDERSON AS ENTRYWAYS.

I TAUGHT MY KINDERGARTENERS AND FIRST GRADERS ABOUT PRIMARY COLOR THROUGH WATERCOLORS...

AND HOW SOME COLORS ARE COMBINATIONS OF OTHER COLORS...

THE WAYS THAT BLUES AND YELLOWS AND REDS SWIRL TOGETHER TO MAKE OTHER COLORS.

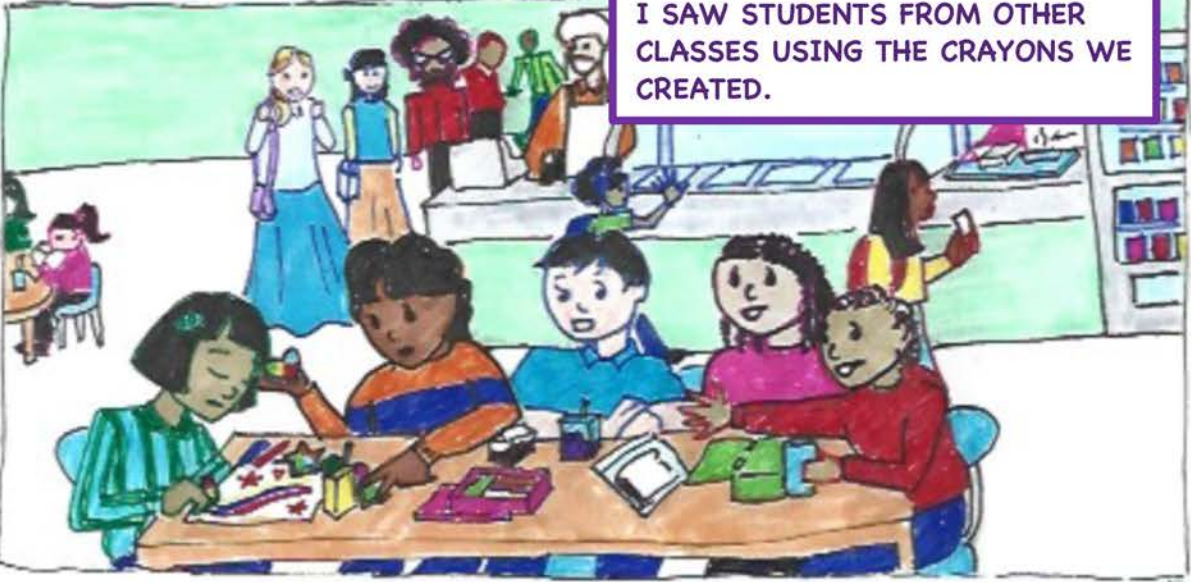




WE TOOK BROKEN CRAYONS AND MELTED THEM INTO NEW CRAYONS TO TALK ABOUT HOW SOMETIMES WE'RE NOT JUST ONE COLOR (OR ONE FEELING OR ONE WAY) BUT ARE ACTUALLY A COMBINATION OF MANY DIFFERENT THINGS ALL AT ONCE.

WE MADE OUR CRAYONS WITH DIFFERENT MOLDS- HEARTS, STARS, AND CIRCLES.

THE STUDENTS MADE CRAYONS FOR THEMSELVES, AND FOR THEIR SIBLINGS AND FRIENDS.



THE NEXT DAY IN THE CAFETERIA, I SAW STUDENTS FROM OTHER CLASSES USING THE CRAYONS WE CREATED.

IT STARTED GETTING EASIER. EACH DAY I FELT A LITTLE MORE CONFIDENT.

AT SNACK, WHEN A STUDENT ASKED ME IF I WAS A GIRL OR A BOY...

I EXPLAINED THAT...

I'M NOT A GIRL OR A BOY...

I'M NON-BINARY.

THE STUDENT WENT BACK TO MUNCHING ON THEIR SUNFLOWER BUTTER AND JELLY SANDWICH.

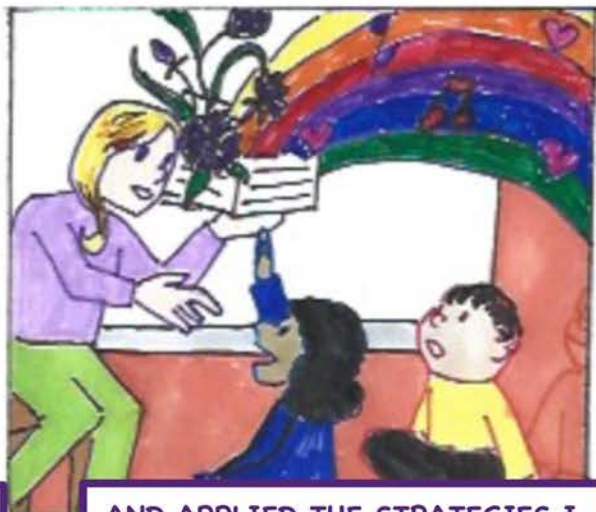
IT WAS MY FIRST SEMESTER TEACHING, AND I WAS PROUD OF MYSELF FOR DOING TEACHING.



# DOING TEACHING



I ATTENDED TRAININGS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY...



AND APPLIED THE STRATEGIES I LEARNED IN MY CLASSROOM.



I ASKED FOR ADVICE ON CLASSROOM DEVELOPMENT FROM MY SUPERVISORS...



FROM MY PEERS...



FROM MY SISTER.

I DREW FROM MY EDUCATION IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND MY STUDENTS-- WHAT THEIR LIVES WERE LIKE, WHAT THEY WERE CURIOUS ABOUT, WHAT KIND OF ART THEY WANTED TO MAKE.

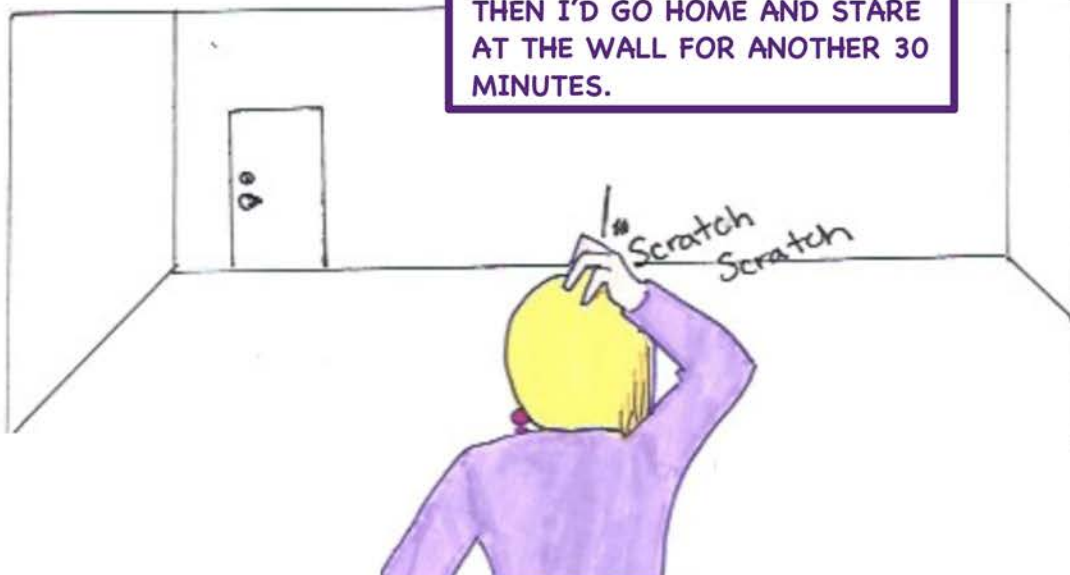
WE READ MORE STORIES, MADE MORE ART, HAD MORE FUN.



STILL...TEACHING KINDERGARTEN IS HARD. MOST DAYS AFTER WORK, I'D SIT IN MY CAR IN COMPLETE SILENCE ON MY DRIVE HOME.



THEN I'D GO HOME AND STARE AT THE WALL FOR ANOTHER 30 MINUTES.



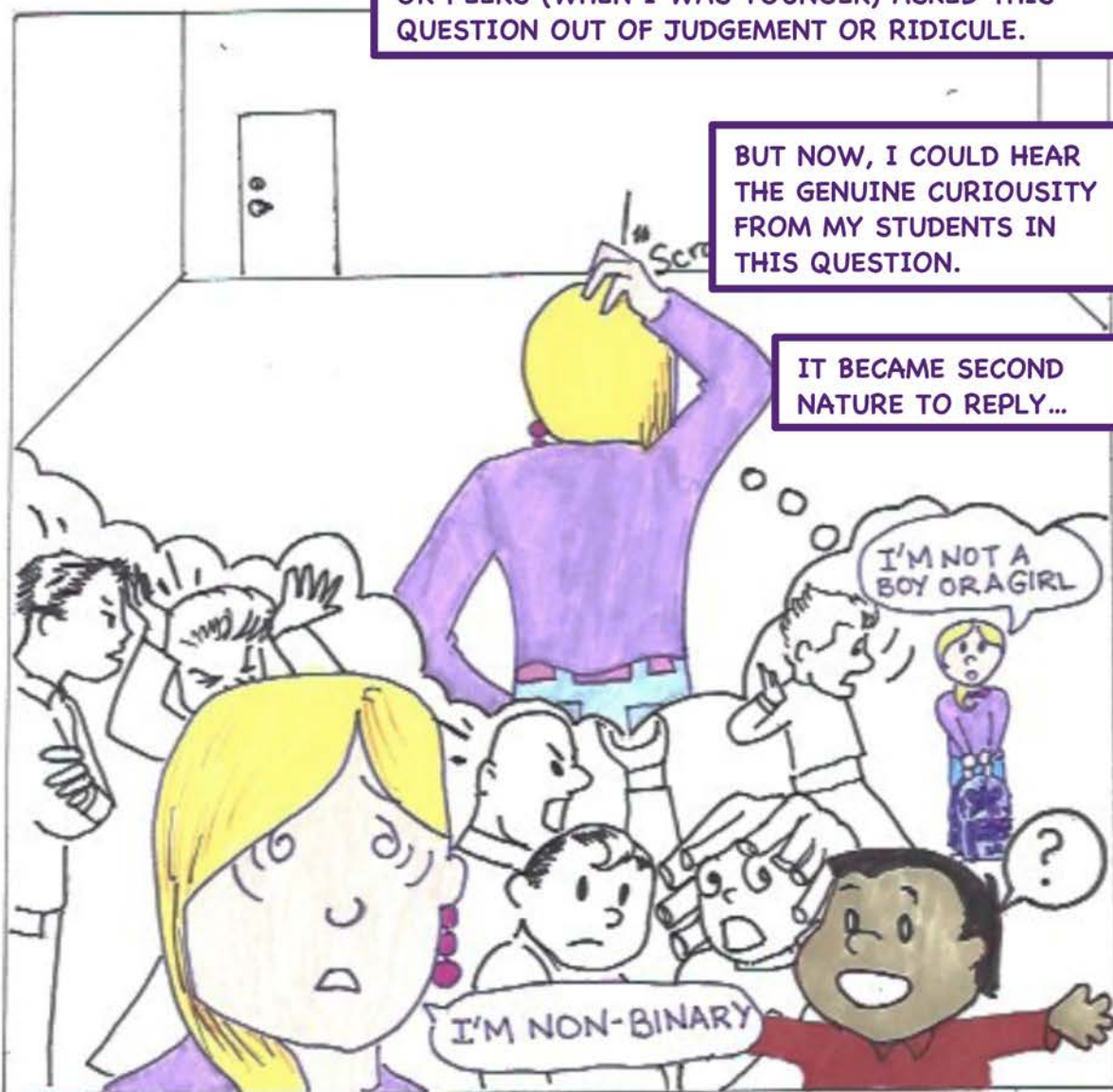
I FELT I WAS GETTING THROUGH TO MY STUDENTS, THAT THEY WERE REALLY UNDERSTANDING ME. HOWEVER, THEY STILL WOULD REGULARLY ASK ME IF I WAS A BOY OR A GIRL.

AND THIS QUESTION STILL SHOCKED ME A LITTLE. IT WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY PANGS OF SADNESS MIXED WITH A STRANGE APPRECIATION...

BECAUSE I REMEMBERED ALL THE TIMES ADULTS OR PEERS (WHEN I WAS YOUNGER) ASKED THIS QUESTION OUT OF JUDGEMENT OR RIDICULE.

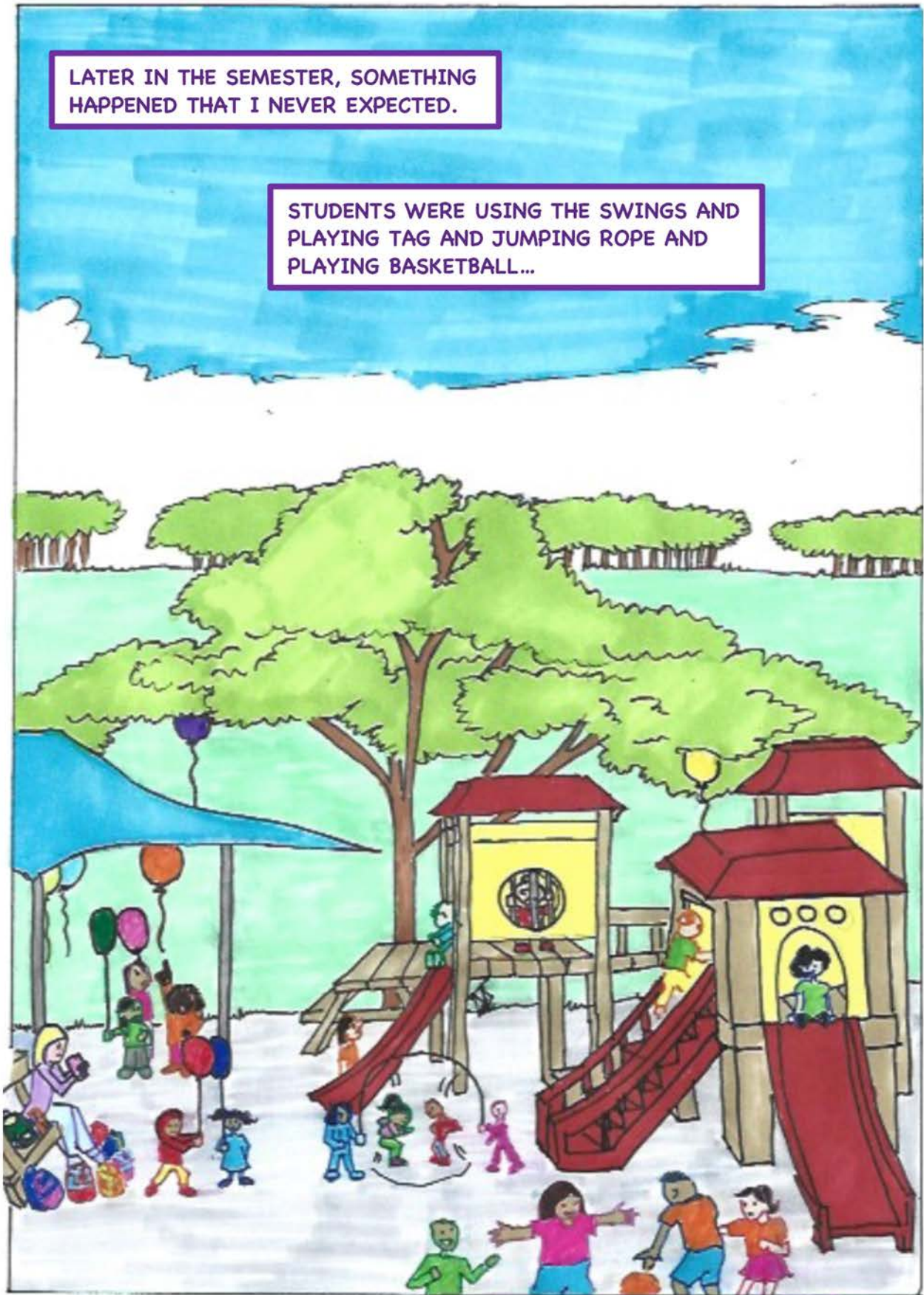
BUT NOW, I COULD HEAR THE GENUINE CURIOSITY FROM MY STUDENTS IN THIS QUESTION.

IT BECAME SECOND NATURE TO REPLY...



LATER IN THE SEMESTER, SOMETHING HAPPENED THAT I NEVER EXPECTED.

STUDENTS WERE USING THE SWINGS AND PLAYING TAG AND JUMPING ROPE AND PLAYING BASKETBALL...



I WAS SITTING ON A BENCH AND A STUDENT NOTICED MY PHONE CASE.



IT HAD PINK FLOWERS ON IT.

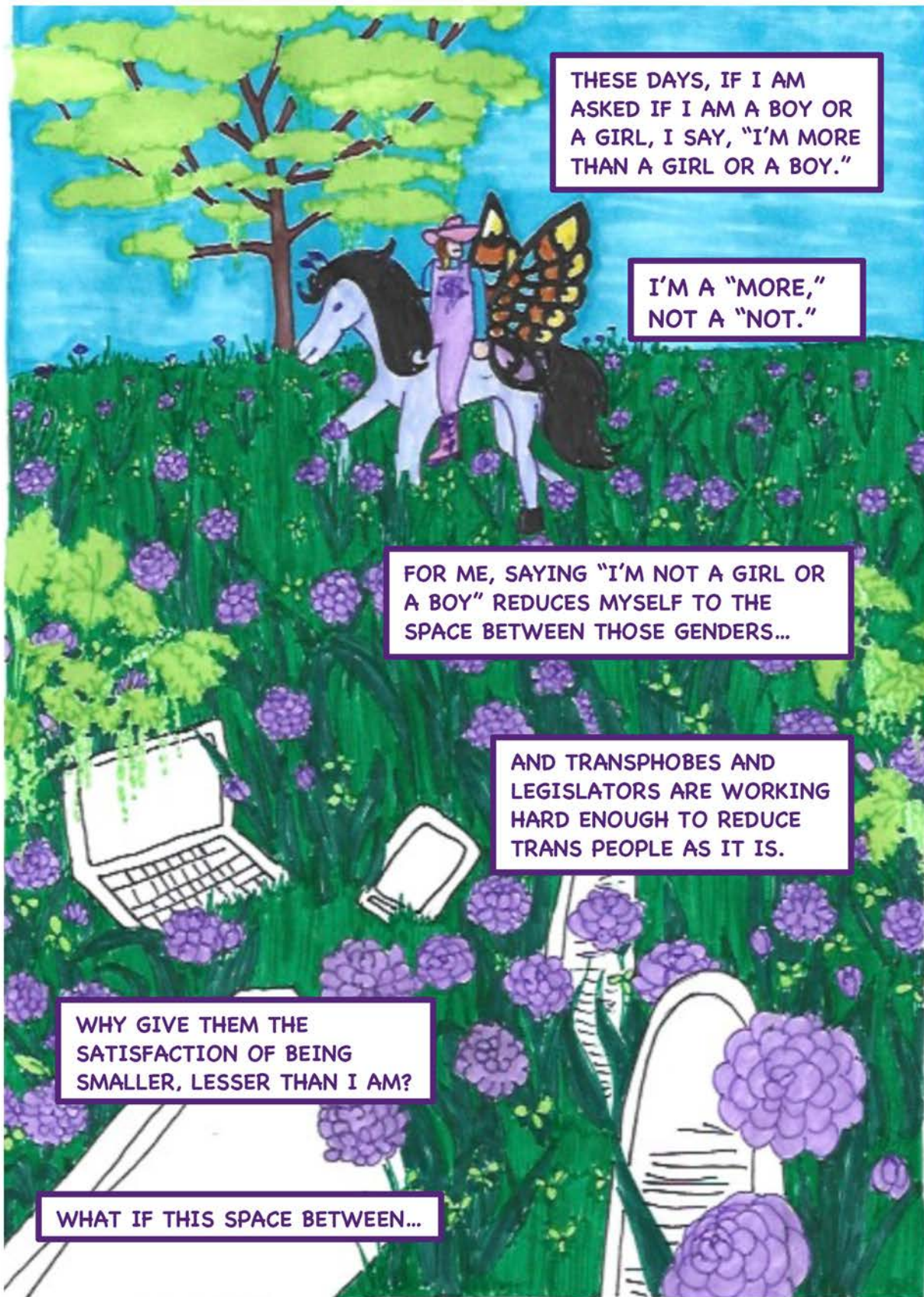
THEY ASKED ME, "WHY DO YOU HAVE PINK ON YOUR PHONE?"



"PINK IS A GIRL COLOR."







THESE DAYS, IF I AM ASKED IF I AM A BOY OR A GIRL, I SAY, "I'M MORE THAN A GIRL OR A BOY."

I'M A "MORE," NOT A "NOT."

FOR ME, SAYING "I'M NOT A GIRL OR A BOY" REDUCES MYSELF TO THE SPACE BETWEEN THOSE GENDERS...

AND TRANSPHOBES AND LEGISLATORS ARE WORKING HARD ENOUGH TO REDUCE TRANS PEOPLE AS IT IS.

WHY GIVE THEM THE SATISFACTION OF BEING SMALLER, LESSER THAN I AM?

WHAT IF THIS SPACE BETWEEN...



...WAS A SPACE BEYOND?

WHAT IF THOSE RIGID MOLDS WERE NEVER DESIGNED TO FIT THESE MANY PARTS OF MYSELF?

WHAT PARTS OF MYSELF CAN I NO LONGER HIDE, SHRINK, SQUEEZE FOR THE SAKE OF SOMEONE ELSE?

WHAT MOLDS NO LONGER SERVE YOU?

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE CHOSE MORE?

WHAT COLORS, WHAT SHAPES, WHAT POSSIBILITIES MIGHT WE CREATE TOGETHER?

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Nora Borre** (she/they) is a White trans disabled artist, organizer, and educator living in Austin, Texas. Currently, she is an MFA candidate in the Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities program at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research links theory and practice by developing connections between trans liberation, youth liberation, and disability justice using embodied storytelling. She is also interested in archives as sites to both construct and to challenge history. Her work in the world centers around popular education and using theatre for social change.



**Farra Yasin** is a comic artist and a language arts teacher who currently works as an assistant professor for the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg in Canada. For Yasin, comic writing is a critical literacy practice that uses the narratives of gesture and visual symbolism as a means of humanization. The docu-comic allows one to challenge oppressive discourses by working with writers to tell the stories of joy and uniqueness of the wonderful people of this Earth. She uses traditional hand drawn techniques for drafting magic realist images to express the relations between past, memory, and context.