



Bank Street

Occasional Paper Series

Occasional
Paper
Series


Volume 2024
Number 52 *The Adventures of Trans Educators:
A Comic Book Issue*

Article 11

November 2024

The Adventures of Trans Educators: A Comic Book Issue

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Recommended Citation

(2024). The Adventures of Trans Educators: A Comic Book Issue. *Occasional Paper Series*, (52). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58295/2375-3668.1555>

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The Adventures of Trans Educators: A Comic Book Issue

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Occasional Paper Series

11. 2024

52



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Introduction

The Adventures of Trans Educators: A Comic Book Issue

Harper B. Keenan, Lee Iskander, and Rachel Marie-Crane Williams

Through our work in teacher education and trans advocacy, the three of us (Harper, Lee, and Rachel) are lucky to regularly hear about the important work trans educators do every day. Whether it's helping students to organize gender and sexuality alliances, mentoring trans youth, working with teachers' unions to improve health care benefits for people of all genders, or simply showing up to school and being present for their students, there is no doubt that trans educators are making important and necessary contributions to learning environments across North America and beyond.

We are also keenly aware that appreciation of the work trans educators do is rare. Over the last five years, trans people of all ages have become increasingly targeted and demonized, especially in relation to schooling. Around the world, lawmakers and politicians are drumming up anti-trans prejudice among the public, positioning trans people as scapegoats for manufactured moral panics and, ultimately, advancing socially conservative political agendas (Reid, 2024). In many places, including the U.S. and Western Europe, transness has frequently been framed as a kind of harmful "social contagion" (Broderick, 2023). Not only is such rhetoric rooted in the belief that transness itself is a problem, the concept of social contagion has been used as justification for widespread efforts to pass legislation that would heavily restrict the rights of trans youth and educators. Too often, the rhetoric of social contagion has led to efforts to push trans people out of public education and to separate trans adults from children. This issue of the *Bank Street Occasional Paper Series* aims to do just the opposite: to celebrate and learn from the presence of trans educators in young people's lives and to work toward a field of education that is far more inviting to trans people of all ages.

TRANSGENDER PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

Although K-12 schools have always had gender non-conforming people working in them, it is only relatively recently that education research and scholarship have addressed the experiences of transgender people. Trans teachers were the subjects of news articles long before our lives and work were the subject of education research. In the 1970s, there were two high-profile cases of trans teachers—Paula Grossman and Steve Dain—who were fired from their jobs in K-12 schools because they had made public gender transitions (Bryan, 1976; Stumbo, 1976; Hanley, 1978; Keenan, 2021). Grossman and Dain were otherwise respected veterans of the classroom. Dain had even been awarded Teacher of the Year prior to transitioning. Yet despite these teachers' decades of service to their students and communities, they and their students were betrayed by their employers' refusal to allow openly trans adults to work in classrooms.

Scholarly attention to the experience of trans people in U.S. schools has steadily increased over the last 20 years. The majority of the early research in this area focused on the experiences of trans and gender non-conforming students, typically painting a dismal portrait of social marginalization and other struggles faced by these youth in schools. Although this research demonstrates how schools contribute to the rigid institutional regulation of gender, it does not attend to how trans people have managed to wrest free of that regulation, both individually and collectively. For example, supportive connections

with trans adults are just one of the many strategies that gender non-conforming young people rely on to make their way through schools. In many cases, these connections are more meaningful than the common understanding of “role models.” Beyond providing basic representation for young people, the presence of trans educators in schools offers an unusual opportunity for intergenerational knowledge construction for transgender people (Morris, Greteman, & Weststrate, 2023). Only recently has educational scholarship focused on the experiences and contributions of trans educators and what we might learn from them (Harris & Jones, 2014; Iskander, 2022; Jourian, Simmons, & Devaney, 2015; McEntarfer & Rice, 2023; Suárez et al., 2022; Ullman, 2020).

TRANS EXPERIENCE ON OUR OWN TERMS

In Issue 52 of the *Occasional Paper Series*, we have worked to create space for trans educators to describe their teaching experiences from their own perspectives, drawing inspiration from the interdisciplinary scholarly area of trans studies. Trans studies began to coalesce as an area of academic study in the 1990s and was constructed both out of trans social movements and in resistance to conventional approaches to studying transness in social scientific and medical research. Rather than taking an explanatory approach to transgender identification or searching for ways to “include” trans people within existing institutional structures, trans studies takes a more radical approach, asking questions like: How did the general public come to understand gender through a normative binary, and how do we get ourselves out of it? What can the general public learn from the experiences of transgender people? In thinking through questions like these, scholars in trans studies usually find it helpful to foreground the plurality of experience within communities of trans people. Then they consider how knowledge derived from trans experience might enable new or different forms of understanding, and what the experiences of trans people might reveal about social and economic conditions more broadly.

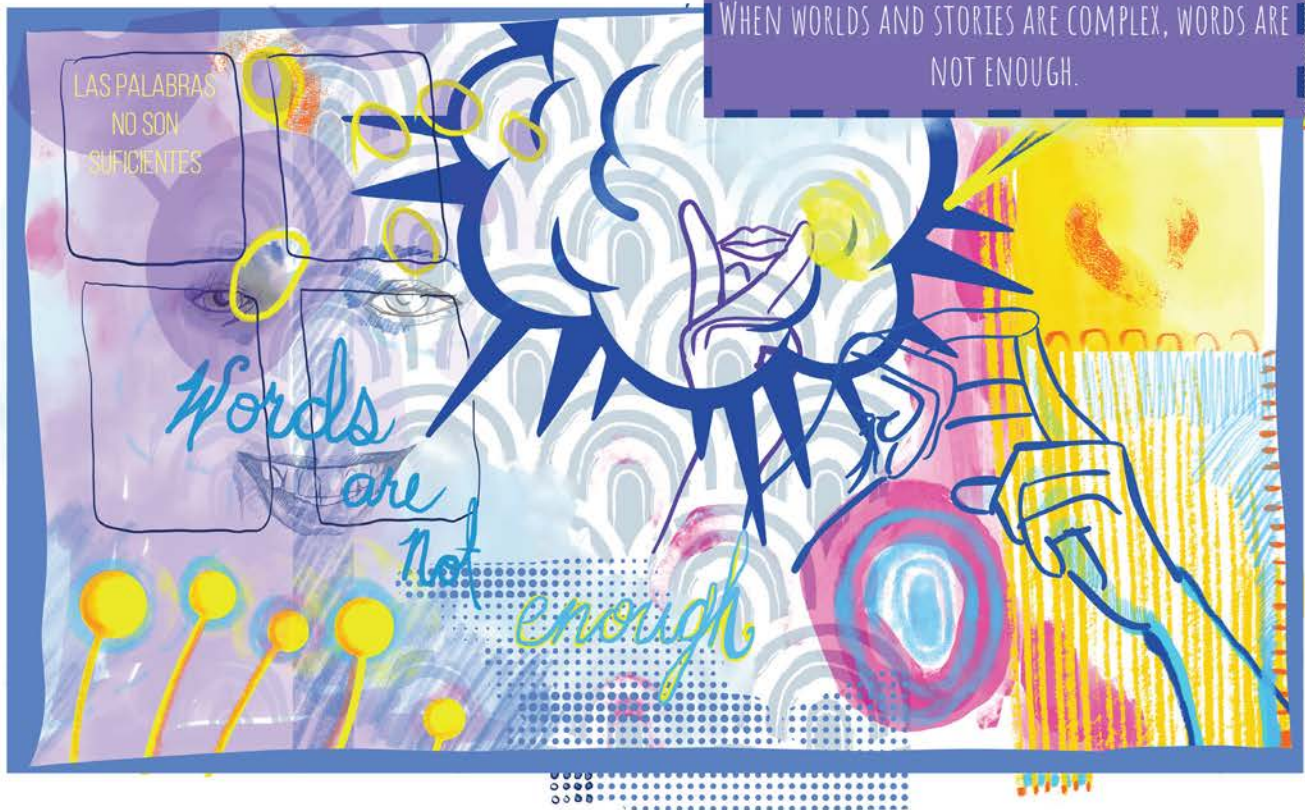
Trans pedagogy is an emergent concept brought forward by scholars working at the nexus of education and trans studies. Although those of us who have written about trans pedagogy have each made unique contributions to its conceptualization, we all tend to argue that meaningful engagement with transgender experience has the potential to change dominant approaches to teaching and learning (e.g., Keenan, 2017; Keenan, 2024; miller, 2016; Muñoz & Garrison, 2008; Nicolazzo, Marine, & Galarte, 2015; Malatino, 2015; Platero & Drager, 2015). For example, trans pedagogies could propel students toward deeper study of how each of us comes to understand our sometimes-evolving sense of our own and others’ genders (Malatino, 2015); to learn about how trans people approach the task of teaching about gender differently from what might be typical in K-12 school settings (Keenan, Hot Mess, Newbold, & Iskander, 2023; Keenan, 2024); or to analyze the history of colonialism in structuring narrow and prescriptive ideas about gender as they are expressed in educational institutions (Muñoz & Garrison, 2008).

CREATING THIS ISSUE AS A COMIC

The three of us believe that thinking about trans pedagogy demands some engagement with the material experiences of transgender people who work in K-12 education. Even as the very idea of transgender people in schools is treated as a matter of political debate, there are hundreds of trans people going to work with young people every day—tying shoelaces, opening milk cartons, checking math homework, and directing school plays. Trans educators are also teaching outside of traditional classrooms in contexts like museums, summer camps, and programs like Drag Story Hour and Freedom School Toronto. While a cacophony of opinions about trans existence proliferates within and beyond classroom walls, trans people are actively teaching. We are present and working in those rooms every day to steward young people’s learning. What can those of us working in the field of education learn from the daily realities, challenges, and joys of trans educators?

To give you a peek into the daily work and contributions of trans teachers, we decided to share their stories in comic form. We hope that presenting these stories visually might help our fellow educators see that trans people are not an abstract concept. The stories of trans educators are complex, and words alone were not enough. Comics provide an expansive opportunity for world-making, storytelling, emotions, design, visual imagery, text, and sequence.

THE ACT OF WORLDMAKING IN COMICS, IN SOME WAYS, IS PARALLEL WITH THE WAYS THAT TRANS PEOPLE HISTORICALLY HAVE QUESTIONED, MADE, AND RE-MADE THE WORLD FROM WHAT IS KNOWN AND WHAT CAN BE IMAGINED. WORLDMAKING IS A POWERFUL ACT OF RECLAMATION, REJECTION, RECOMPOSITION, AND CREATIVITY.



COMIC CREATORS MIGHT ADOPT PICTORIAL AND NARRATIVE CONVENTIONS, REIMAGINE THEM, OR IGNORE THEM ALTOGETHER IN THE WORLDS THAT THEY PRESENT.

LIKE GENDER, COMICS ARE COMPLEX AND MULTI-LAYERED. YOU CAN "READ" COMICS, BUT TO UNDERSTAND THEM, YOU HAVE SOME INTERSECTIONAL SENSE OF LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS, AND THE CULTURAL CONVENTIONS THE CREATOR EMPLOYS.

LIKE GENDER, COMICS HAVE A HISTORY OF STEREOTYPES, CONVENTIONS, AND TRADITIONS.



NOT ALL COMICS TELL A SEQUENTIAL STORY, BUT AS HUMANS, WE CAN'T HELP BUT PUT THINGS TOGETHER AND MAKE A STORY BASED ON WHAT WE SEE. IF TWO PICTURES ARE PLACED NEXT TO EACH OTHER, OUR IMPULSE IS GENERALLY TO FIND SOME NARRATIVE THAT WILL LINK THE IMAGES.

WE LINK THE PAST TO THE PRESENT AND THE PRESENT AND PAST TO THE FUTURE. WHAT HAS BEEN, TO WHAT IS, TO WHAT CAN BE.

CRASH!!!

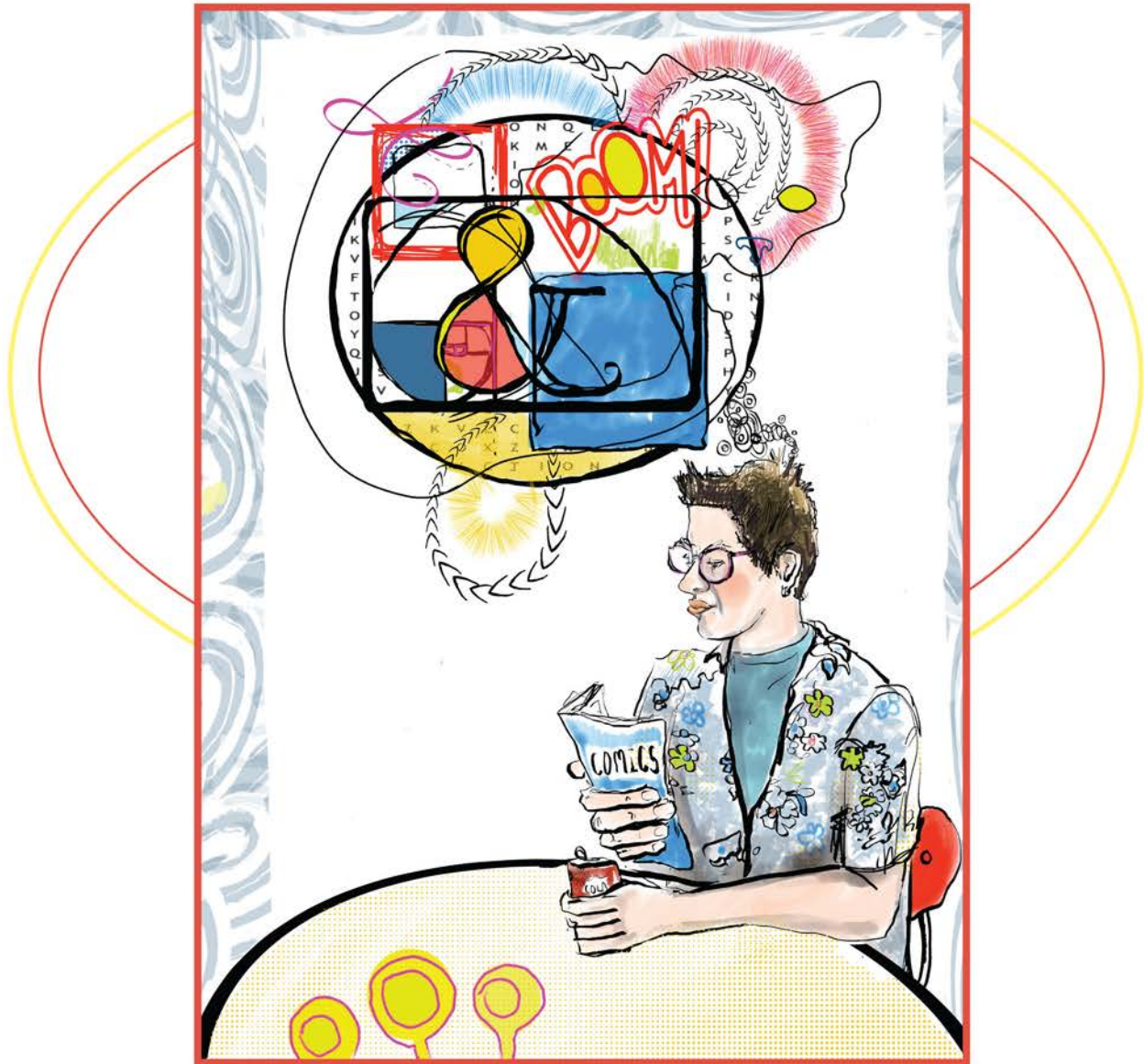


THEY WERE BLOCKING MY SUNSHINE PATCH!



THE ABILITY TO CONNECT ONE IDEA TO ANOTHER AND TO ALLOW TIME TO HELP US UNDERSTAND HOW TO MAKE SENSE OF PATTERNS THAT AT FIRST SEEM CHAOTIC, DISCORDANT, INCOMPREHENSIBLE, OR UNRECOGNIZABLE IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF READING COMICS AND OF BEING HUMAN. WE ARE ALWAYS COMPOSING STORIES TO HELP US MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD.

COMICS ALLOW SO MUCH FREEDOM.



COMICS OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR READERS TO MOVE FLUIDLY BETWEEN WORDS, IMAGES, PANELS, PAGES, AND SPREADS. THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF LITERARY LIBERATION; READERS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PLOD SLOWLY FROM ONE WORD TO THE NEXT, LINE AFTER LINE, PAGE AFTER PAGE, IN ORDER TO COMPREHEND THE STORY.

READERS CAN LOOK AT JUST THE PICTURES, IGNORE THE WORDS, READ ONLY THE SPEECH BUBBLES OR NARRATION, OR ADMIRE THE DESIGN.

COMICS ALLOW "READING" TO BEGIN ANYWHERE ON THE PAGE. MOST COMICS ARE BEST READ IN A PARTICULAR SEQUENCE, BUT FOR SOME READERS THAT SEQUENCE COMES LAST IN THE ACT OF CONSUMPTION.

WRITERS



ARTISTS

OUR WRITERS AND ARTISTS HAVE COLLABORATIVELY EMPLOYED COMICS, CREATIVITY, IMAGES, TEXTS, AND WORLDMAKING TO TELL STORIES ABOUT TEACHING AND LIVING, AND TO MAKE A SPACE FOR THE STORIES OF PEOPLE WHO WILL COME AFTER THEM.

CREATING THIS ISSUE AS A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

This issue came to fruition through an extended collaborative process. We were overwhelmed by the number of submissions we received in response to our call for narratives from trans educators, which highlighted that there are many trans educators working in a variety of educational settings who want to share their experiences with the wider public. We went through the difficult process of selecting just a few of these submissions, with careful attention to featuring a range of trans positionalities and educational contexts. Then, each educator was paired with a queer and/or trans-identifying comic artist to translate their narrative into comic form.

It was exciting and powerful to witness how the partnerships worked together to ensure that each educator's story was told with careful accuracy and sensitivity, a respect that is far from guaranteed in much media representation of transgender people. Through their work together, many of the creative teams built friendships that we expect will last far into the future. This is the kind of relationality that we seek to cultivate within the field of education: one that begins from a premise of welcoming trans people into the teaching profession and builds networks of support that will sustain their long-term contributions to the teaching and learning of young people.

OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS

The comics in this special issue represent a diversity of artistic styles, narrative devices, and experiences in schools. Some zoom in on a particular day or moment, while others chart a journey over years or decades. They do not tell simplistic stories of oppression, resilience, or triumph. Instead, the contributions to this issue collectively illustrate the nuances of trans educators' experiences across a range of regional and educational contexts. These comics are meant to reach beyond the walls of academia: they can be shared online, emailed to friends and colleagues, printed out, photocopied, or left in a school library or staff room for others to find. They will interest students, teachers, teacher educators, researchers, and members of the general public who want to learn more about the many contributions of trans people in education.

The comic written by Sam Long and illustrated by Quan Phan, and the one written by Owen Dempsey and illustrated by Jet Lepper, take the reader on journeys of personal growth and self-reflection. Both begin by welcoming us back to school: in Long and Phan's comic, the reader is prompted to remember what it is like to be a new teacher; in Dempsey and Leppers's, we are invited into Dempsey's recollections of being a trans teen struggling to imagine a future.

In *How's Teaching Going?* Long and Phan take the reader through an emotional journey that is at once ordinary and unique, showcasing both the ordinary insecurity that many new teachers feel and the apprehension felt by many trans educators when it comes to sharing their trans identity with students. Yet Long's story does not adhere to a familiar narrative that positions "coming out" as inherently liberating: even after he shares his story with his students, they still do not follow his directions.

Similarly, Dempsey and Leppers's comic, *Ten Year Reunion*, about becoming the teacher Dempsey wished he'd had when he was young, avoids the expected conclusion. Lepper's illustrations juxtapose Dempsey's teenage and adult selves, using color and pattern to produce a complex commentary on the relationship between who Dempsey is, who he was, and who he wants to be. Dempsey and Lepper's comic illustrates how trans experience is a gift that enriches the support and depth of understanding educators can offer their students.

The comic written by Yarrow Koning and illustrated by Sofia Abreu, and the comic written by Per Sia and illustrated by Ali Blake, showcase the power of queer and trans joy, resistance, and persistence

in contexts the anti-trans backlash has targeted. In *Always Been*, Koning and Abreu take on Florida's anti-trans legislation. Their form of resistance is to turn our attention to the quiet power of noticing the persistent queerness and transness of the natural world. On the title page and hidden throughout the comic, readers will find species of ecological beings that defy sex/gender binaries, including gynandromorphic butterflies and fungi. Abreu's illustrations contrast the beauty and color of queer and trans humans and more-than-humans with humans who want to repress that diversity and see the world in black and white.

Readers of *Socrates and Me* by Per Sia and Ali Blake might similarly search Blake's colourful and intricately detailed spreads for hidden gems: in this case, illustrations of children's books that celebrate gender diversity. The story follows Per Sia to her last performance as part of Drag Story Hour before a much-needed vacation. While the backlash and protests targeting Story Hour are mentioned, the comic does not dwell on these; instead, it focuses on the feelings of happiness and acceptance Story Hour instills in children, their families, and Per Sia herself. For Per Sia and Blake, a Story Hour event's joyfulness drowns out the hate.

The comic written by Nora Borre and illustrated by Farra Yasin, like that written by Daniel Gallardo and illustrated by Martin Pech, showcase trans educators' ingenuity in navigating education workplaces where others may not understand or accept them fully. Borre and Yasin's comic, *More Than*, follows Borre's considerations as they attempt to explain their trans experience and gender-neutral honorific, "Mx," to their colleagues and their kindergarten class in Texas. The comic highlights Borre's efforts to teach young children about non-binary identity creatively, thoughtfully, and sincerely while also striving to understand their students better.

While Borre and Yasin's comic draws attention to the extra work trans educators may be called on to do even in supposedly supportive workplaces, Gallardo and Pech's comic focuses on an explicitly hostile workplace. In *Your Roots Are Showing*, we tag along with a fabulous drag artist and trans femme as she tries to find employment as a teacher in Mexico's school system.

With humor, color, and plenty of queer cultural references, Pech illustrates the main character's misadventures as she conspires to become "he/him" —the hyper-masculine, blond man a school principal seems to be looking for. The comic is a compelling and entertaining commentary on the enduring anti-trans stigma that prevents many skilled educators from becoming teachers.

The issue concludes with a comic by James F. Woglom, Stephanie Jones, and Dylan Brody titled, *A Light in Dark Times: An Overt Defense of Trans-Affirming Spaces in Education*. Unlike the other contributions to this issue, this comic is not autobiographical. Instead, it is a comprehensive treatise on the current anti-trans backlash and its impact on schools. Merging academic writing, enthralling illustrations, and references to key gender studies texts, the authors and artist make a strong case for gender-affirming educational environments. As the authors argue, such environments enable critical thinking, promote joy, and create enough breathing room for all adults and children to show up to learn and teach in their full humanity.

Through these stories, we hope you gain a sense of liberation from restrictive and harmful conventions and are inspired to teach, learn, share, and see the broad possibilities of worldmaking for the greater good of teachers and the field of education. We hope that you will consider downloading the entire issue and use it as a resource for your students, colleagues, families, friends, and for yourself. The stories of trans educators we share in this issue are just a tiny slice of a big world. There are lots of comics that celebrate the stories, lives, and work of trans people. Here is a list if you want to read more!

**WANT TO READ MORE COMICS THAT CELEBRATE TRANS LIVES?
CHECK THESE OUT:**



GENDER QUEER BY MAIA KOBABE

**A QUICK & EASY GUIDE TO THEY/THEM
PRONOUNS BY ARCHIE BONGIOVANNI
AND TRISTAN JIMERSON**

**A QUICK & EASY GUIDE TO QUEER &
TRANS IDENTITIES BY MADY G AND
J.R. ZUCKERBERG**

**BE GAY, DO COMICS BY MATT BORS,
MATT LUBCHANSKY, SARAH MIRK AND
ELERI HARRIS**

NONBINARY BY MELANIE GILLMAN

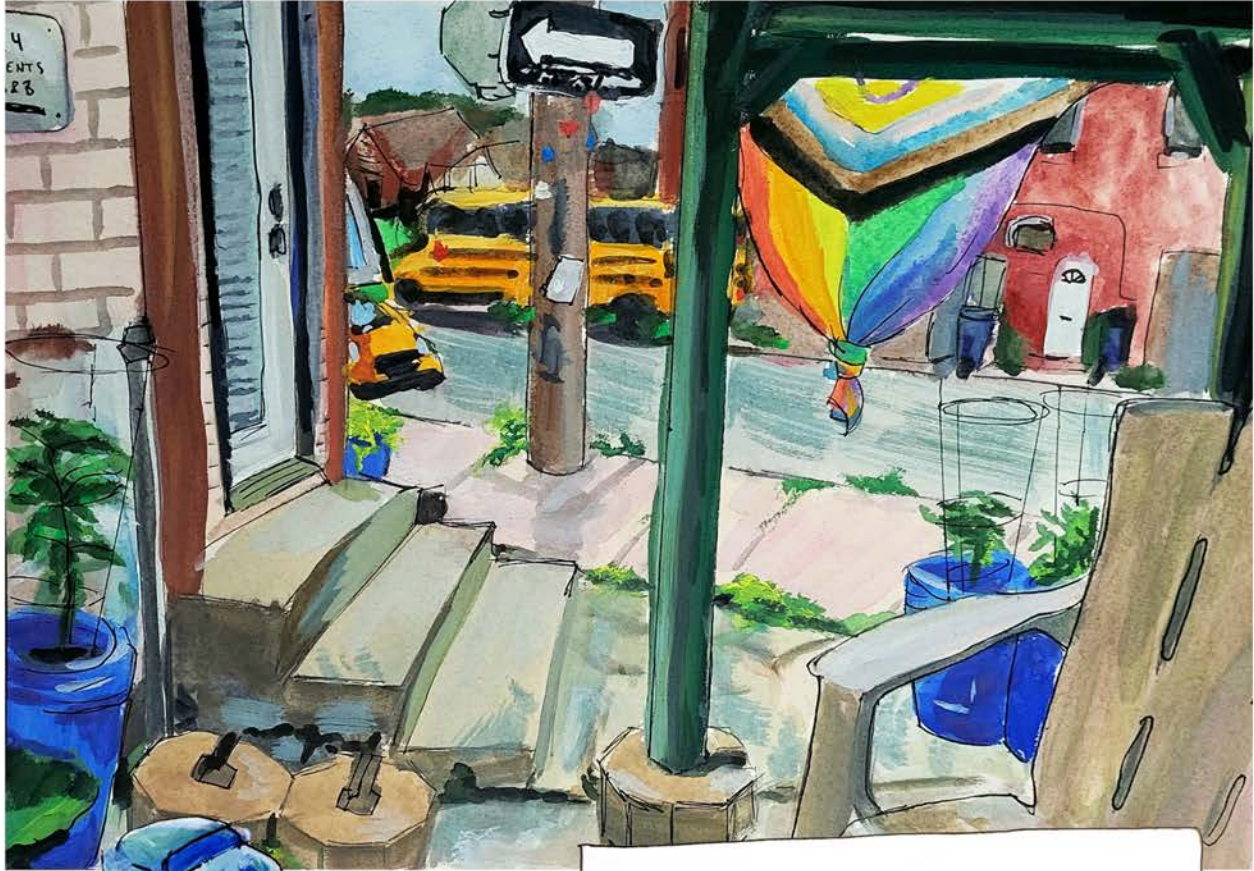
COMING OUT, AGAIN: TRANSITION STORIES BY SABRINA SYMINGTON

**MY LIFE IN TRANSITION: A SUPER LATE BLOOMER COLLECTION BY
JULIA KAYE**

**SPECIAL TOPICS IN BEING A HUMAN: A QUEER AND TENDER GUIDE TO
THINGS I'VE LEARNED THE HARD WAY ABOUT CARING FOR PEOPLE,
INCLUDING MYSELF BY S. BEAR BERGMAN AND SALLI FREEDMAN-LAWSON**

**AT 30, I REALIZED I HAD NO GENDER: LIFE LESSONS FROM A
50-YEAR-OLD AFTER TWO DECADES OF SELF-DISCOVERY BY SHOU
ARAI**

**THE OUT SIDE: TRANS & NONBINARY COMICS BY THE KAO, DAVID
DANEMAN AND MIN CHRISTENSEN**



GOING BACK TO SCHOOL?



*HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES TO
HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY...*



CLASSROOM TEACHER? CHECK OUT THESE CURRICULAR RESOURCES!

Adaptable mini-lesson about 2SLGBTQIA+ stories in Canada

Disability, gender and sexuality lesson pack

Gender and sexuality alliance action book

Lesson plans to create more gender expansive classrooms and support transgender and non-binary students

Teaching about gender diversity

Teaching LGBT History

Trans Hirstory in 99 Objects

Queer & trans history of Canada

GLSEN

Lambda Legal: Trans Workplace Rights

National Center for Trans Equality

Protecting Our Schools: A Handbook to Address Transphobia in Education

Trans Educators Network

TRANS EDUCATOR? THESE RESOURCES CAN SUPPORT YOU IN CONNECTING WITH PEERS AND ADVOCATING FOR YOUR RIGHTS!



TEACHER EDUCATOR? THESE RESOURCES ARE MEANT TO SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR PROGRAM IN WELCOMING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TRANS TEACHERS



Guidance on creating a "frequently asked questions" document for current and prospective trans students in teacher education

Visual resource for mentor teachers supporting trans teacher candidates

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Harper B. Keenan is the inaugural Robert Quartermain Professor of Gender & Sexuality in Education at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Keenan's scholarship examines how adults and children relate to each other within the structures of schooling and other educational contexts, and what their interactions reveal about the possibilities and challenges of public education. He is also the founder of the Trans Educators Network, a mutual aid organization for support and connection among trans people working in K-12 schools. Before becoming an academic, Dr. Keenan was an elementary school teacher in New York City.



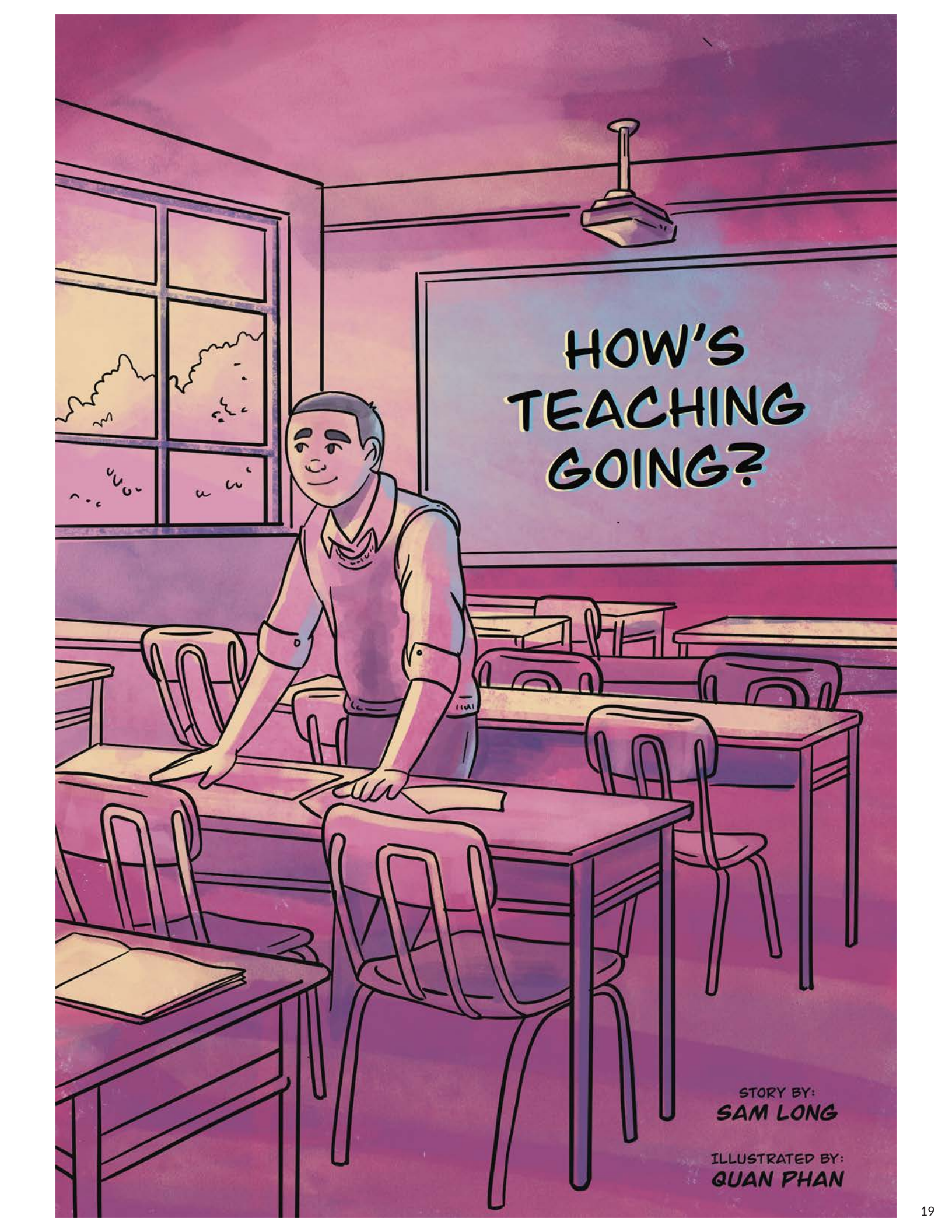
Lee Iskander (they/them) is an artist and scholar working at the intersection of trans studies, curriculum studies, and teacher education. Lee's research examines how discourses of gender and sexuality shape identities in educational spaces and has been published in the *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *Teaching Education*, and *Teachers College Record*. Lee's interest in gender and sexuality in schools arose from their experience as a youth activist. They are currently a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia.



Rachel Marie-Crane Williams, a native of North Carolina, earned a BFA in Painting and Drawing from East Carolina University and an MFA in Studio Art and a PhD in Art Education from Florida State University. She spent 22 years as a professor and, later, department chair in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies at The University of Iowa. She is lucky and happy to be the dean of liberal arts at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, a position she has held since 2022. She is the creator of two graphic historiographies, *Elegy for Mary Turner: An Illustrated Account of a Lynching* (Verso Press) and *Run Home If You Don't Want to Be Killed: The Detroit Uprising of 1943* (UNC Press and the Duke Center for Documentary Studies). Her writing has also appeared most recently in *Southern Cultures*, *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures*, *Meridians*, *Feminist Studies*, and *Visual Arts Research*. Her work as an artist is grounded in narrative painting, printmaking, and illustration. The natural world, field research, scholarship, ephemera, and drawing heavily influences her imagery. She works in oil, aqueous media, and digitally.

How's Teaching Going?

Sam Long and Quan Phan



HOW'S TEACHING GOING?

STORY BY:
SAM LONG

ILLUSTRATED BY:
QUAN PHAN



I THOUGHT HE WAS A STUDENT!



SO HERE ARE SOME THINGS ABOUT ME.

ABOUT ME

- Bachelor of Science degree from University of Toronto, Canada
- Majored in Physiology, Minored in Math
- Chinese-American, grew up in Canada
- Hobbies: Board games, Geocaching, Sci Fi movies

DID YOU SEE ANY MOOSE IN CANADA?



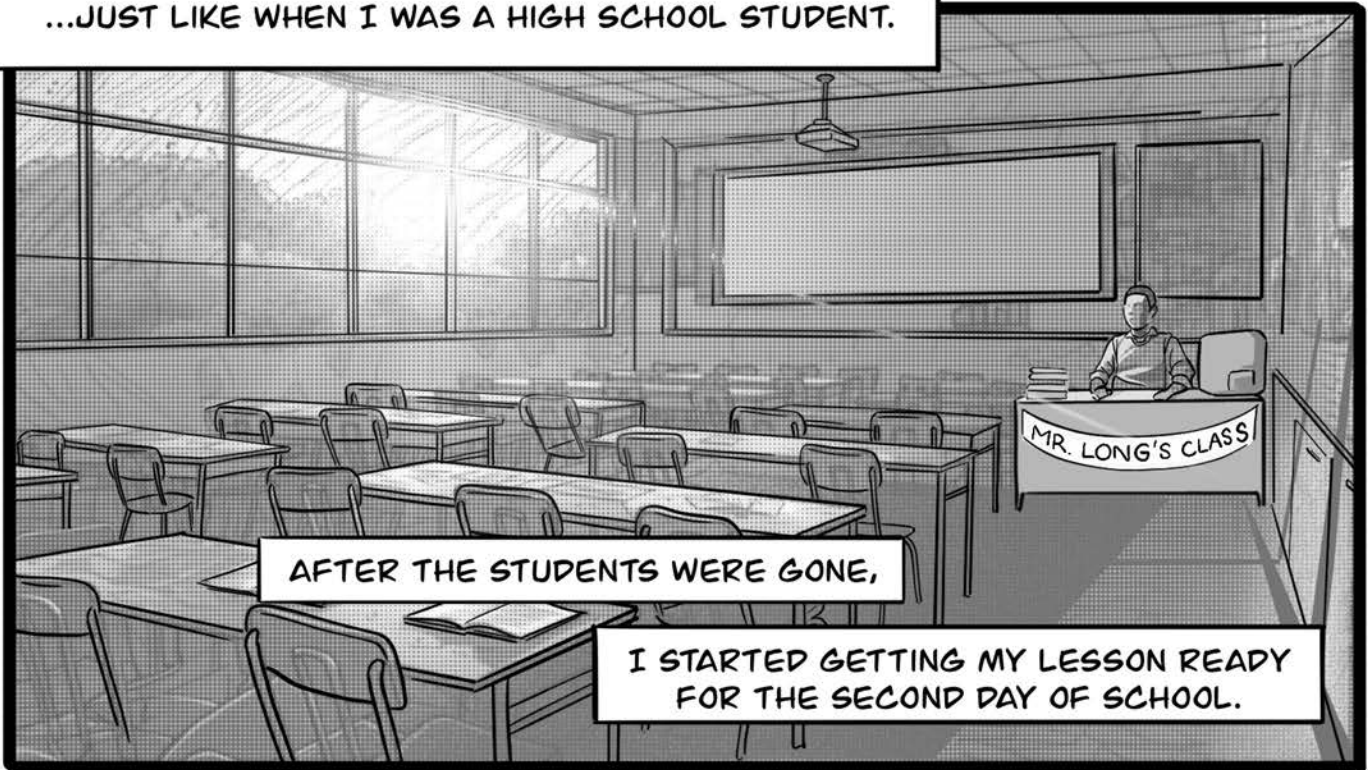
BUT I LEFT OUT ONE OF MY MOST MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES FOR NOW - MY GENDER TRANSITION.

NO, TORONTO IS A CITY OF ALMOST 3 MILLION PEOPLE.. IT'S A LOT BIGGER THAN DENVER.



IT WAS EXHAUSTING TO BE ON ALL DAY. I FELT NERVOUS...

...JUST LIKE WHEN I WAS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT.



AFTER THE STUDENTS WERE GONE,

I STARTED GETTING MY LESSON READY FOR THE SECOND DAY OF SCHOOL.

3 MONTHS LATER



AND WHAT DO WE DO NEXT TO ISOLATE OUR X?

$$2^2(x+3)+9-5=32$$

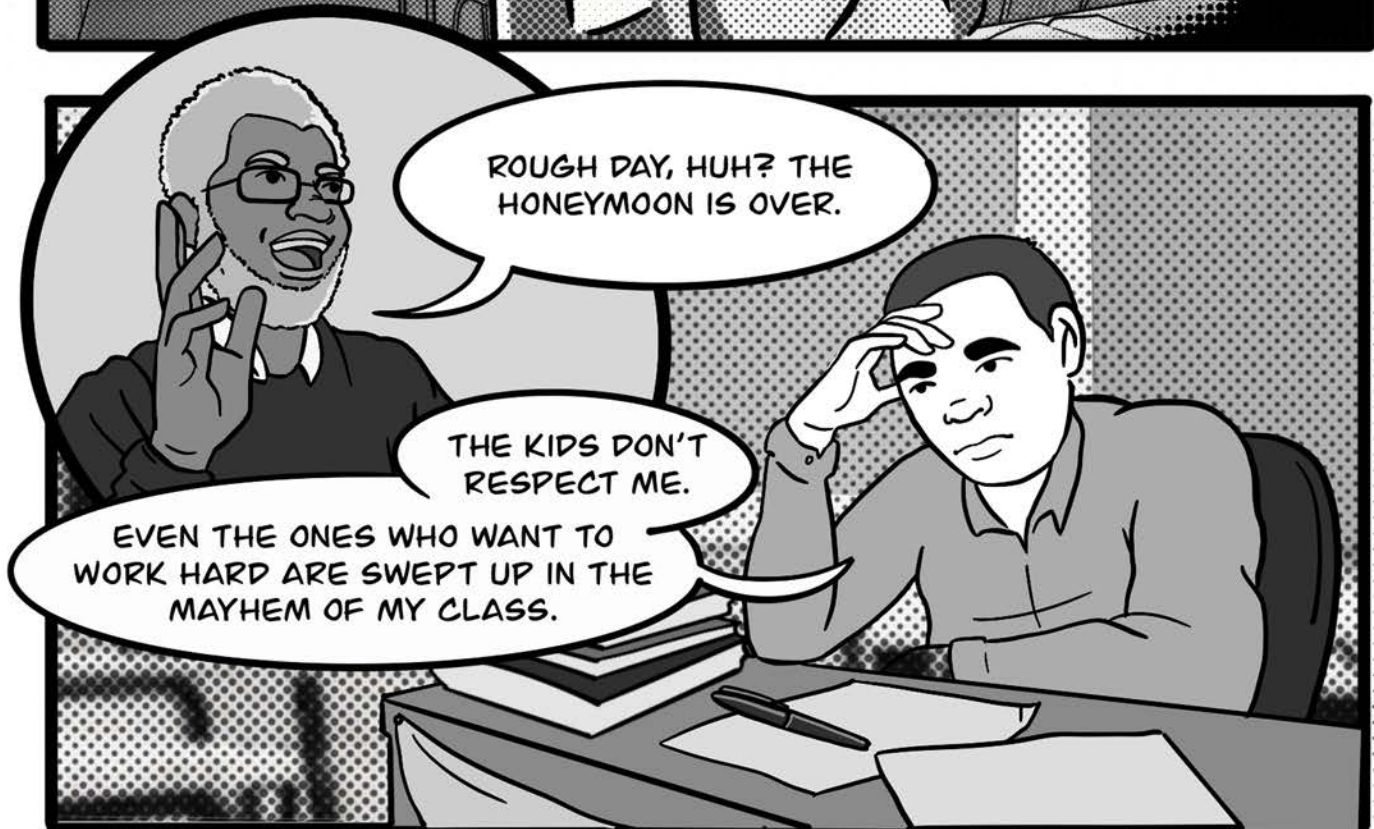
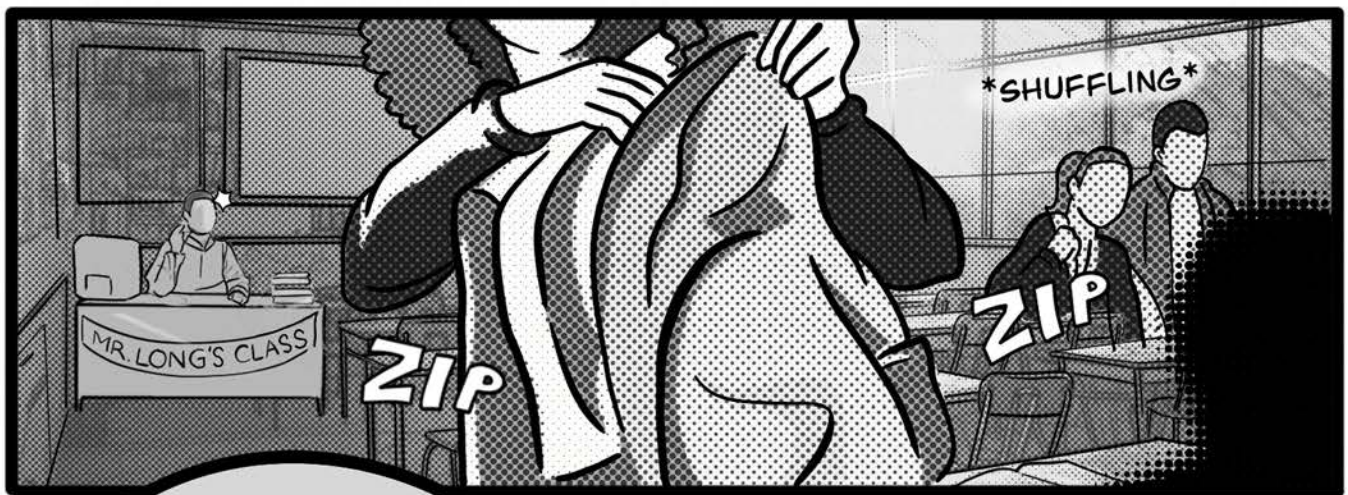
ZION, WHAT DO YOU THINK?



I DUNNO, WHY'RE YOU ASKING ME?!



REMEMBER, WE'RE TRYING-



THE OTHER TEACHERS ALL TRIED TO HELP ME. BUT I HAD TO NAVIGATE MY OWN PATH.

JANUARY

WHEN I WAS 16, I TOLD MY MOM I WAS TRANS AND SHE SAID, "I CAN'T STAND TO LOSE YOU."

I SAID,

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'LOSE ME?' I'M RIGHT HERE."

I KNOW A LOT OF YOU HAVE BEEN IN A SIMILAR SITUATION,

WHERE YOUR FAMILY COULDN'T SEE YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE.

FOR SOME OF YOU,

I MIGHT BE THE FIRST TRANS PERSON YOU'VE MET IN YOUR LIFE.

BUT I WON'T BE THE LAST,

AND IN SCHOOL WE'RE PREPARING YOU FOR A FUTURE

WHERE YOU'LL LIVE AND INTERACT IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY.



I ... I FINALLY GET TO TELL MY STORY.

CLAP!

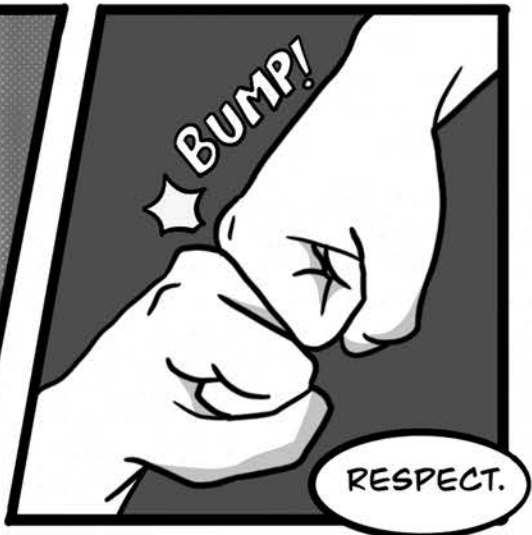
CHEER

CHEER

LATER IN THE HALL

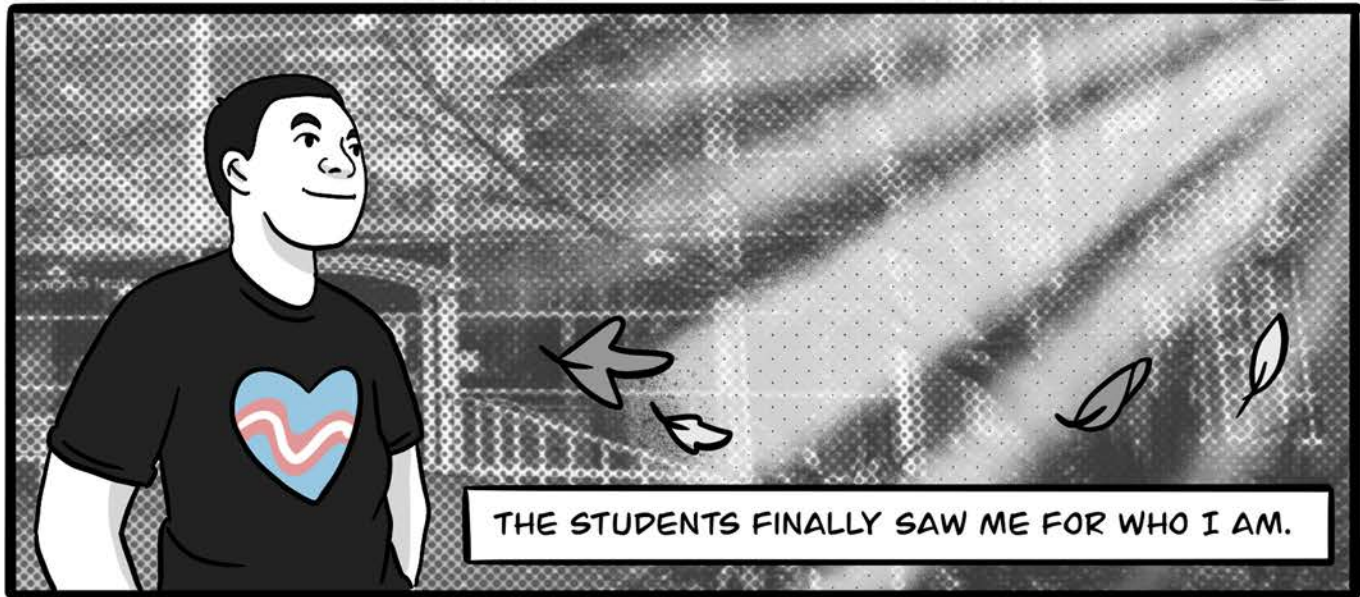


THAT TAKES GUTS, MISTER.



BUMP!

RESPECT.



THE STUDENTS FINALLY SAW ME FOR WHO I AM.

APRIL



YEARS LATER

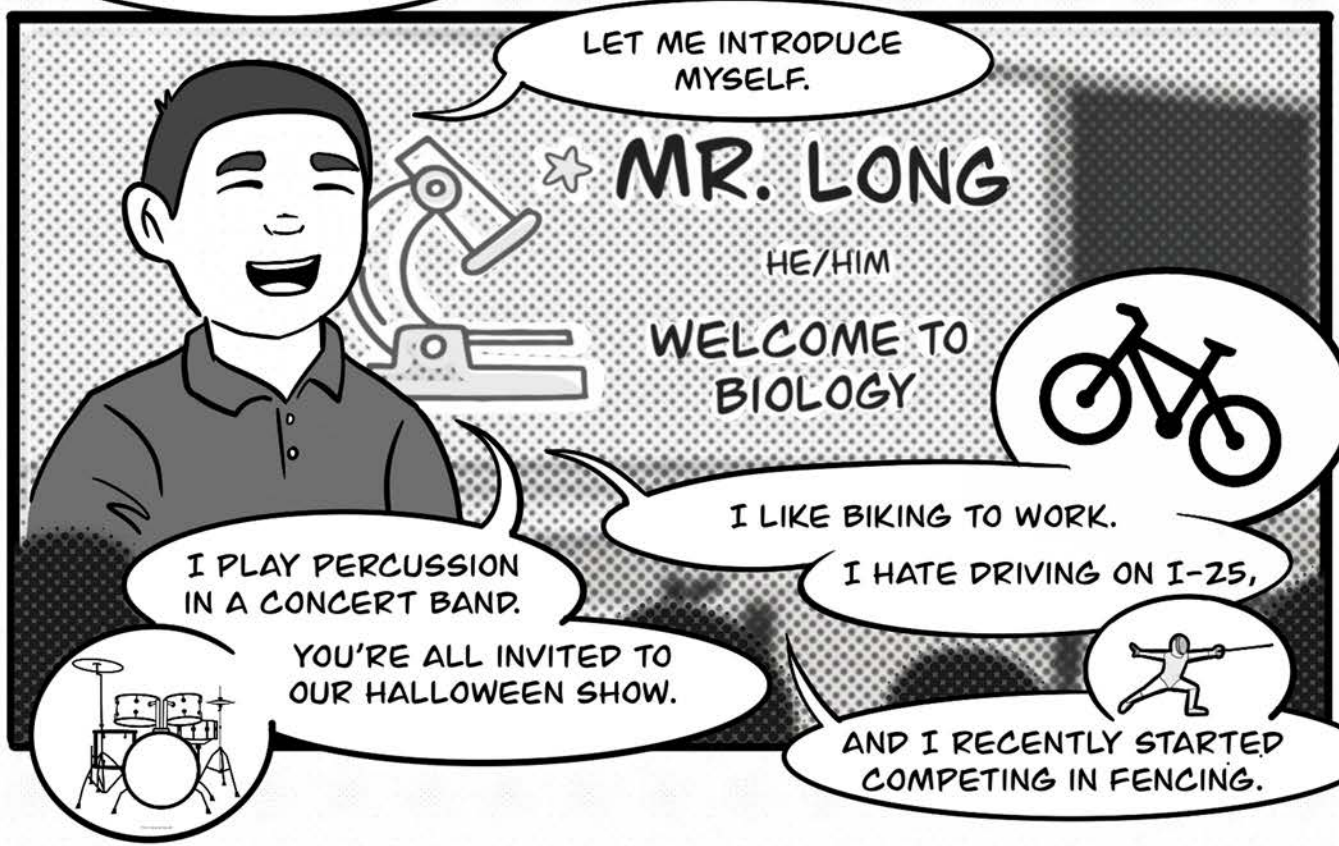


MY NINTH YEAR OF TEACHING. A BRAND NEW GROUP OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE NEVER HEARD MY JOKES.



OH MY GOD, I THOUGHT YOU WERE A STUDENT.

THAT'S OKAY, I THOUGHT YOU WERE A TEACHER.



LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF.

MR. LONG

HE/HIM

WELCOME TO BIOLOGY

I LIKE BIKING TO WORK.

I HATE DRIVING ON I-25,

I PLAY PERCUSSION IN A CONCERT BAND.

YOU'RE ALL INVITED TO OUR HALLOWEEN SHOW.

AND I RECENTLY STARTED COMPETING IN FENCING.

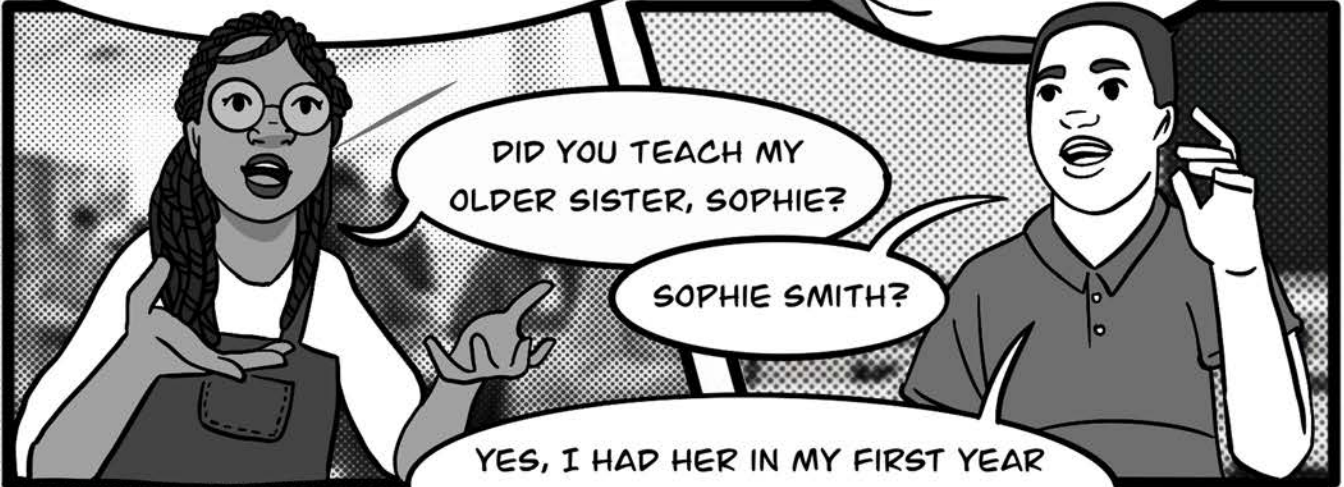


NOT A PHASE



I'M A TRANSGENDER MAN,
IT'S AN IMPORTANT PART OF
MY IDENTITY.

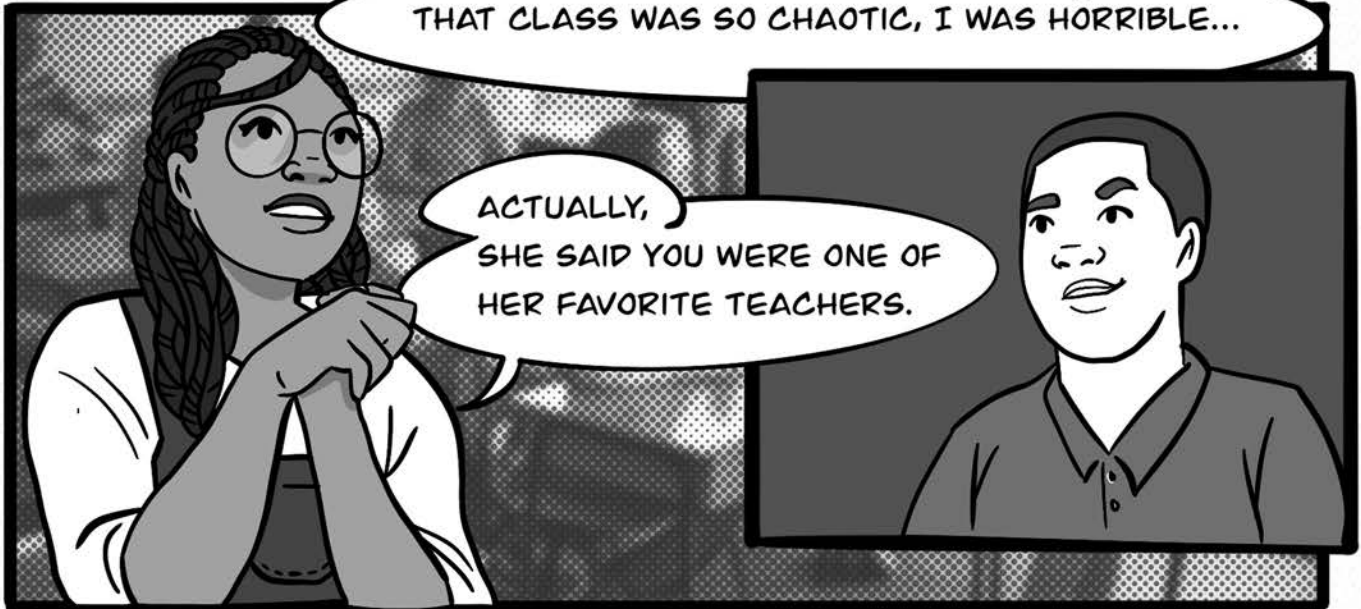
PEOPLE USUALLY DON'T KNOW THAT
BY LOOKING AT ME, SO I SHARE MY
STORY WITH ALL OF MY CLASSES.



DID YOU TEACH MY
OLDER SISTER, SOPHIE?

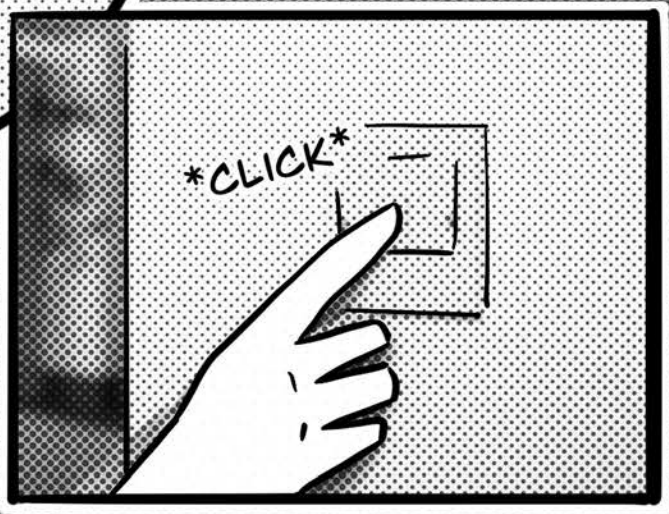
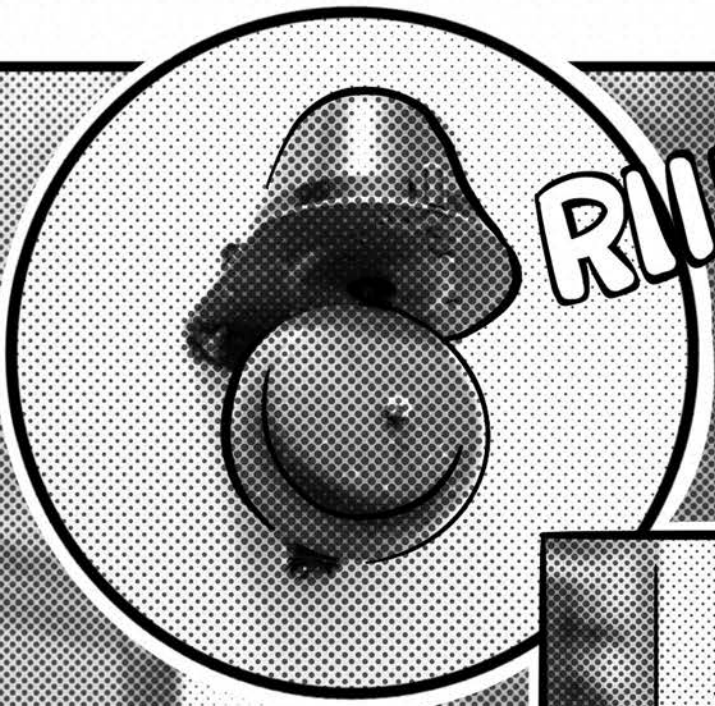
SOPHIE SMITH?

YES, I HAD HER IN MY FIRST YEAR
WHEN I WAS STILL TEACHING MATH.
THAT CLASS WAS SO CHAOTIC, I WAS HORRIBLE...



ACTUALLY,
SHE SAID YOU WERE ONE OF
HER FAVORITE TEACHERS.

RRIINGG!



TEACHING HAS MADE THE BEST OF ME VISIBLE.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Sam Long (he/him) is a Chinese-American-Canadian transgender man and high school science teacher in Denver, Colorado.



Dr. Quan Phan (he/him) earned his PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Oklahoma. His research explores 2SLGBTQIA+ students' visions of queer utopia through participatory action research and visual methods. He examines how individuals in higher education can challenge dominant narratives and resist oppressive structures. Through his work as a creative and student affairs professional, Quan integrates curricular design, strategic assessment, and creative expression into his DEI work, creating transformative experiences that center marginalized communities and build long-lasting legacies of equity and student success.

Ten Year Reunion

Owen Dempsey and Jet Lepper

AS A TRANS TEEN, NOBODY KNEW HOW BAD THINGS WERE...

TEN YEAR REUNION

WRITTEN BY OWEN DEMPSEY
ART BY JET LEPPER

INTERNALLY, OR AT HOME.

MY CLASS-CLOWN COPING MECHANISM, CHARISMA, AND EASY A'S MEANT I STRUGGLED IN SILENCE.

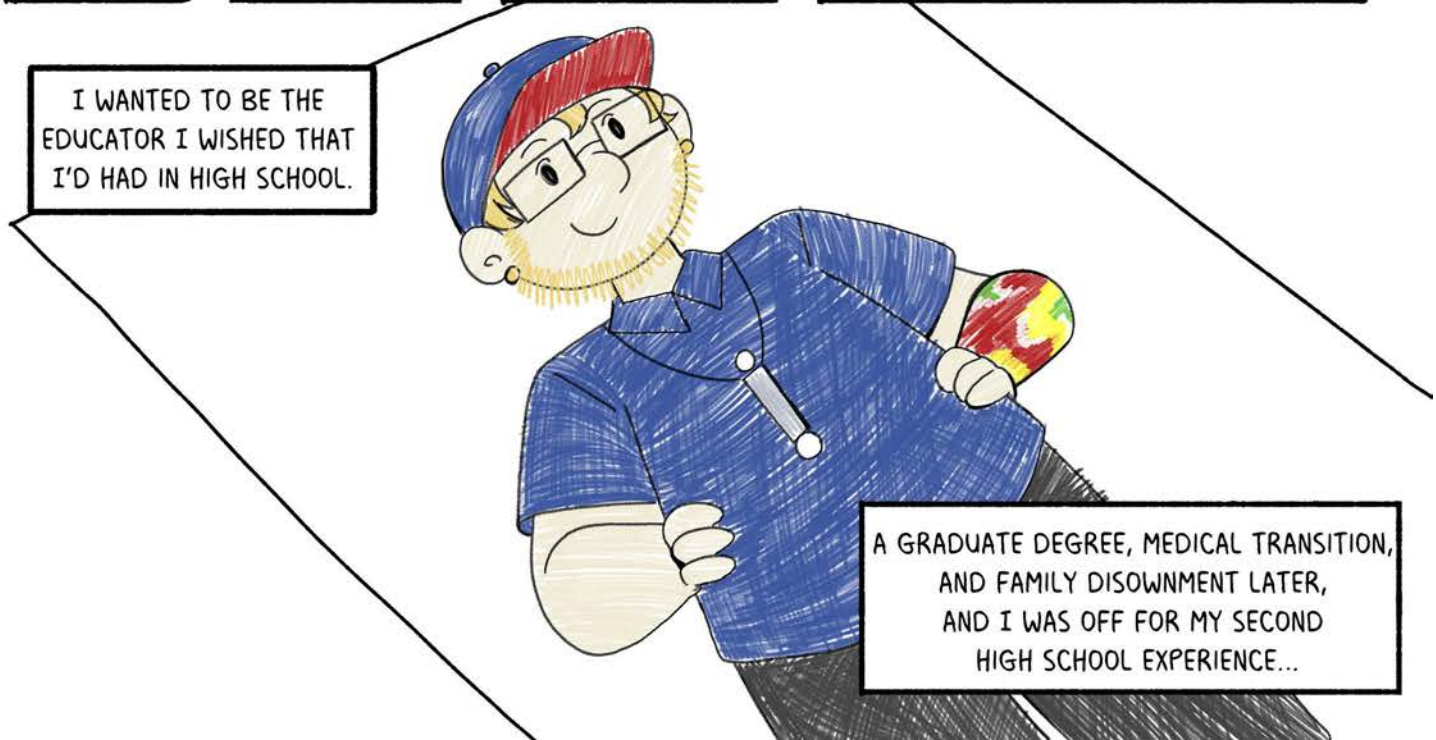
WITH DYSPHORIA ON AN ENDLESS MENTAL LOOP, AND THE WEIGHT OF MY PAIN KEEPING MY HEAD DOWN...

I SPENT MY CLASSES DOODLING THE MAN I'D HOPED WOULD ONE DAY COME SAVE ME.

DON'T I KNOW YOU FROM SOMEWHERE?

I'M YOU, FROM THE FUTURE!

HOP IN, WE'RE GOING TO SAN FRANCISCO!



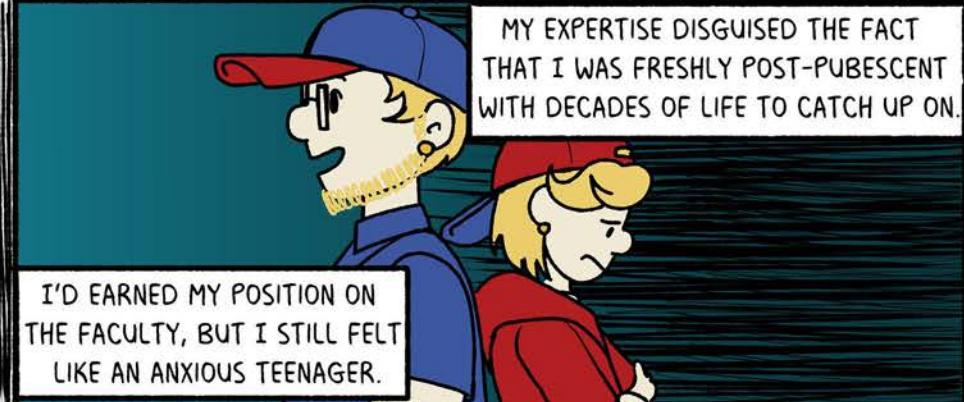


WOW, YOU'RE A TEACHER? YOU'RE STEALTH, RIGHT?

NOPE. I'M PRETTY OPEN ABOUT MY STORY NOW.

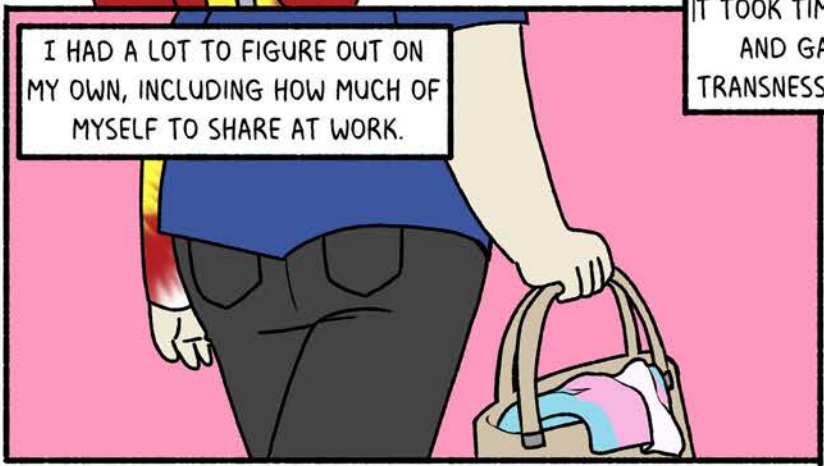


REALLY?! WHY?



MY EXPERTISE DISGUISED THE FACT THAT I WAS FRESHLY POST-PUBESCENT WITH DECADES OF LIFE TO CATCH UP ON.

I'D EARNED MY POSITION ON THE FACULTY, BUT I STILL FELT LIKE AN ANXIOUS TEENAGER.



I HAD A LOT TO FIGURE OUT ON MY OWN, INCLUDING HOW MUCH OF MYSELF TO SHARE AT WORK.

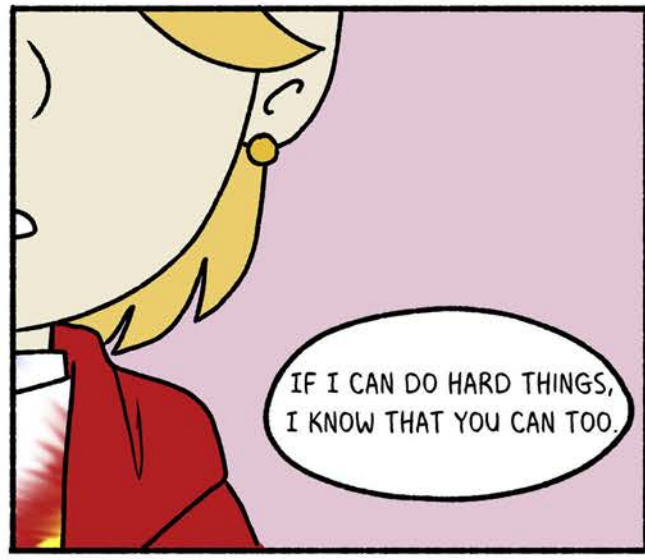
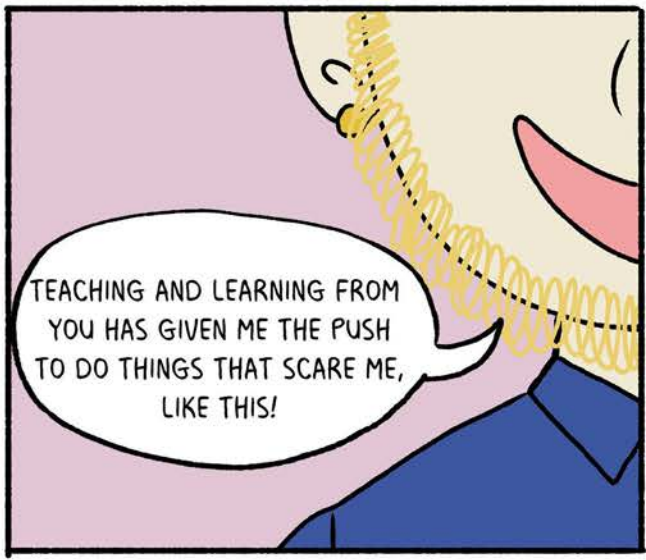
IT TOOK TIME FOR ME TO DIG THROUGH INTERNALIZED SHAME AND GAIN THE COURAGE TO OPENLY SPEAK ABOUT MY TRANSNESS, BUT I OWED IT TO MYSELF, AND MY STUDENTS...

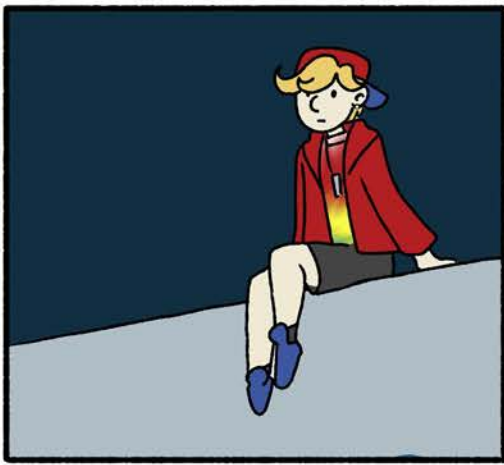


I SHARE MY STORY BECAUSE YOU AND ALL THE OTHER TRANS KIDS DESERVE TO SEE THAT A FUTURE IS POSSIBLE.

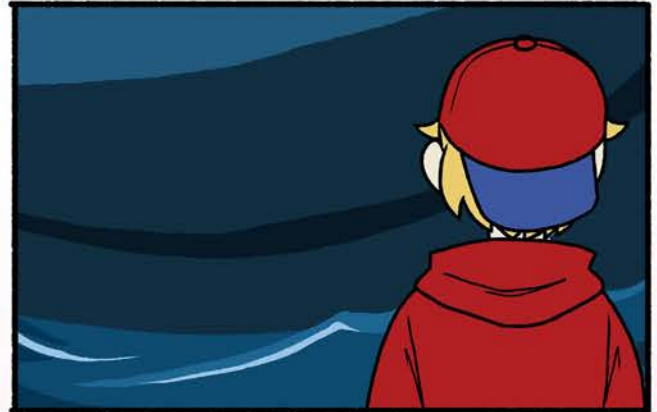
TODAY'S TOPIC:
What's it like to be
a Trans teacher?

Awesome!
vulnerable challenging
POWERFUL





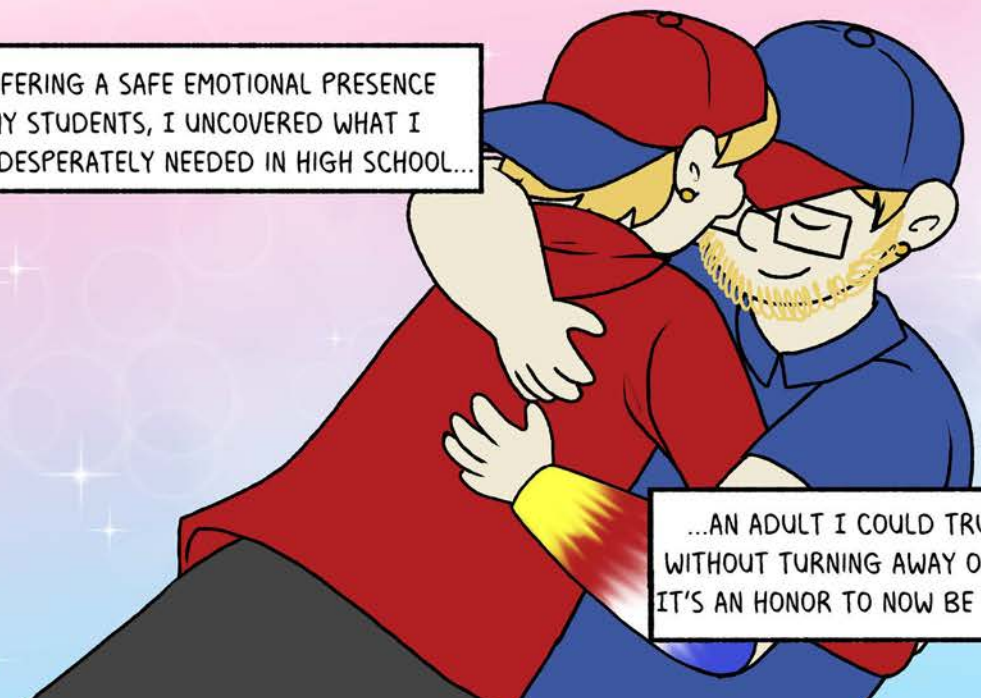
HEY, ARE YOU OK? LIKE, FOR REAL?



NOBODY'S EVER ASKED ME THAT BEFORE.

I KNOW. I'VE GOT YOU NOW.

BY OFFERING A SAFE EMOTIONAL PRESENCE TO MY STUDENTS, I UNCOVERED WHAT I HAD SO DESPERATELY NEEDED IN HIGH SCHOOL...



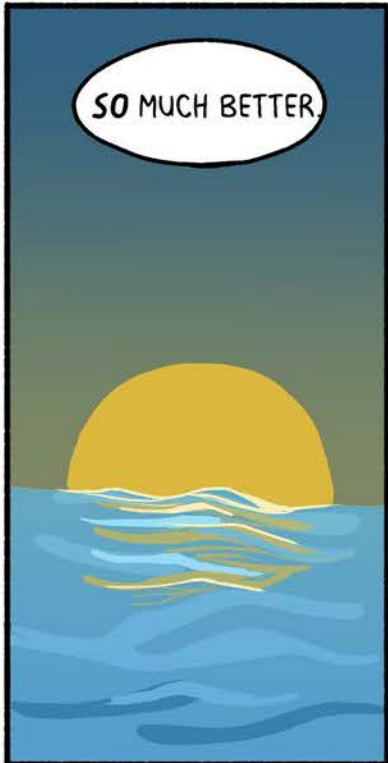
...AN ADULT I COULD TRUST TO SEE MY REALITY WITHOUT TURNING AWAY OR TRYING TO CHANGE ME. IT'S AN HONOR TO NOW BE THAT PERSON FOR OTHERS.



DOES IT REALLY GET BETTER?



ONE DAY, WHEN YOU'RE READY, YOU'LL MAKE IT BETTER.



SO MUCH BETTER.



TRANSFORMING MY PAIN INTO LIBERATION FOR TEENS LIKE ME HAS BEEN IMMENSELY HEALING.



I'VE SHOWN UP EVERY DAY FOR MY STUDENTS AND MY INNER CHILD.



IT'S TIME FOR ME TO FULLY SHOW UP FOR MY ADULT SELF, WHICH MEANS LEAVING THE CLASSROOM...FOR NOW.



THERE'S STILL A LOT OF BEAUTY ON THE HORIZON.

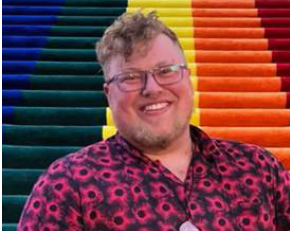
SO WHAT'S NEXT FOR US?



NOT SURE YET! ISN'T THAT BEAUTIFUL?



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Owen Dempsey (he/him) is a special educator based in the San Francisco Bay Area. He obtained his Master of Arts in Teaching from Mount Holyoke College and has a decade of multidisciplinary teaching experience in public and independent middle and high schools, post-secondary institutions, and through one-on-one coaching and consulting. Owen is passionate about creating space for neurodivergent and disabled students and LGBTQ+ youth to learn, explore, and thrive.



Jet Lepper (he/they) is a queer comic artist from the San Francisco Bay Area who specializes in educational content for children. He also works in special education as a paraprofessional while working towards becoming a teacher.

Always Been

Yarrow Koning and Sofía Abreu

A circular illustration of a garden scene. At the top, two clownfish with red, white, and orange stripes swim. To their left, a brown frog sits on a rock. In the center, the title 'ALWAYS BEEN' is written in large, glowing, orange-outlined letters. Below the title, a brown slug with a patterned back and two eye stalks is visible. To the right, a purple butterfly with black and orange markings is shown. At the bottom, a large, dark brown snail shell is prominent. On the left side, there is a large, textured, yellowish-brown object that looks like a beehive or a cluster of flowers. The background is a dark purple color with some green foliage and a blue sky area at the top.

ALWAYS BEEN

written by Yarrow Koning
illustrated by Sofía Abreu



SOMEWHERE ELSE IN FLORIDA...



...A HATEFUL GOVERNOR SIGNS LAWS TAKING AWAY QUEER AND TRANS RIGHTS.



THE RIGHT TO CARE FOR ONE'S BODY.



THE RIGHT TO LEARN ABOUT ONE'S HISTORY.

THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION FROM BIGOTRY.

THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS ONE'S IDENTITY.



BUT WHEREVER THERE IS REPRESSION, ...

...THERE IS ALWAYS RESISTANCE, AND FLORIDA IS NO DIFFERENT.





BACK AT THE GARDEN...

HI EVERYONE, COULD WE COME BACK TOGETHER FOR A FEW MINUTES PLEASE? I'D LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES.



I DREW A BUTTERFLY I SAW. IT WAS SO BEAUTIFUL. I FEEL REALLY CALM.

I DREW THIS MANGO TREE, AND NOW I'M THINKING ABOUT ALL THE DIFFERENT NATURAL PLACES I CAN VISIT AND DO MORE DRAWING.



YOU KNOW WHAT MY FAVORITE PART IS ABOUT CONNECTING WITH NATURE? NATURE IS SUPER QUEER, AND TRANS, AND DEFIES EVERY CATEGORY HUMANS TRY TO THROW AT IT.



WHenever you journal, I invite you all to remember that you are nature and nature is you. We are here. We have always been here. And we will always be here...



...AND THAT IS SOMETHING THAT CAN NEVER BE TAKEN AWAY.

Always Been (Spanish)
Siempre Hemos Sido

Yarrow Koning and Sofía Abreu



SIEMPRE HEMOS SIDO

escrito por Yarrow Koning
ilustrado y traducido por
Sofía Abreu



EN OTRO LUGAR DE FLORIDA...



...UN GOBERNADOR LLENO DE ODIOS FIRMA LEYES QUE LES QUITAN DERECHOS A PERSONAS QUEER Y TRANS.



EL DERECHO DE CUIDAR DE SU CUERPO.



EL DERECHO DE EXPRESAR SU IDENTIDAD.



EL DERECHO DE APRENDER SOBRE SU PROPIA HISTORIA.



EL DERECHO DE PROTECCIÓN ANTE EL ODIOS Y PREJUICIO.

PERO DONDE HAY REPRESIÓN, ...

...SIEMPRE HAY RESISTENCIA Y FLORIDA NO ES LA EXCEPCIÓN.





DE REGRESO EN EL JARDÍN...

OIGAN TODOS, ¿PODEMOS REGRESAR A ESTAR TODOS JUNTOS POR UNOS MINUTITOS POR FAVOR? ME ENCANTARÍA ESCUCHAR SOBRE SUS EXPERIENCIAS.

YO DIBUJÉ UNA MARIPOSA QUE VI. ERA TAN BELLA. ME SIENTO MUY EN PAZ.

YO DIBUJÉ ESTE ÁRBOL DE MANGOS Y AHORA ESTOY PENSANDO EN TODOS LOS LUGARES NATURALES QUE PUEDO VISITAR Y HACER MÁS DIBUJOS.

¿SABEN CUÁL ES MI PARTE FAVORITA DE CONECTAR CON LA NATURALEZA? QUE LA NATURALEZA ES SÚPER QUEER Y TRANS Y DESAFÍA CUALQUIER CATEGORÍA QUE LOS HUMANOS TRATAN DE IMPONERLE.

CUANDO SEA QUE ESTÉN CON SU DIARIO, LES INVITO A RECORDAR QUE USTEDES SON NATURALEZA Y LA NATURALEZA ES USTEDES. ESTAMOS AQUÍ. SIEMPRE HEMOS ESTADO AQUÍ Y SIEMPRE ESTAREMOS AQUÍ...

...Y ESO NADIE NOS LO PUEDE QUITAR.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Yarrow Koning (they/them) is a queer, trans, and non-binary environmental educator and multimedia storyteller based in Georgia. Yarrow holds a Master of Education in Environmental Education from Florida Atlantic University and specializes in environmental education that centers equity, justice, queer ecology, and multispecies liberation. Yarrow is the co-director and impact campaign coordinator for the new *Queers 4 Climate Justice* documentary, *Can't Stop Change: Queer Climate Stories from the Florida Frontlines*. In their free time, Yarrow enjoys hiking, birding, listening to podcasts, reading, and snuggling with their cat.

Yarrow Koning (elle) es una educadore ambiental queer, trans y no-binaria y una contadore de historias multimedia que actualmente reside en Georgia. Yarrow tiene una Maestría en Educación Ambiental de la Florida Atlantic University y se especializa en educación ambiental centrada en equidad, justicia, ecologías queer y liberación multispecie. Yarrow es el Co-Directore y Coordinadore de Campañas de Impacto para el nuevo documental de *No Se Para el Cambio: Historias Queer Sobre el Clima Desde Las Vanguardias de Florida*. En su tiempo libre, Yarrow disfruta del senderismo y le encanta observar aves, escuchar podcasts, leer, y acurrucarse con su gato.



Sofía Abreu is an illustrator from Mexico City who is currently finishing a doctoral degree in mathematics education at Michigan State University. Sofía has enjoyed drawing since an early age and is increasingly excited for the possibilities that comics offer as a form of expression and connection. During her postgraduate studies, Sofía has had the space to grow with this medium and has authored and co-authored two mini comic books, *In-Betweens* and *Young Philosophers*, respectively, among other works. Sofía currently lives in East Lansing, MI with her cat family, Zami and Aleph, and is grateful for coffee every morning.

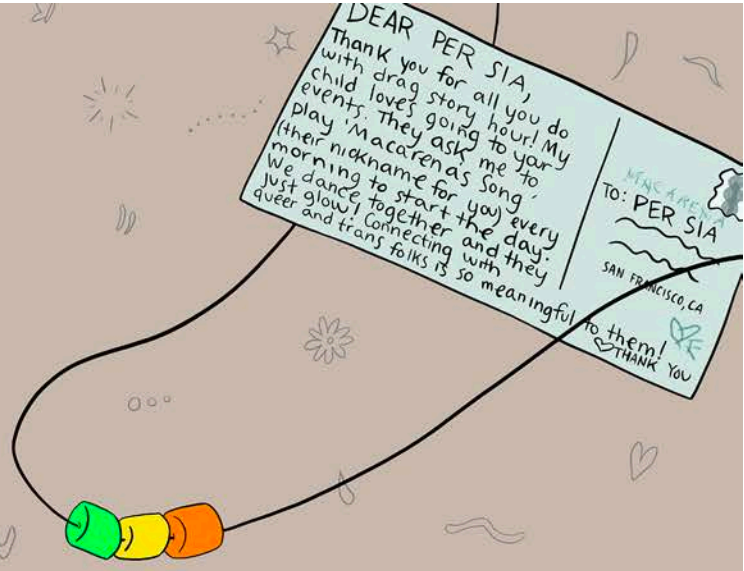
Sofía Abreu es una ilustradora de la Ciudad de México que está terminando su doctorado en educación matemática de la Michigan State University. Sofía disfruta dibujar desde que era pequeña y cada vez le emocionan más las posibilidades que ofrecen los cómics como medios de expresión y conexión. En sus estudios de doctorado, Sofía ha tenido el espacio para crecer con este medio y es autora y co-autora de dos mini comics, *In-Betweens* y *Young Philosophers* respectivamente, entre otras obras. Actualmente, Sofía vive en East Lansing, MI, con su familia gatuna, Zami y Aleph, y todas las mañanas está agradecida por su café.

Socrates and Me

Per Sia and Ali R. Blake



DEAR PER SIA,
 Thank you for all you do with drag story hour! My child loves going to your events. They ask me to play 'Macarena' Song' (their nickname for you) every morning to start the day. We dance together and they just glow! Connecting with queer and trans folks is so meaningful to them!
 TO: PER SIA
 SAN FRANCISCO, CA
 THANK YOU



Socrates and me

WRITTEN BY:
 Per Sia

ILLUSTRATED BY:
 Ali R. Blake





IT'S BEEN THIRTY-SOMETHING DAYS SINCE MY LAST DAY OFF, BUT IT'S OK BECAUSE TODAY IS MY LAST DRAG STORY HOUR OF THE SUMMER, AND AFTER THAT I AM HEADING TO OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FOR A MUCH NEEDED VACATION. THIS YEAR HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING, WITH ALL THE HATE DRAG STORY HOUR HAS RECEIVED.



DRAG STORY HOUR HAS HEALED THE QUEER PERSON I WAS AND STILL CARRY WITH ME. I WISH I HAD THIS PROGRAM GROWING UP. MAYBE IF I HAD THIS PROGRAM GROWING UP IT WOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN ME FOUR DECADES TO DECLARE MY TRANSNESS.

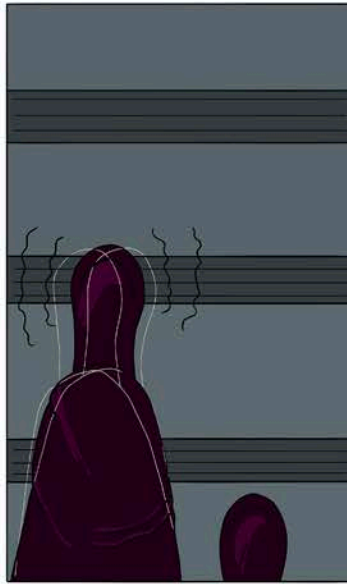
BOOKS? CHECK! PASSPORT? CHECK! CHONIS? CHECK! MY ANXIETY? CHECK!

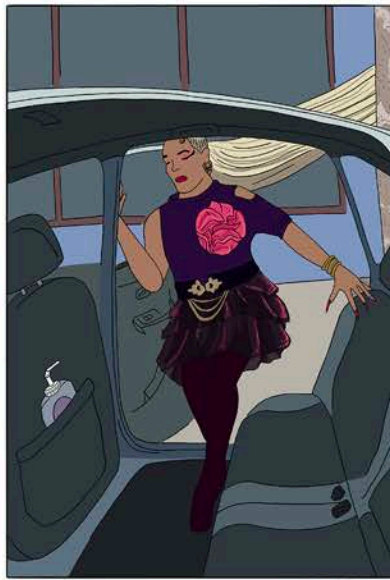
TIME TO ORDER THE UBER TO THE FRIENDS GOLDEN GATE LIBRARY IN OAKLAND!

THE WAIT IS FIVE MINUTES, WHICH IS PERFECT BECAUSE THAT'S HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE ME TO GET TO THE CURB.

I LIVE ON THE TOP FLOOR OF A THREE-STORY BUILDING WITH NO ELEVATOR, SO IT'S A CHALLENGE.

ESPECIALLY IN MY HEEL-LESS HEELS.





LOOKING LOVELY THIS MORNING. WHERE ARE WE HEADED, A LIBRARY?

← Trip Details

IT IS A SHAME THAT THERE HAS BEEN SO MUCH HATE AND CONTROVERSY ABOUT A WONDERFUL PROGRAM FOR KIDS.



I LOVE THE DRAG STORY HOUR, AND SO DO MY GRANDCHILDREN!

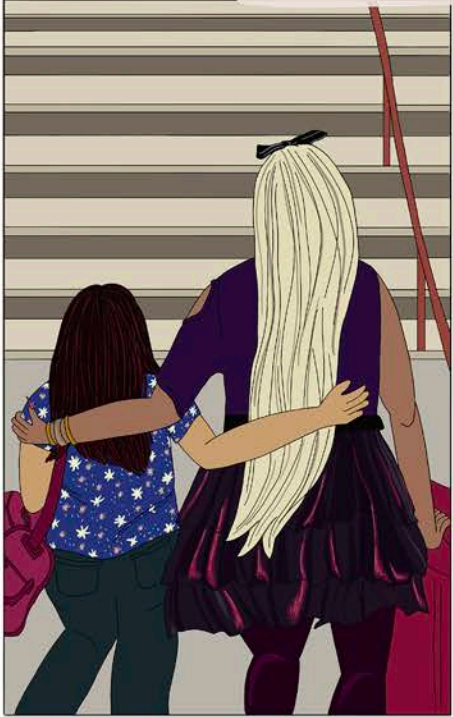
YES, I'M A FOUNDING MEMBER OF DRAG STORY HOUR, AND I AM OFF TO DO MY LAST ONE OF THE SUMMER BEFORE A MUCH-NEEDED VACATION!



35 MINUTES LATER...

I AM GREETED BY MY "BODYGUARD," LAURA. I'VE NICKNAMED LAURA "MY BODYGUARD" BECAUSE SHE IS ALWAYS AT MY SIDE WHEN I AM DOING DRAG STORY HOUR IN OAKLAND.

SHE HAS SET PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ANTI-TRANS/ANTI-DRAG PROTESTERS, INCLUDING SAFE ESCAPE ROUTES IN CASE OF EMERGENCY.



I SET UP ALL MY BOOKS ON THE STAGE AND SYNC MY PHONE TO THE SPEAKER WHILE FAMILIES START TRICKLING IN.



HI EVERYONE!
MY NAME IS PER SIA (PRONOUNCED IN SPANISH) OR PER SIA (PRONOUNCED IN ENGLISH). EITHER ONE WORKS, BECAUSE TRUST, I'VE BEEN CALLED WAY WORSE!



WHO I AM IS TRANS

WHAT I DO IS DRAG. ARE WE READY FOR SOME BOOKS? AND A LIP SYNC OR TWO?





LET'S START WITH
A LITTLE DRAG
NUMBER,

BECAUSE WHAT'S
A DRAG QUEEN
WITHOUT A
LITTLE LIP SYNC?



LIKE A PLASTIC BAG



LIKE A PLASTIC BAG

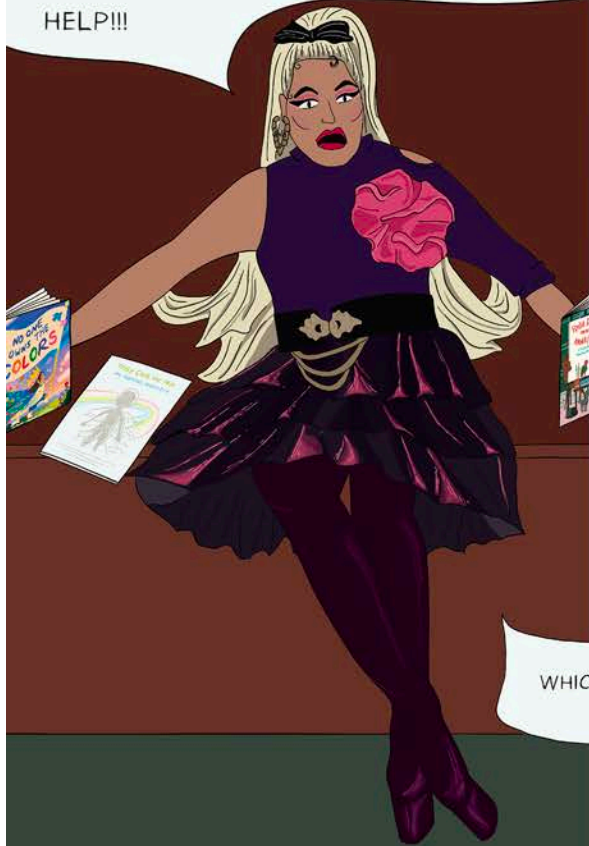


LIKE A PLASTIC BAG?



BUT DO YOU EVER FEEL?

I HAVE A BIG PROBLEM!! TOO MANY BOOKS,
AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO READ,
HELP!!!



WHICH BOOK WOULD YOU
LIKE ME TO R-



YAAA

WEEE!

MY NAME IS SOCRATES AND MY
PRONOUNS ARE HE/HIM AND I AM
TRRAAANNSSSSGGGENNNDDEERRR!!!

IN THIS MOMENT I AM FLOODED WITH SO MANY
EMOTIONS. IT TAKES EVERY OUNCE OF STRENGTH
TO NOT BURST INTO TEARS, HAPPY TEARS. TO
KNOW THAT SUCH A YOUNG PERSON WAS SO IN
TOUCH WITH THEIR BODY AND WHO THEY ARE
MAKES IT SUCH A MOMENT OF HAPPINESS, AND
EVERYONE CHEERS.

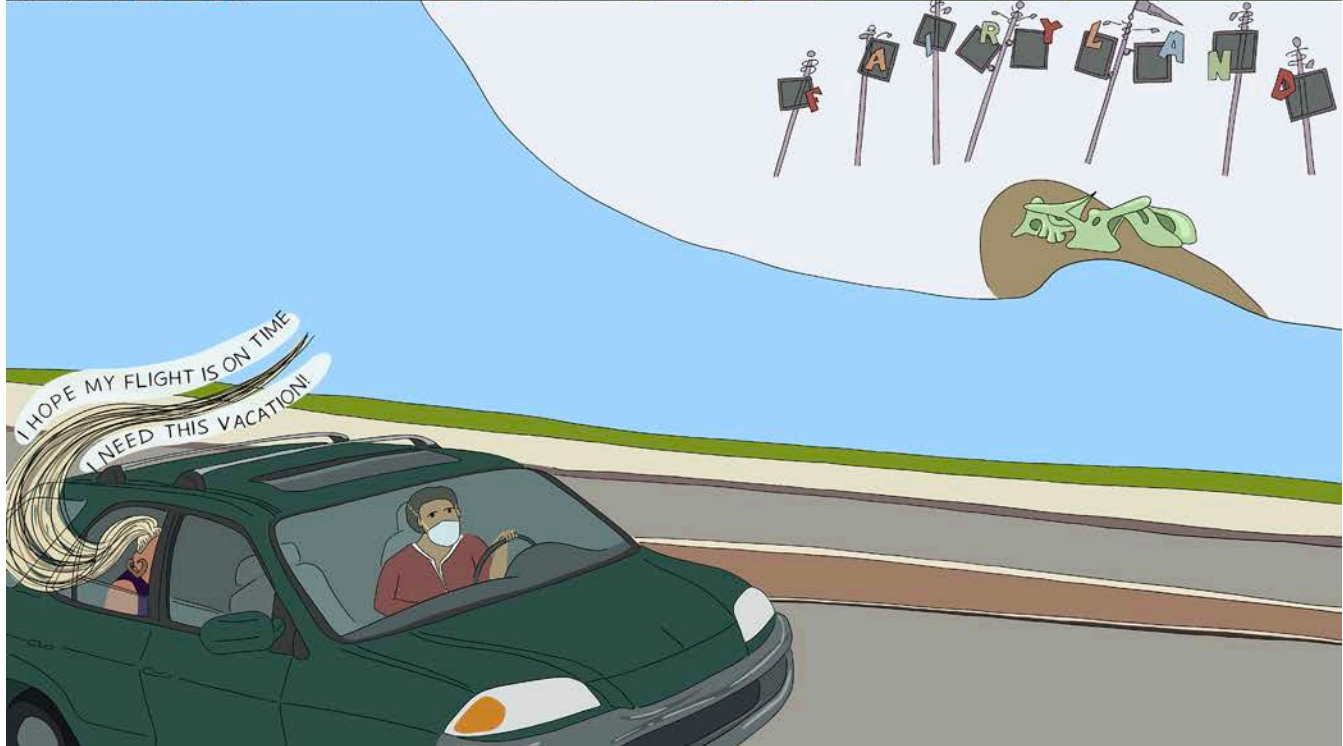
HIS HAPPY AND CONFIDENT FACE GIVES ME
SO MUCH QUEER JOY!

AS I READ MY STORY BOOK TO THE
CHILDREN, I AM REMINDED OF HOW
IMPORTANT THE PROGRAM IS, NOT
JUST FOR QUEER KIDS AND THEIR
FAMILIES, BUT ALSO FOR US, THE
PERFORMERS. HOW AS EDUCATORS,
WE CONTINUE TO LEARN FROM OUR
STUDENTS.

* SNAPS *



IT FEELS SO SPECIAL TO KNOW THAT THE BOOKS I READ CELEBRATE ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE, BUT ESPECIALLY QUEER FOLKS, ESPECIALLY DURING VERY CHALLENGING TIMES FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

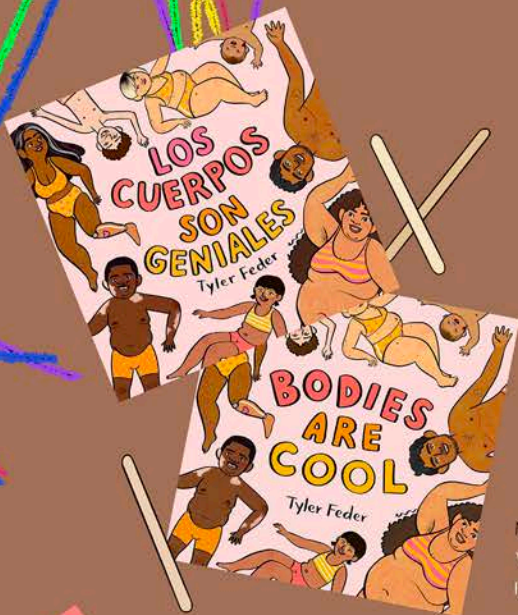


I AM THE LUCKIEST DRAG QUEEN
IN THE WORLD

AS I SIT IN THE OAKLAND AIRPORT WAITING
FOR MY FLIGHT, I FEEL THE TEARS BUBBLING
UP FROM THE JOY I CAN'T CONTAIN INSIDE.
TO KNOW THAT WHAT I DO HAS AN IMPACT
MAKES ME FEEL DEEPLY GRATEFUL.

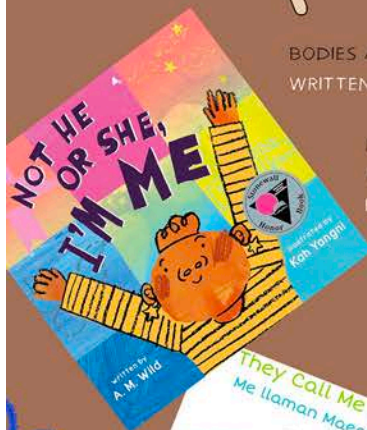


WHAT'S IN PER SIA'S DRAG BAG?!



NO ONE OWNS THE COLORS
WRITTEN BY: GIANNA DAVY
ILLUSTRATED BY: BRENDA RODRIGUEZ

BODIES ARE COOL (LOS CUERPOS SON GENIALES)
WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY: TYLER FEDER



NOT HE OR SHE, I'M ME
WRITTEN BY: A.M. WILD
ILLUSTRATED BY: KAH YANGNI

FRIDA KAHLO AND HER ANIMALITOS
WRITTEN BY: MONICA BROWN
ILLUSTRATED BY: JOHN PARRA



WE ARE WATER PROTECTORS
WRITTEN BY: CAROLE LINDSTROM
ILLUSTRATED BY: MICHAELA GOADE



THEY CALL ME MIX / ME LLAMAN MAESTRE
WRITTEN BY: LOURDES RIVAS
ILLUSTRATED BY: BREENA NUÑEZ

IT FEELS GOOD TO BE YOURSELF:
A BOOK ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY
WRITTEN BY: THERESA THORN
ILLUSTRATED BY: NOAH GRIGNI



A LIFE MADE BY HAND:
THE STORY OF RUTH ASAWA
WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY: ANDREA D'AQUINO

DID YOU SEE THIS POSTER HUNG UP IN THE LIBRARY?
THE POSTER WAS CREATED BY MICAH BAZANT.



"THIS PIECE WAS CREATED IN 2016 WITH THE ALLIANCE OF SOUTH ASIANS TAKING ACTION, AND INSPIRED BY MUSLIM WOMEN IN A LITERACY PROGRAM IN OAKLAND, CA." FOR MORE ON THE CREATION OF THE POSTER AND TO DOWNLOAD A POSTER TO HANG IN YOUR SPACE:

<https://www.micahbazant.com/buy-art/everyone-is-welcome-here>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



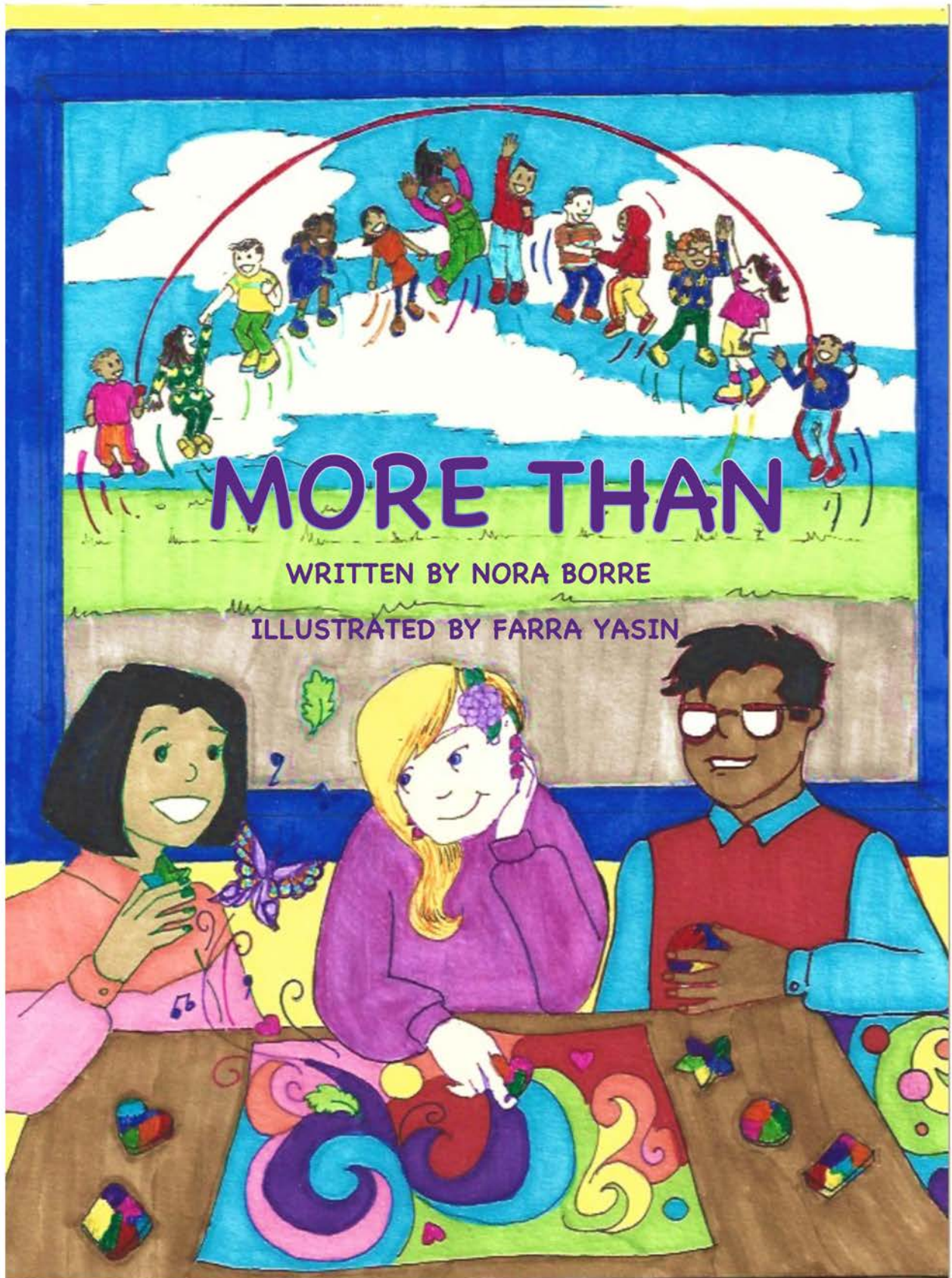
With a pedigree from weekly performances at the late, iconic *Esta Noche*, **Per Sia's** trajectory has gone on to include art curation, stand-up, television, and maybe a quinceañera or two, in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and México. Currently, she is a regular performer in the nationally acclaimed "Drag Story Hour" as well as an educator in residence at an after-school arts program in the San Francisco Unified School District profiled on *KQED Arts*, *National Public Radio* and *CNN*.



Ali R. Blake is a teaching artist and education researcher cultivating spaces for people to imagine and create the worlds we want to live in together—definitely more queer and more trans worlds! When Ali is not drawing, reading, writing, gardening, singing and dancing while cooking, or cuddling with cats, they organize a queer and trans communal clothing making space rooted in multidimensional struggles for self-determination. If you're lucky, you may meet them performing, too, as *AI iteration*.

More Than

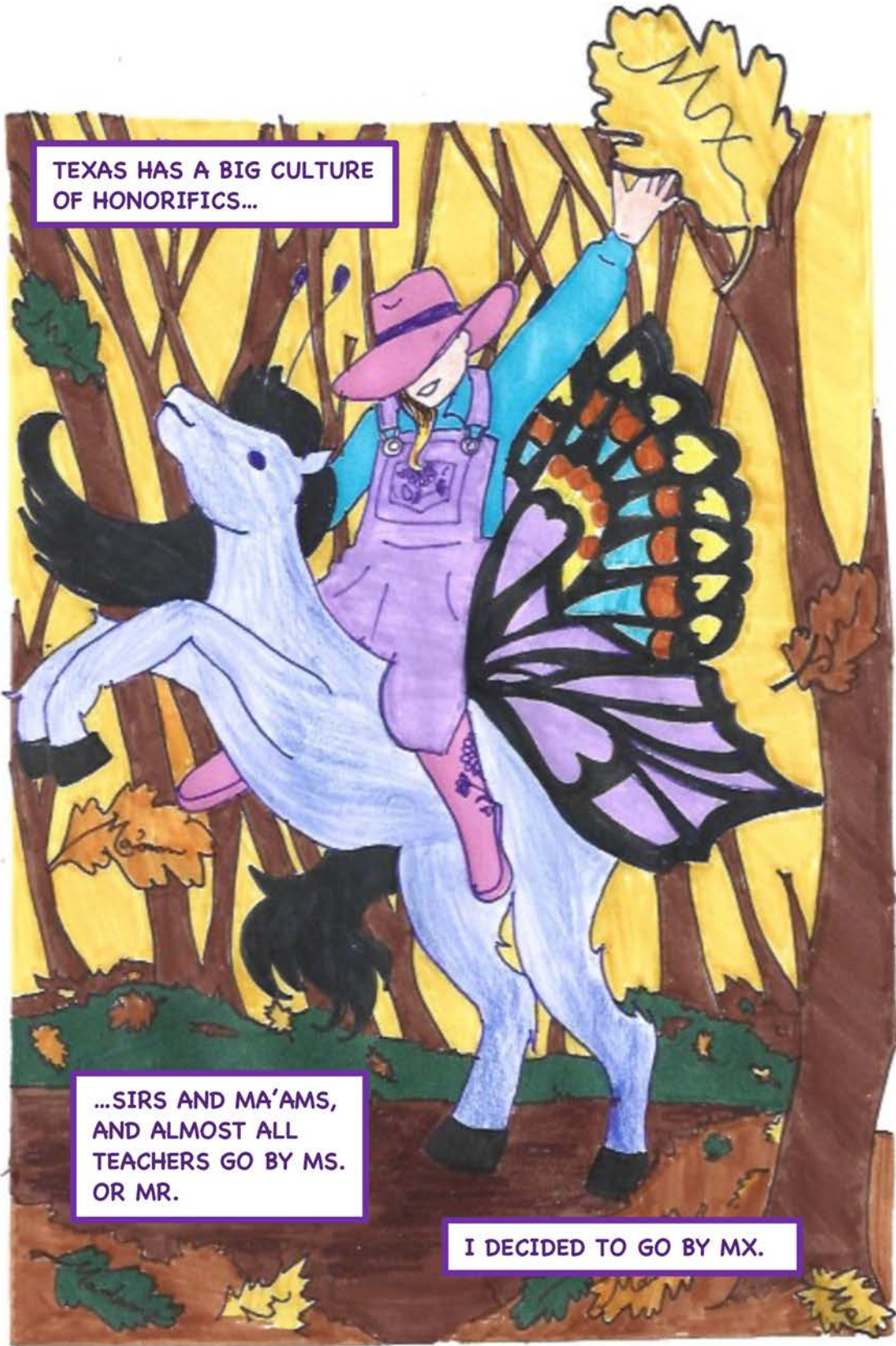
Nora Borre and Farra Yasin



MORE THAN

WRITTEN BY NORA BORRE

ILLUSTRATED BY FARRA YASIN

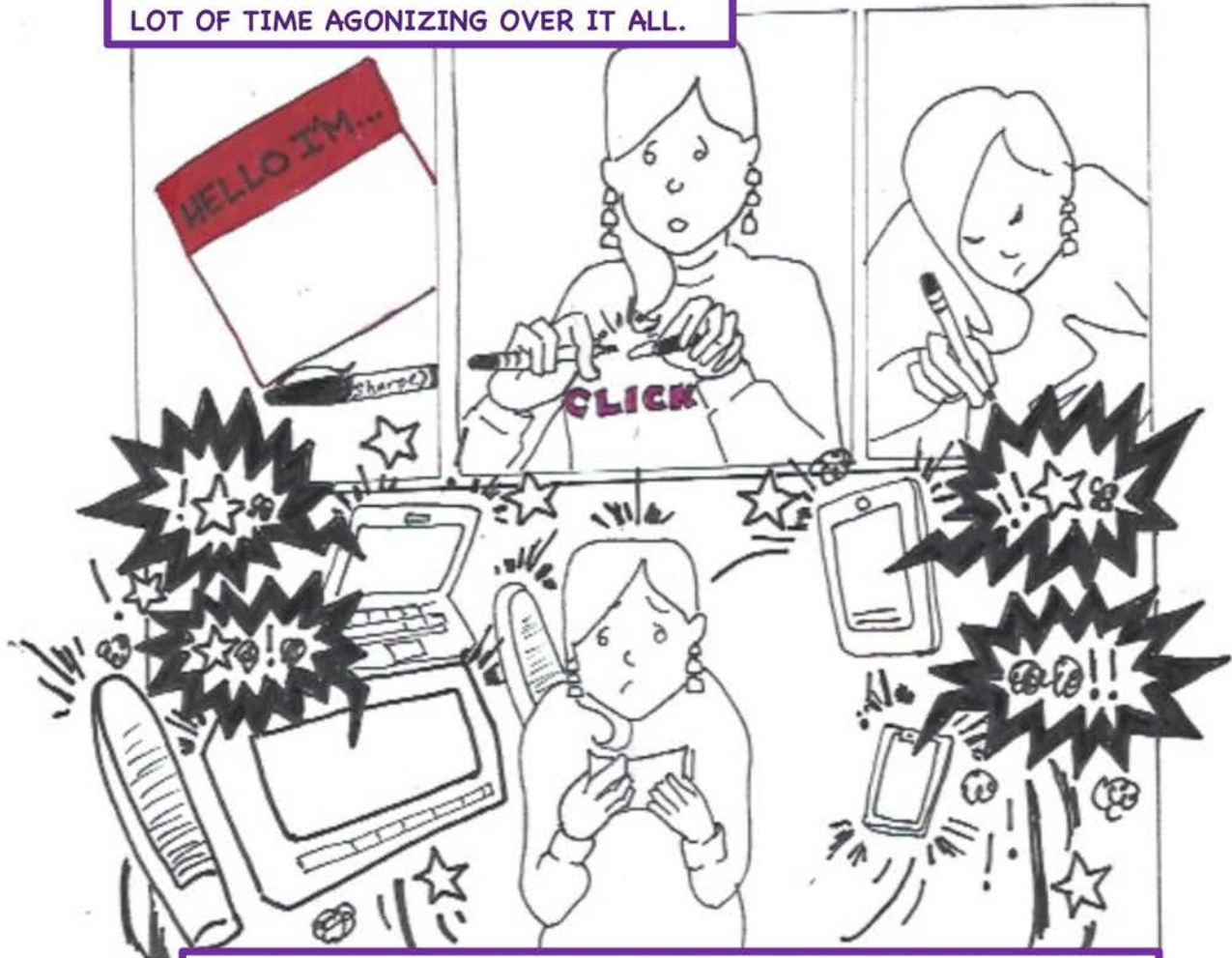


TEXAS HAS A BIG CULTURE OF HONORIFICS...

...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.

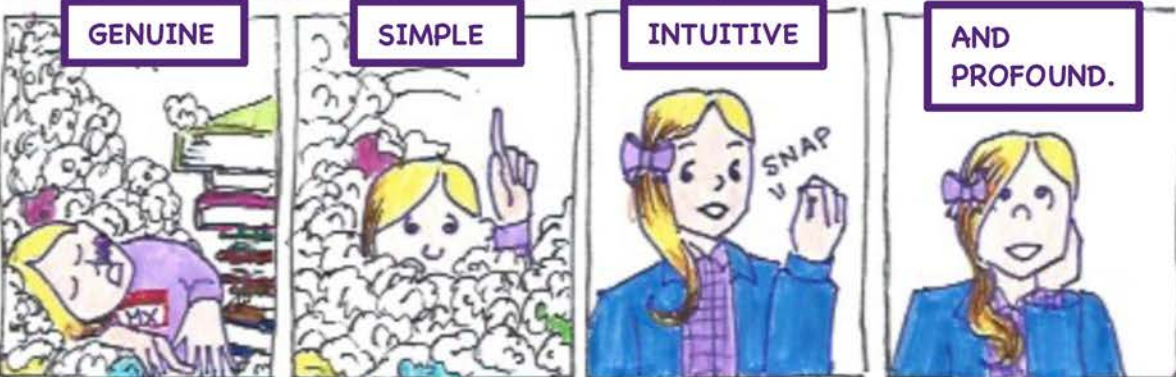
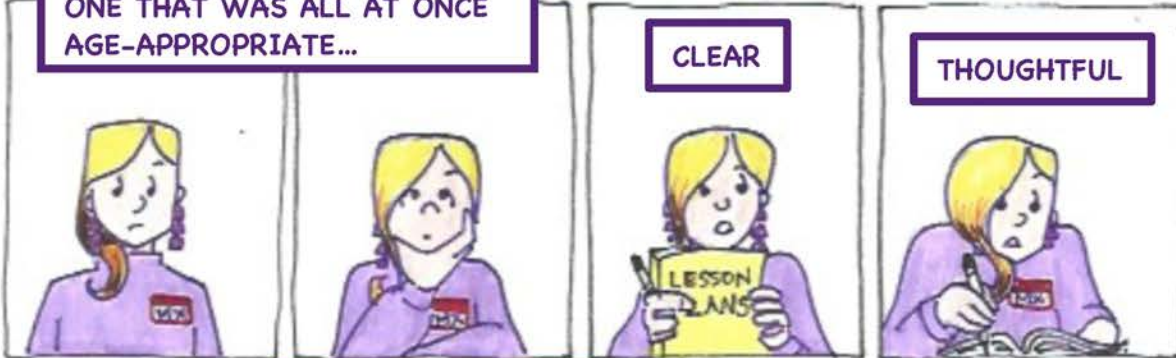
STILL, I DIDN'T SEE ANY TRANS PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS.



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...





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.

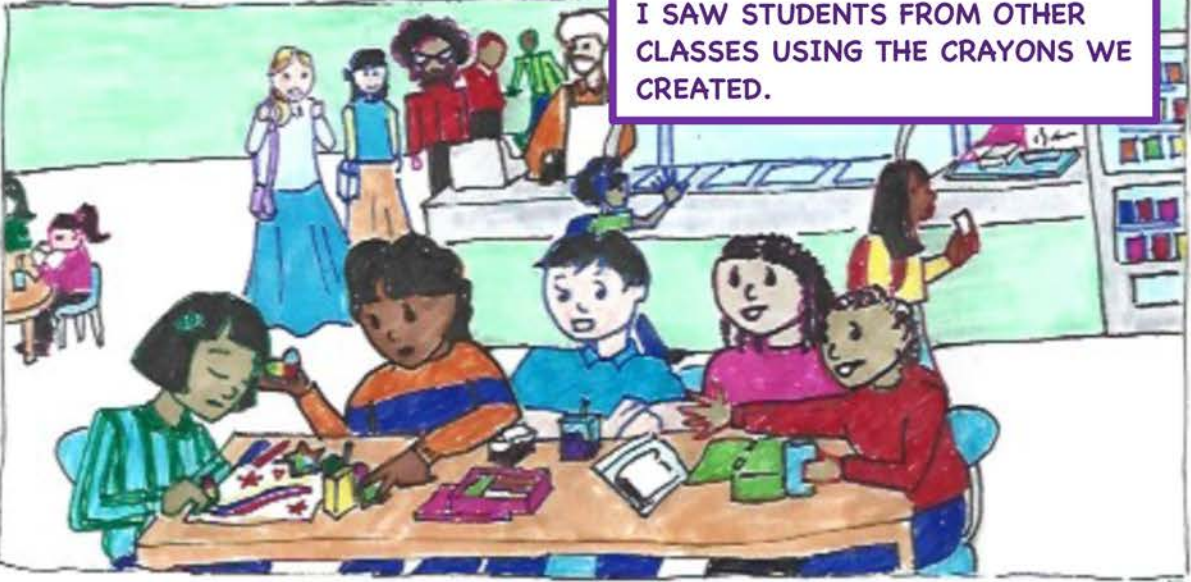




WE TOOK BROKEN CRAYONS AND MELTED THEM INTO NEW CRAYONS TO TALK ABOUT HOW SOMETIMES WE'RE NOT JUST ONE COLOR (OR ONE FEELING OR ONE WAY) BUT ARE ACTUALLY A COMBINATION OF MANY DIFFERENT THINGS ALL AT ONCE.

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.

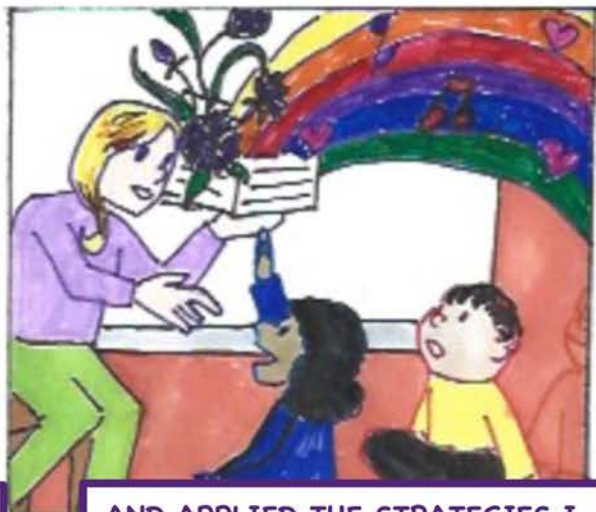
IT WAS MY FIRST SEMESTER TEACHING, AND I WAS PROUD OF MYSELF FOR DOING TEACHING.



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.

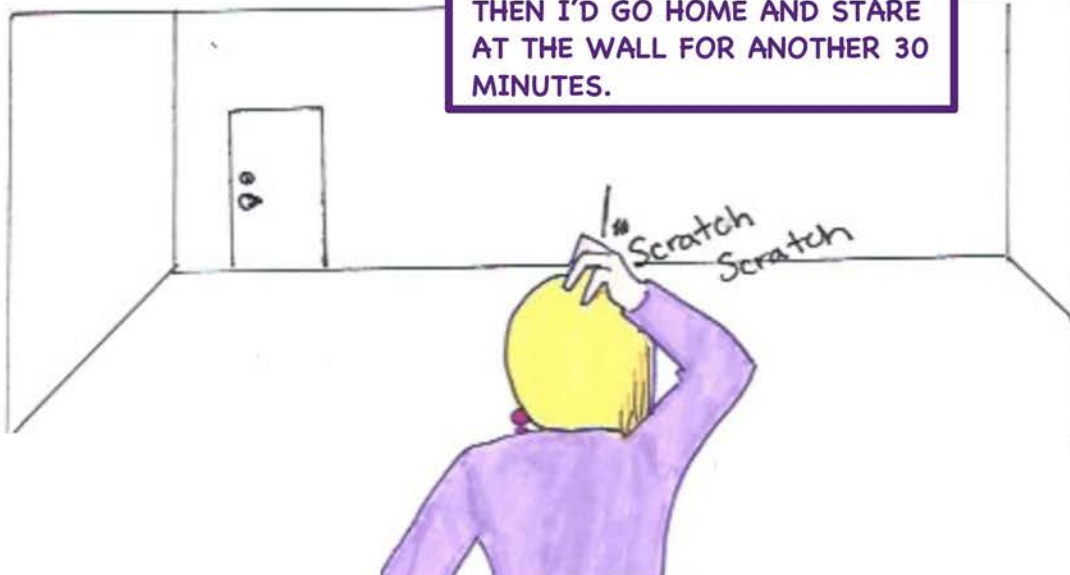
WE READ MORE STORIES, MADE MORE ART, HAD MORE FUN.



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.



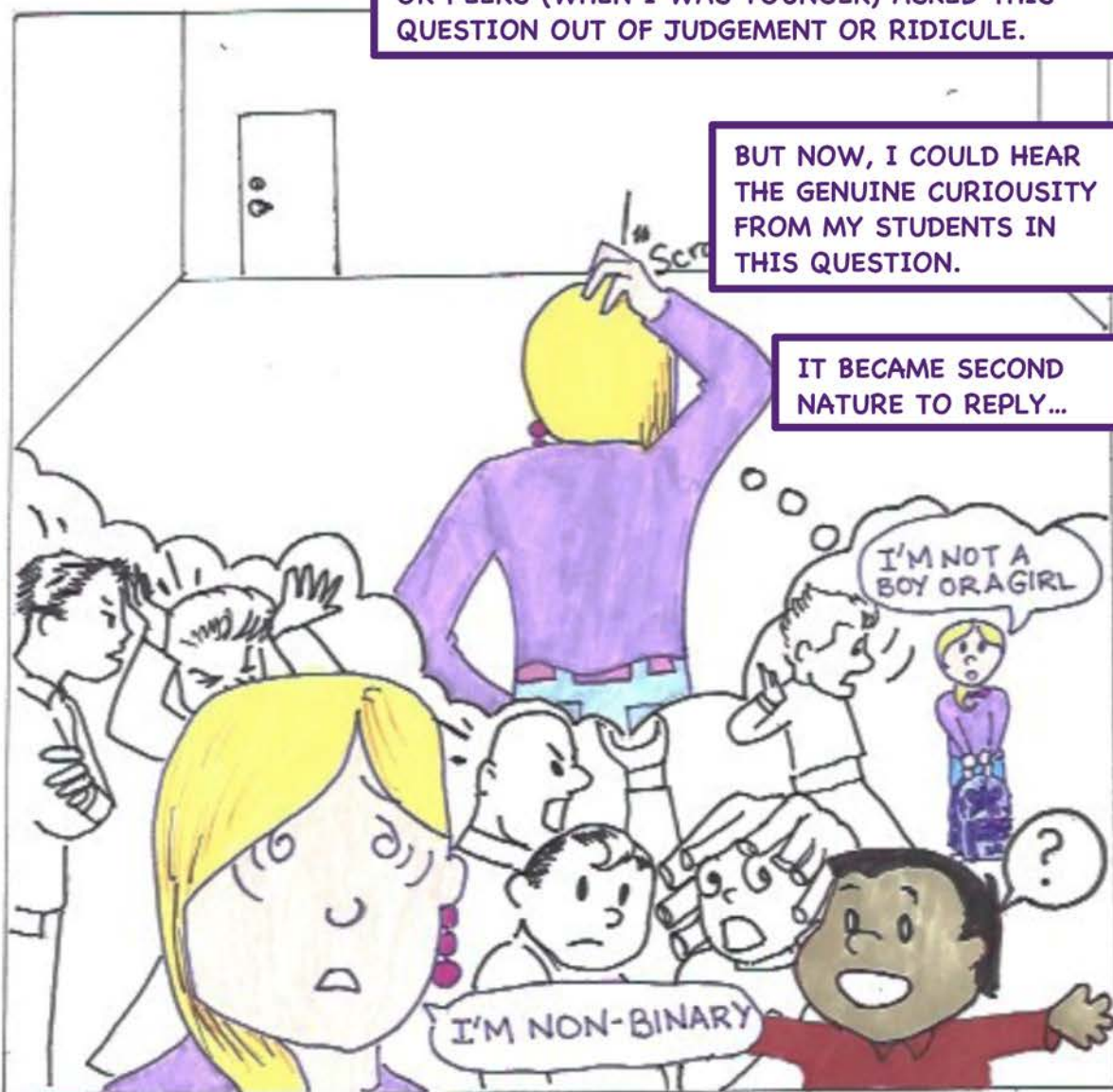
I FELT I WAS GETTING THROUGH TO MY STUDENTS, THAT THEY WERE REALLY UNDERSTANDING ME. HOWEVER, THEY STILL WOULD REGULARLY ASK ME IF I WAS A BOY OR A GIRL.

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.

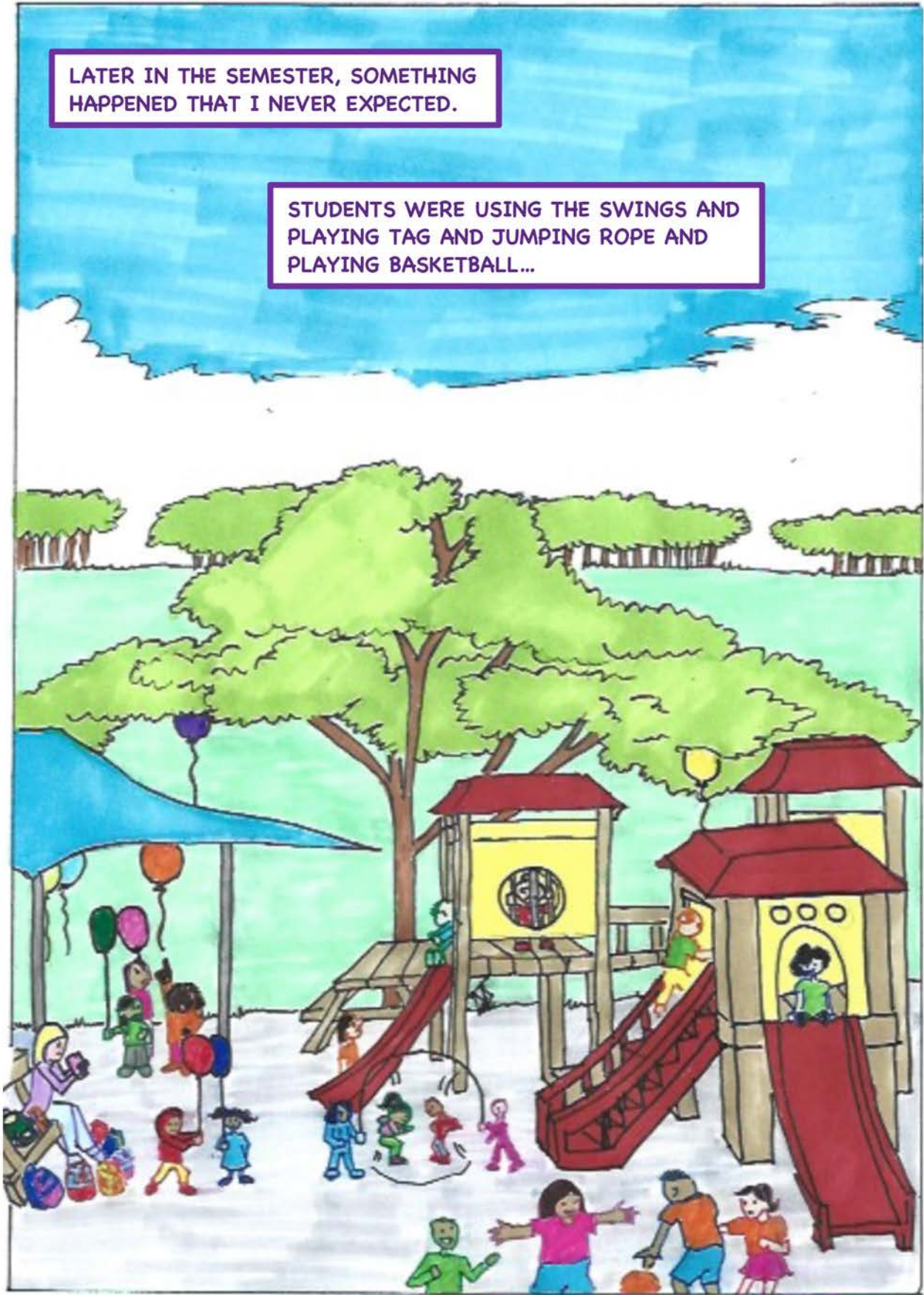
BUT NOW, I COULD HEAR THE GENUINE CURIOSITY FROM MY STUDENTS IN THIS QUESTION.

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...

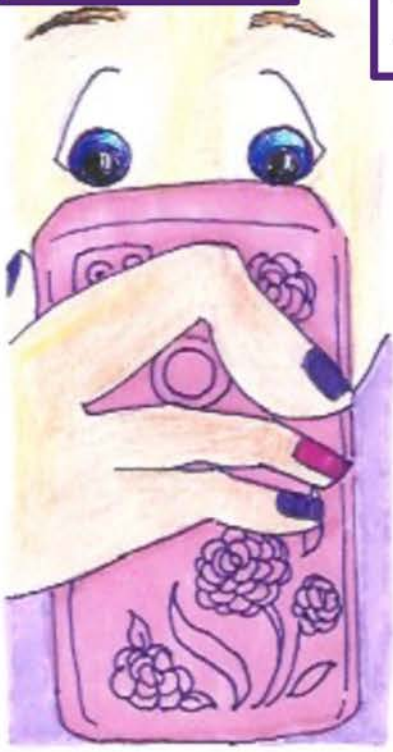


I WAS SITTING ON A BENCH AND A STUDENT NOTICED MY PHONE CASE.



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.

Your Roots are Showing

Daniel Gallardo and Martín Pech

YOUR



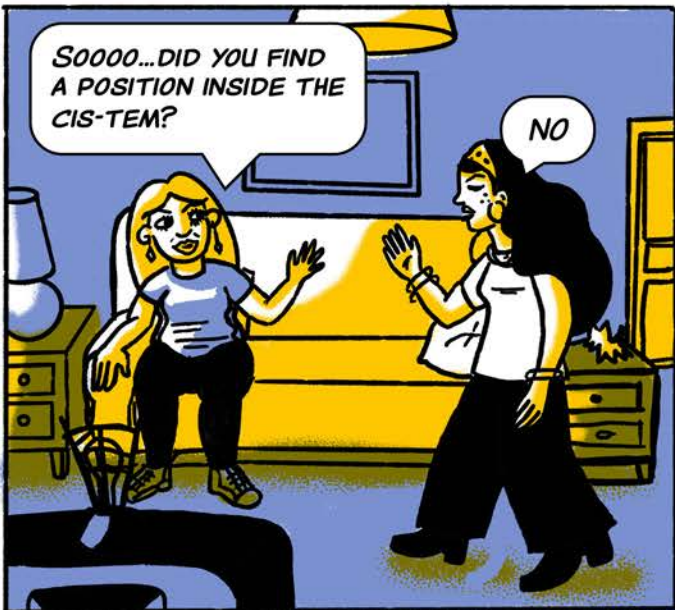
ROOTS
ARE SHOWING

= BY DANIEL GALLARDO =
ART BY: MARTÍN PECH

MEXICO CITY CIRCA 2008



AFTER INTERVIEWING ONCE AGAIN FOR A TEACHING POSITION, I'M ANNOYED, TIRED, AND DEVASTATED. I HAVEN'T BEEN HIRED, AND I KNOW IT'S BECAUSE I'M A TRANS FEMME EDUCATOR.





I DARED TO DREAM OF BREAKING DOWN THE RIGID GENDER BINARIES ENTRENCHED WITHIN MEXICO'S SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT MAKE US FEEL LIKE OUTSIDERS - NOT FINDING A JOB THIS TIME MADE ME FEEL LIKE I WILL NEVER BELONG IN SCHOOLS.

I AM DETERMINED TO BECOME A TEACHER, EVEN IF DRASTIC MEASURES NEED TO BE TAKEN.



I COULD GO BACK, YOU KNOW... TO WHO I USED TO BE. ONLY DURING THE DAYTIME - IT WILL BE LIKE STRAIGHT DRAG; I COULD BRING HE/HIM BACK.

...ARE YOU JOKING?!! THAT IS A CRAZY IDEA! HOW WILL YOU EVEN?... IT WILL DESTROY YOU.

NO -- WE'RE ALL BORN NAKED, AND THE REST IS DRAG





I DECIDED TO EMBARK ON A DARING MISSION TO TRANS(FORM) THE AILING EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM WITHIN. I BEGAN TO CAMOUFLAGE MY TRANSITION SO I COULD FIND A TEACHING JOB.



TO BEGIN INFILTRATING THAT DECAYING EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE, I KNEW I NEEDED TO ADOPT THE IDEALS, APPEARANCE, AND BEHAVIORS OF THOSE IN POWER.



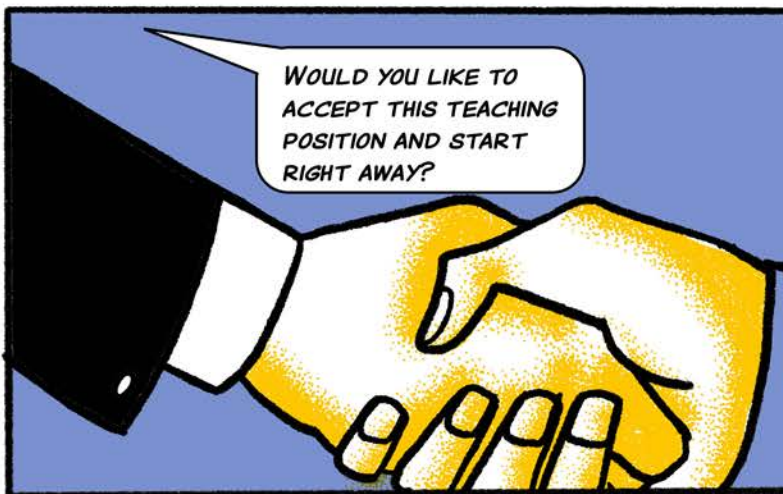
I ASSUMED THE GUISE OF A MACHO MAN - THE ONE THE CIS-TEM EXPECTED ME TO BE. I DRESSED IN PROFESSIONAL MALE ATTIRE, SPORTING A SUIT WITH A MATCHING TIE AND MY HE/HIM PRONOUNN TAG.



MEXICAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ALSO SEEM TO PRIVILEGE BLONDENESS! THEIR MISGUIDED PURSUIT OF UNATTAINABLE WHITE PURITY AND OBSESSION WITH EUROPEAN AESTHETICS FORCED ME TO RETOUCH MY DARK ROOTS.



AFTER GOING TO THE FIRST INTERVIEW IN ONE OF THE TOP-RATED SCHOOLS IN MEXICO, I WATCHED HE/HIM GET THE JOB ON THE SPOT.





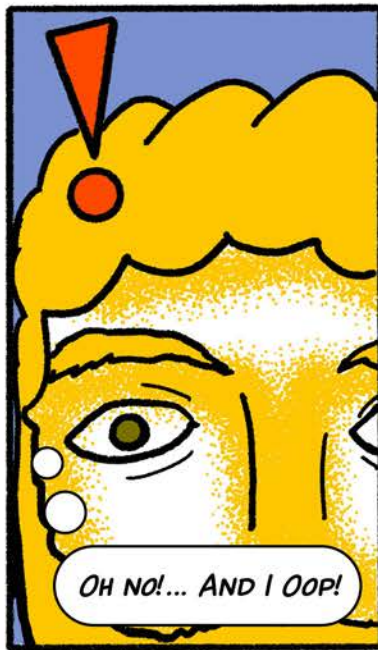
EVERY DAY WAS A DELICATE DANCE OF DISGUISE FOR ME, CONCEALING MYSELF BENEATH THE FACADE OF A CIS-NORMATIVE MALE EDUCATOR.



GOOD MORNING, MR.



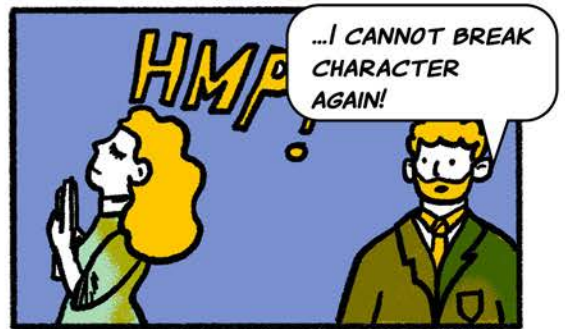
HEY GIRRRRRRL!...



OH NO!... AND I OOP!



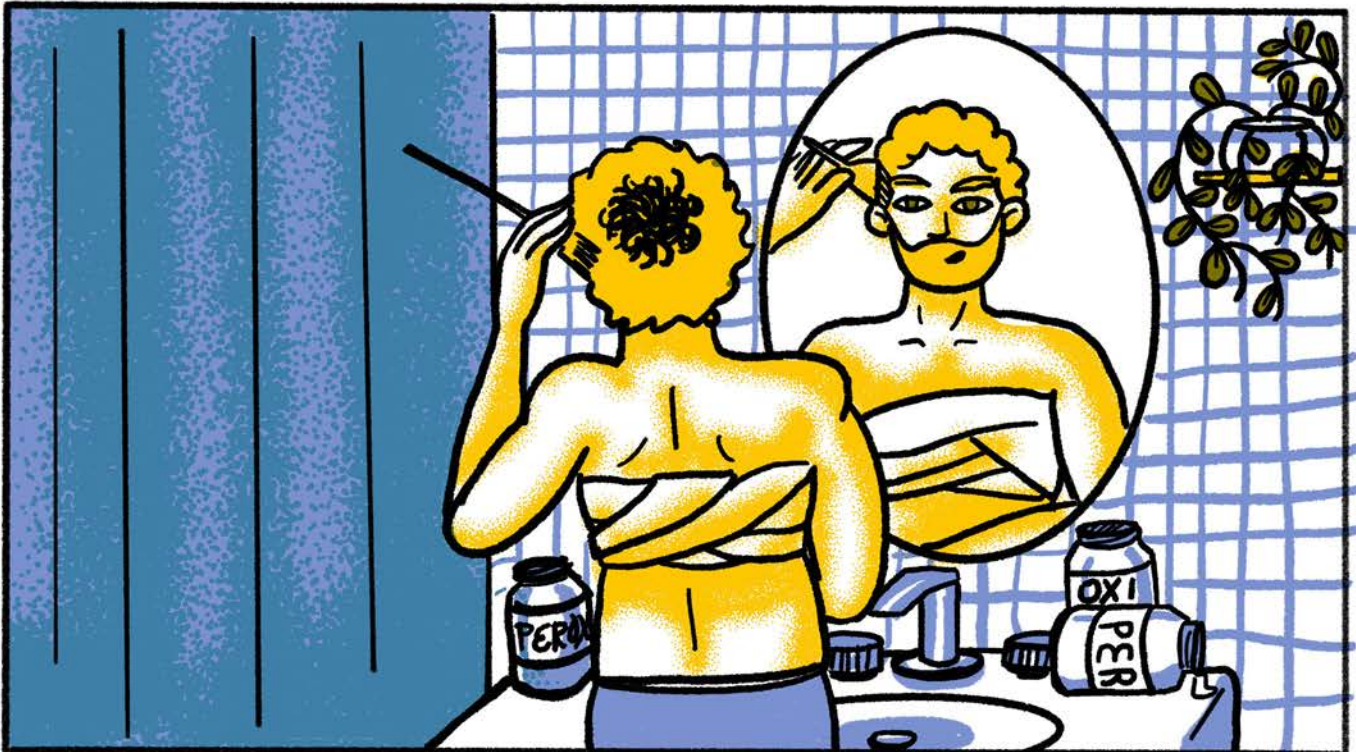
GOOD MORNING, MISS



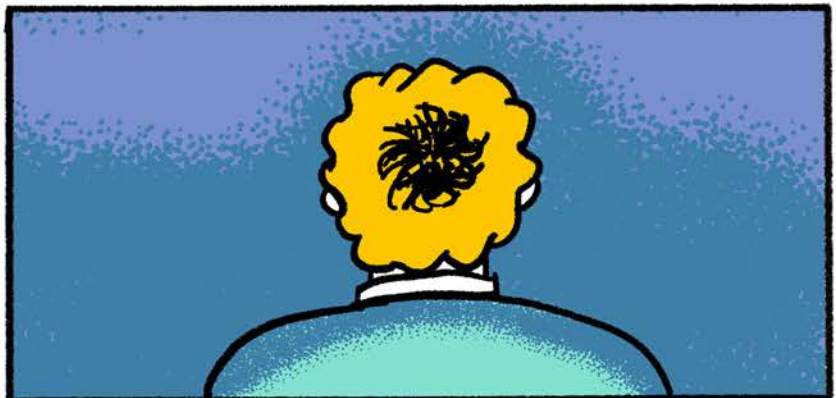
...I CANNOT BREAK CHARACTER AGAIN!

ALTHOUGH I CONTINUED TO PLAY THE CIS-MALE ROLE FOR MANY YEARS, I HAD NOT MANAGED TO CHANGE ANYTHING





THE STRUGGLE BECAME PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING WHEN ONE DAY I RAN OUT OF BLONDE HAIR DYE AND FORGOT TO RETOUCH MY ROOTS!



MY DARK CURLY ROOTS BEGAN TO SHOW - THREATENING THE CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED ILLUSION.



GOOD MORNING, MISS.



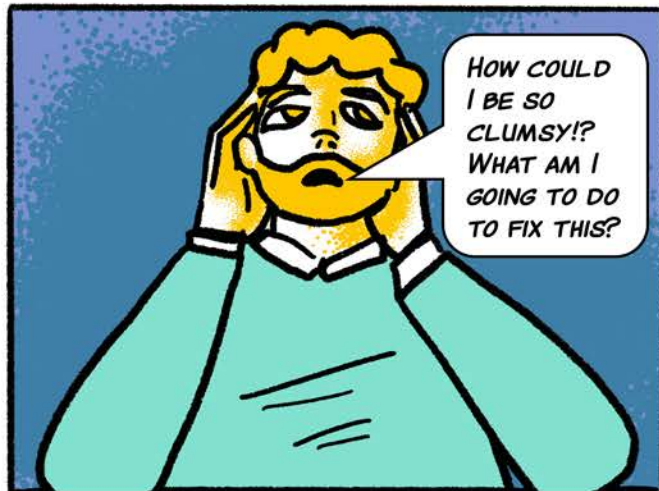
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A NATURAL BLONDE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE IN THIS ELITE SCHOOL.



I... I BEG YOUR PARDON?



YOUR ROOTS ARE SHOWING!

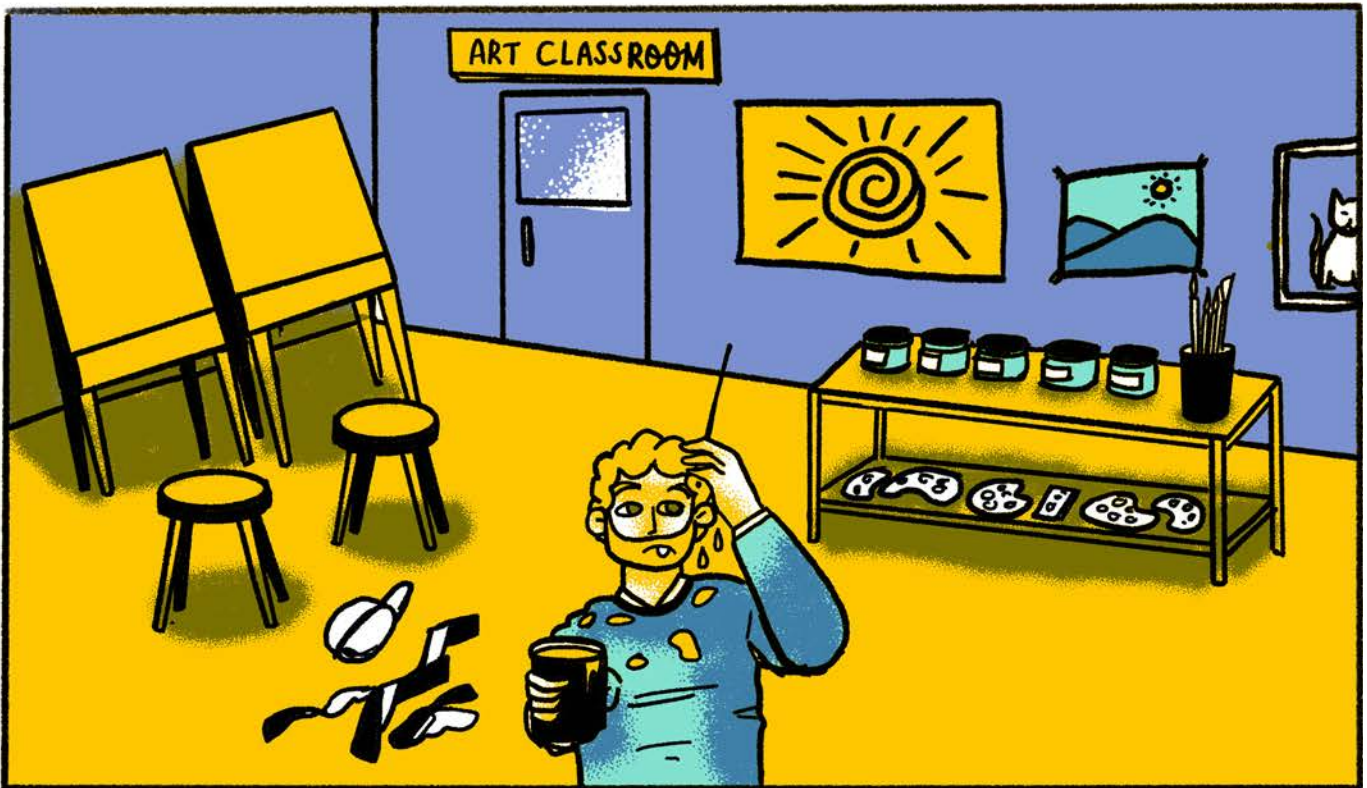


HOW COULD I BE SO CLUMSY!?!
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO TO FIX THIS?

I RAN TO THE BATHROOM AND NOTICED THAT MY DARK ROOTS HAD GROWN OUT MORE THAN USUAL ALL AROUND THE BACK OF MY HEAD.



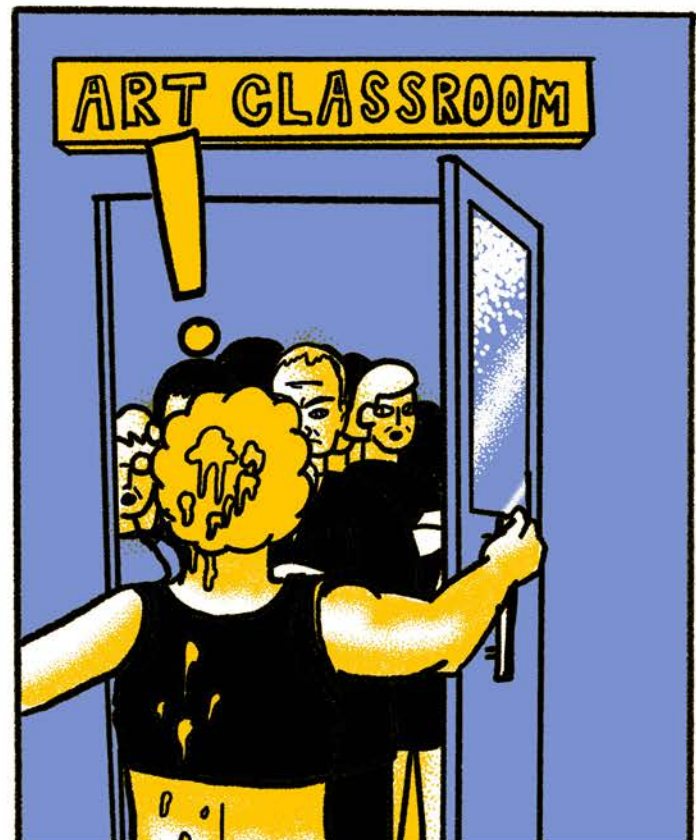
I TRIED TO COVER THEM SOMEHOW, BUT NOTHING WAS WORKING, AND MY ROOTS WERE STILL SHOWING.



I RAN TO THE ART SUPPLIES ROOM, GRABBED YELLOW PAINT IN DESPERATION, AND STARTED TO COVER MY ROOTS, BUT THAT DIDN'T WORK EITHER.



OH NO! I LOOK LIKE A HOT MESS! I NEED TO SNEAK OUT BEFORE SOMEONE SEES ME LIKE THIS.



AS SOON AS I OPENED THE DOOR, I REALIZED THAT EVERYONE WAS WAITING OUTSIDE . . . WAITING TO WATCH THE WITCH BURN AT THE STAKE

DESPITE EVERY EFFORT TO CONCEAL MY ROOTS AND BE PART OF THE CIS-TEM, I KNEW ONE DAY THEY WOULD FIND OUT WHO I WAS AND VIEW ME AS A THREAT TO THE STUDENTS.

I TOLD YOU SOMETHING WAS OFF WITH HIM. WHAT TYPE OF MAN WOULD PAINT HIS HAIR?

HE ALWAYS SEEMED VERY EFFEMINATE TO ME. I CAN'T BELIEVE WE LET HIM BE AROUND THE STUDENTS ALL THESE YEARS.

YOU ARE FIRED! YOU HAVE TRICKED US INTO BELIEVING YOU ARE SOMETHING YOU ARE NOT.

I JUST ASK THAT YOU PACK UP YOUR BELONGINGS. PLEASE LEAVE QUIETLY AND DON'T MAKE A SCENE.

ABSOLUTELY.





NOW THAT I HAD BEEN Outed, I FOUND MYSELF IN THE RANKS OF THE UNEMPLOYED AGAIN.



WHAT AM I GONNA DO...CRISTINA?!?! STOP PRACTICING THE CHOREO OF THE GAYEST ANTHEM - YOU KNOW IT ALREADY.



!!!ABRE...!



...CIERRA...



...ACARICIA...



...Y BUFA!!!

'THE SONG "DIME QUE ME AMAS" BY MEXICAN GIRL GROUP JEANS BECAME A PRIDE ANTHEM FOR THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY IN MEXICO RESULTING IN THIS VIRAL CHOREOGRAPHY CREATED BY THE GAYS IN THE 2000'S.

CRISTINA CONVINCED ME TO GO BACK TO PERFORMING AT CLUBS AS MY DRAG PERSONA. SHE TOLD ME THAT THE DRAG SCENE HAD TRANS(FORMED) SINCE I LEFT.



GIRL! YOU NEED TO MEET HAUS ANTIFA! THEY ARE THE FIERCEST PERFORMERS RIGHT NOW AND ARE CHANGING THE GAME!!



AS I ENTERED THE CLUB, ASTEROID ANTIFA WAS PERFORMING A FIERCE ANTI-CAPITALIST LIP SYNC THAT MADE ME TREMBLE.



EVERYONE GIVE A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR ASTEROID ANTIFAAA!!!



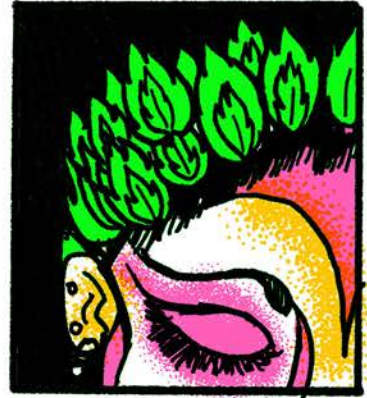
LET'S DECOLONIZE WHAT WE WERE TAUGHT. WITH OUR BLACK HAIR...



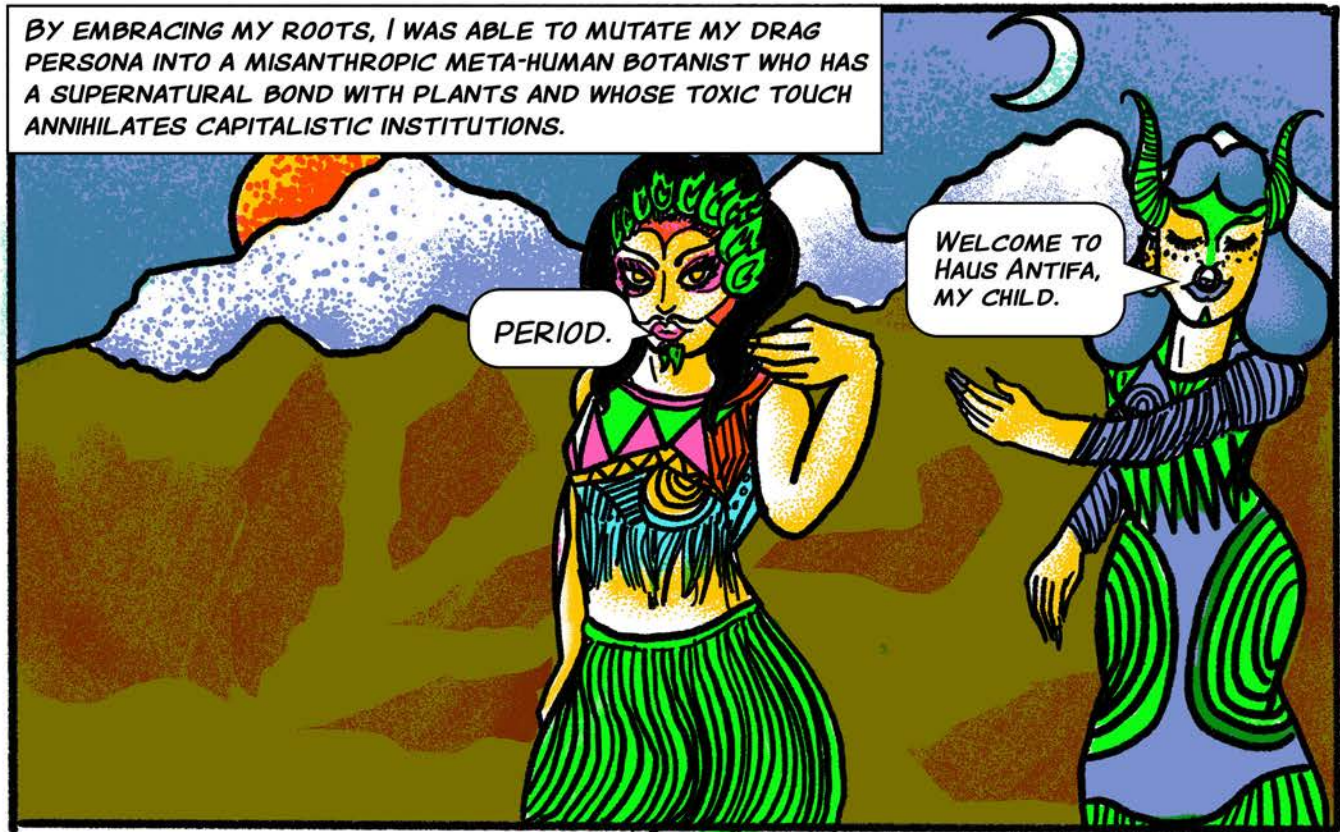
²ALEBRIJES ARE BRIGHTLY, WHIMSICAL CREATURES DREAMT FROM MEXICAN FOLK ART, TYPICALLY CRAFTED USING PARTS FROM DIFFERENT ANIMALS TO FORM A NEW VIBRANT MAGICAL BEING.



AFTER MONTHS OF COLLECTIVE CONSPIRING AGAINST THE CIS-TEM, ASTEROID TOOK ME UNDER THEIR WING TO EXPERIMENT WITH BEING A DRAG CREATURE WHO EMERGED FROM THE LAND AND WAS LETTING HER ROOTS GROW.



BY EMBRACING MY ROOTS, I WAS ABLE TO MUTATE MY DRAG PERSONA INTO A MISANTHROPIC META-HUMAN BOTANIST WHO HAS A SUPERNATURAL BOND WITH PLANTS AND WHOSE TOXIC TOUCH ANNIHILATES CAPITALISTIC INSTITUTIONS.



PERIOD.

WELCOME TO HAUS ANTIFA, MY CHILD.

ASTEROID CONFIDED THAT THEIR DREAM WAS TO CREATE AN ANTIFA LABORATORY FOR 2S/LGBTQ+ YOUTH WHERE THEY LEARN TO TRANS(CEND) THE DOMINANT BINARY NARRATIVE THROUGH ART, PERFORMANCE, AND EMBODIED KINSHIP.



UNABLE TO CONFORM TO THE CIS-TEM ANY LONGER, WE DECIDE TO EMBRACE BEING DRAG EDUCATORS OUTSIDE CAPITALIST INSTITUTIONS, FINDING STRENGTH IN BOTH OUR ROOTS AND ABILITY TO TRANS(FORM).



TOGETHER WE BEGAN TO CULTIVATE TRANS(FORMATIVE) LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ROOTED IN KINSHIP, DIVERSITY, AND IMAGINATION, WHERE 2S/LGBTQ+ YOUTH REVEL IN EACH OTHER'S UNAPOLOGETIC QUEERNESS.



BECOMING KIN WITH THOSE WHO NO LONGER WANT TO BE CONFINED WITHIN THE OPPRESSIVE WALLS OF THE CIS-TEM AND ARE LOOKING FOR A PLACE WHERE THEY FIND A SENSE OF BELONGING. A PLACE OF FABULOUSNESS WHERE 2S/LGBTQ+ YOUTH IMAGINE ALTERNATIVES THROUGH PLAYFUL PRACTICES AND LEARN ABOUT DECOLONIZING, ANTI-RACIST, AND DISABILITY JUSTICE APPROACHES.

THE DRAG LABORATORY HAS BECOME A MOBILE TROOP THAT TRAVELS TO DIVERSE AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES, LOOKING FOR 2SILBGTQ+ YOUTH WHO FEEL ISOLATED. WE INVITE THEM TO JOIN A PLACE OF LIBERATION, EMPOWERMENT, AND JOY.



WE ARE ON A QUEST TO FIND KIN WHO WANT TO JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF QUEERDOS TO FOSTER GATHERINGS OF MUTUAL AID AND CARE.

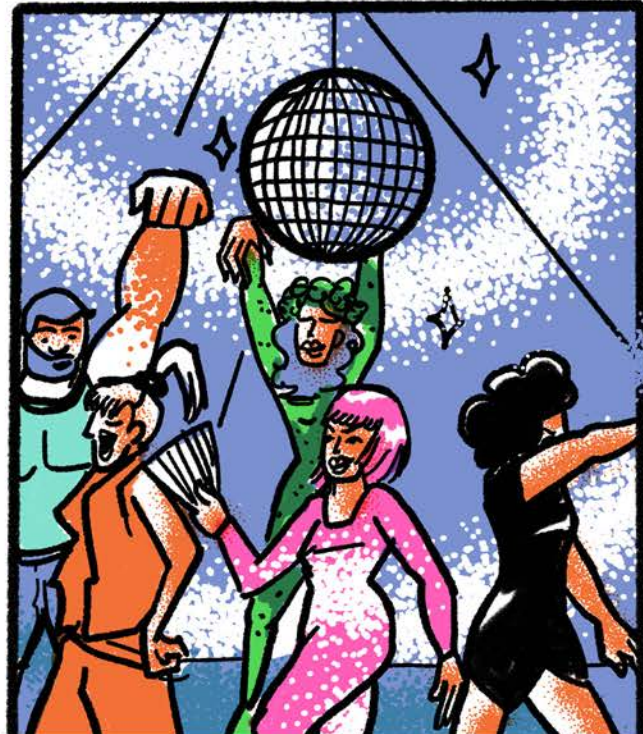


LAND IS, THEREFORE WE ARE.

USING STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACHES TO EDUCATION, WE CONTINUE TO CULTIVATE TRANS(FORMATIVE) LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THROUGH THE ART OF DRAG WHERE WE IMAGINE OURSELVES RADICALLY DIFFERENTLY.



BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2S/LGBTQ+ YOUTH TO FORM A WEB OF CO-RESISTANCE TO FIGHT FOR ALL THE OPPRESSED... FEARLESSLY AND UNAPOLOGETICALLY... WE ARE WORKING TO TRANS(FORM) A CIS-TEM THAT HAS NEVER WORKED FOR US.



WE ARE CULTIVATING A PLACE OF HEALING WHERE WE FIND UNIQUE WAYS OF EXPRESSING OUR FREEDOM AND BE UNABASHEDLY OURSELVES. A PLACE THAT UNFOLDS WHEN WE EMBRACE OUR ROOTS TO TRANS(CEND) BOUNDARIES AND FOSTER A MORE COMPASSIONATE HUMANITY.



THIS IS A STORY OF TRANS(FORMATION)...

This is a story of TRANS-former

TODAY, ALTHOUGH I DON'T WORK IN A SCHOOL, I AM INVITED TO CLASSES TO READ TO CHILDREN. I ALWAYS TRY TO TAKE THEM ON NATURE WALKS AND SHOW THEM THEIR ROOTS.



Your Roots are Showing (Spanish) Se Te Ven Las Raíces

Daniel Gallardo and Martín Pech

SETEVEN



LAS RAÍCES

LA (TRANS)FORMACIÓN DE UNA EDUCADORA
DRAG EN MÉXICO

= POR: DANIEL GALLARDO =

= ILUSTRADO POR: MARTÍN PECH =

MÉXICO D.F. CIRCA 2008



DESPUÉS DE OTRA ENTREVISTA PARA UN TRABAJO DE MAESTRA, ESTOY ENOJADA, HARTA Y DEVASTADA. NO ME CONTRATARON Y SÉ QUE ES PORQUE SOY UNA EDUCADORA TRANS FEMENINA.





ME ATREVÍ A SOÑAR CON DERRIBAR LOS RÍGIDOS BINARIOS DE GÉNERO ARRAIGADOS EN EL SISTEMA ESCOLAR DE MÉXICO QUE NOS HACEN SENTIR EXCLUIDES. NO ENCONTRAR UN TRABAJO ESTA VEZ ME HACE SENTIR QUE NUNCA PERTENECERÉ DENTRO DE LAS ESCUELAS.

ESTOY DECIDIDA A CONVERTIRME EN MAESTRA, INCLUSO SI SE NECESITAN MEDIDAS DRÁSTICAS.



PODRÍA VOLVER, SABES... A QUIEN SOLÍA SER. SOLO DURANTE EL DÍA; SERÁ COMO UN DRAG HETERO; PODRÍA TRAER DE VUELTA A ÉL.

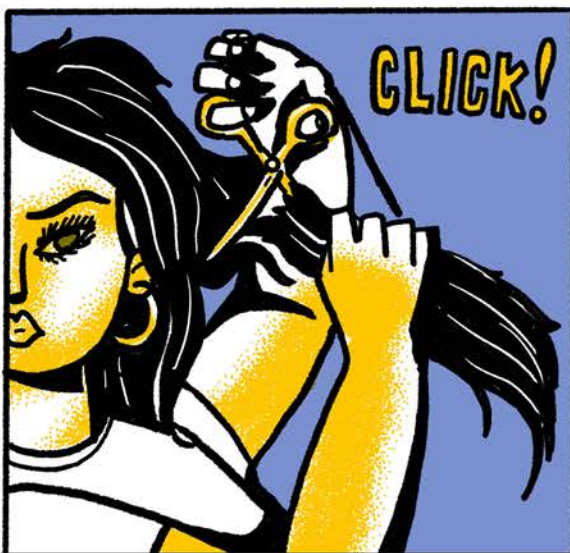


... ¿ESTÁS LOCA? ¡OTRA IDEA RIDÍCULA! ¿CÓMO LE HARÍAS?... TE DESTRUIRÁ.

¿TODES NACEMOS DESNUDES Y LO DEMÁS ES DRAG?



DECIDÍ EMBARCarme EN UNA MISIÓN INTRÉPIDA PARA TRANSFORMAR EL DETERIORADO SISTEMA EDUCATIVO DESDE ADENTRO. COMENCÉ A CAMUFLAR MI TRANSICIÓN PARA PODER ENCONTRAR UN TRABAJO COMO MAESTRO.



PARA COMENZAR LA INFILTRACIÓN DE UN TERRENO EDUCATIVO COLONIAL, SABÍA QUE NECESITABA ADOPTAR LOS IDEALES, LA APARIENCIA Y EL COMPORTAMIENTO DE AQUELLOS EN EL PODER.



ASUMÍ EL DISFRAZ DE UN HOMBRE MACHO, EL QUE EL CIS-TEMA ESPERABA QUE FUERA. ME VESTÍ CON ATUENDO PROFESIONAL MASCULINO, LUCIENDO UN TRAJE A LA MEDIDA Y MI ETIQUETA DE PRONOMBRE ÉL.



LAS INSTITUCIONES EDUCATIVAS MEXICANAS TAMBIÉN PARECEN TENER UNA AMBICIÓN GÜERA. SU BÚSQUEDA EQUIVOCADA DE PUREZA BLANCA INALCANZABLE Y OBSESIÓN CON LA ESTÉTICA EUROPEA ME OBLIGÓ A RETOCAR MIS RAÍCES OSCURAS... ¡BIEN PAULINA RUBIO!



DESPUÉS DE CONSEGUIR UNA ENTREVISTA EN UNA DE LAS ESCUELAS MÁS RENOMBRADAS DE MÉXICO, VI CÓMO ÉL CONSEGUÍA TRABAJO EN SU PRIMER INTENTO.





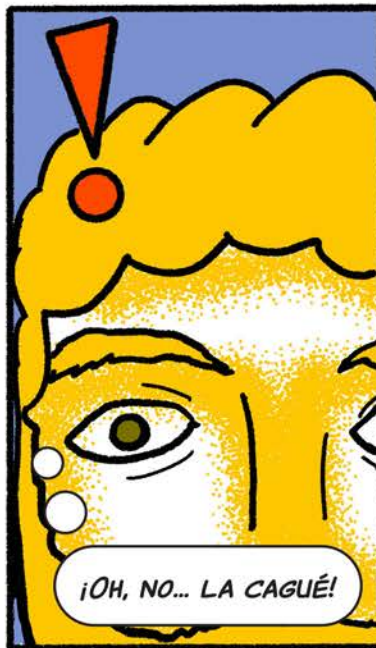
CADA DÍA ERA UN DELICADO BAILE DE DISFRACES PARA MÍ, OCULTÁNDOME BAJO LA FACHADA DE UN EDUCADOR MASCULINO CIS-NORMATIVO.



BUENOS DÍAS, MAESTRO.



¡HOOOOLLI, HERMANA...!



¡OH, NO... LA CAGUÉ!



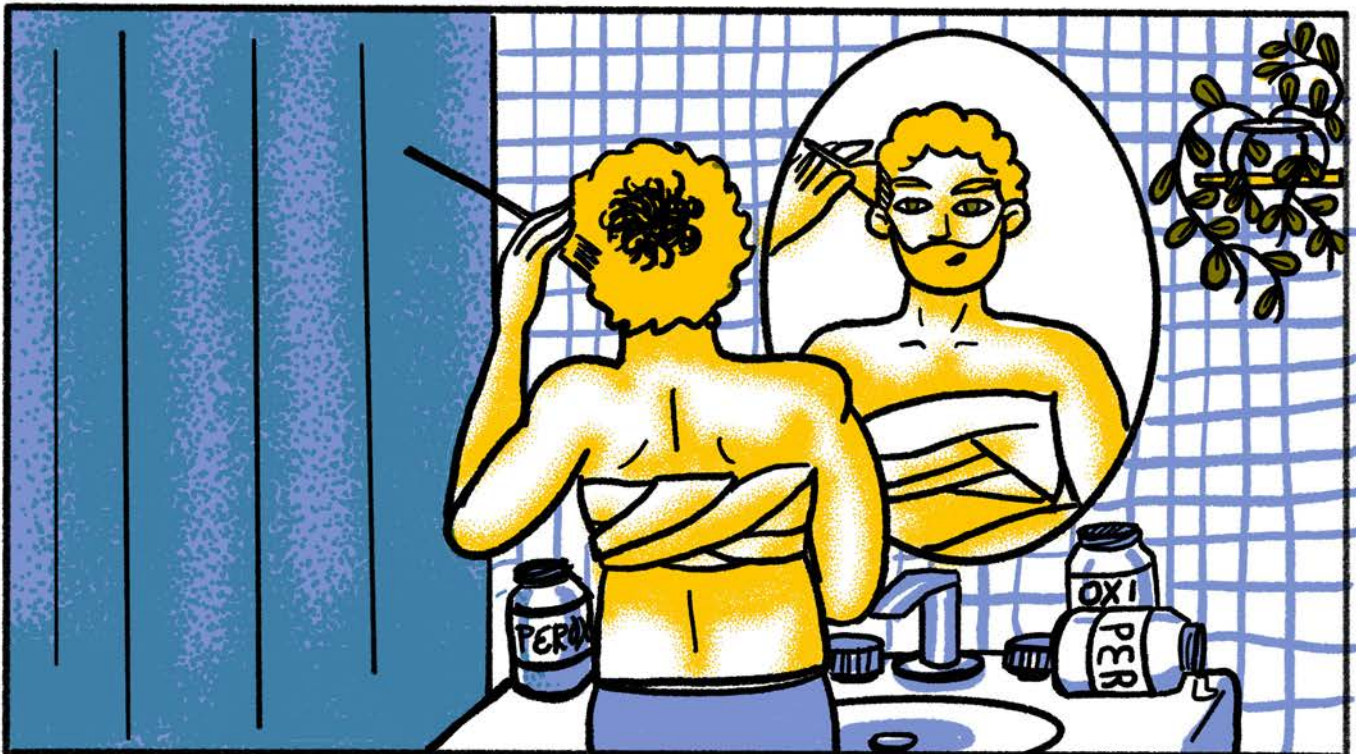
BUENOS DÍAS, MAESTRA.



NO PUEDO SALIRME DE PERSONAJE OTRA VEZ.

DESPUÉS DE AÑOS INTERPRETANDO EL MISMO PAPEL, NO LOGRÉ CAMBIAR NADA DENTRO DEL SISTEMA EDUCATIVO. INCLUSO TERMINE OCULTANDO MI IDENTIDAD A ESTUDIANTES LGBTQ+.





MI PLAN SE ARRUIÑÓ EL DÍA QUE ME QUEDÉ SIN TINTE RUBIO PARA EL CABELLO Y OLVIDÉ RETOCAR MIS RAÍCES.



MIS RAÍCES OSCURAS COMENZARON A REVELARSE A MIS COMPAÑERXS DE TRABAJO, AMENAZANDO LA ILUSIÓN QUE HABÍA CONSTRUIDO CUIDADOSAMENTE.



BUENOS DÍAS, MAESTRA.



PENSÉ QUE ERAS RUBIO NATURAL COMO TODOS LOS DEMÁS EN ESTA ESCUELA ÉLITE.



¿PERDÓN?



¡SE TE VEN LAS RAÍCES!

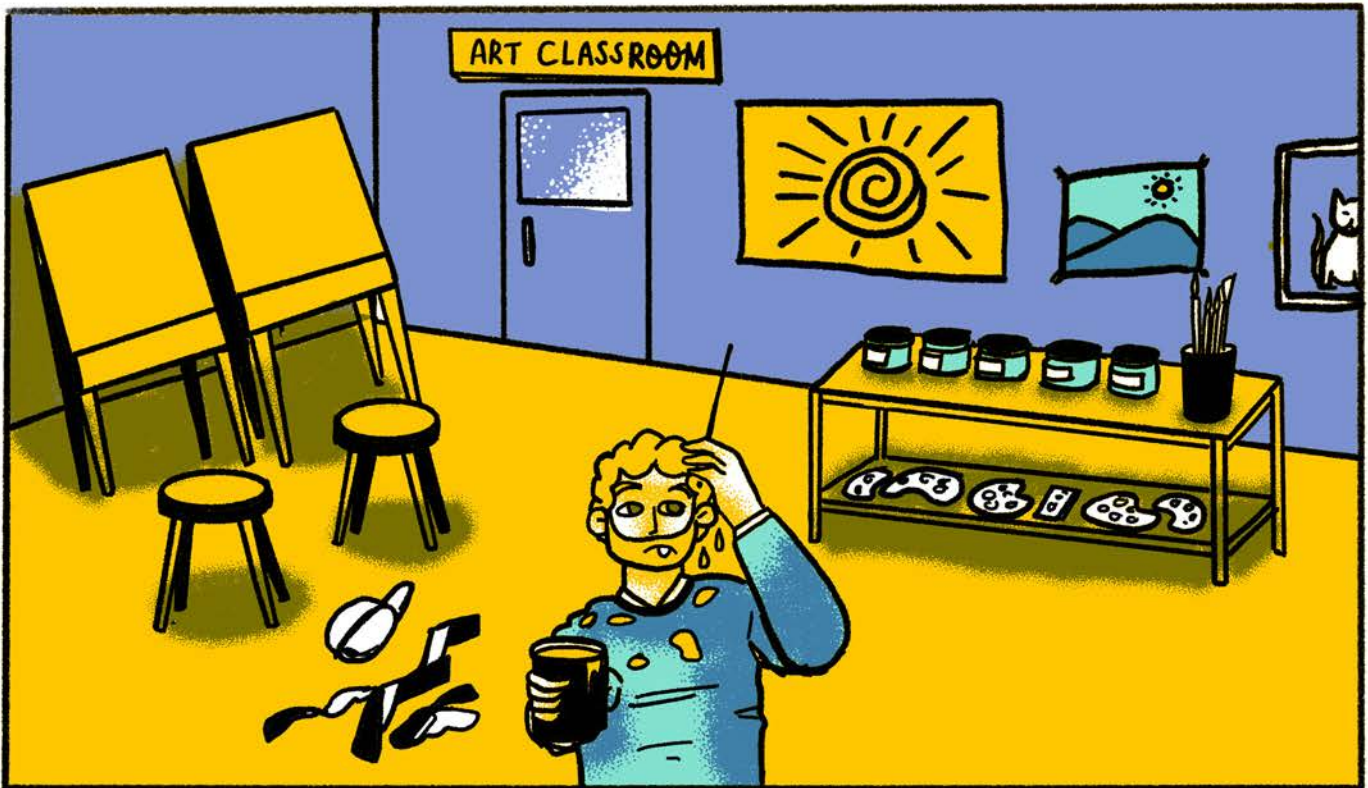


¡CÓMO PUDE SER TAN DESCUIDADA!
¿QUÉ VOY A HACER PARA TAPAR MIS RAÍCES?

CORRÍ AL BAÑO Y PERCIBÍ QUE EN LA PARTE DE ATRÁS DE MI CABEZA, MIS RAÍCES OSCURAS ESTABAN CRECIENDO MÁS DE LO NORMAL. SHAMPOO CRE-C... DIRÁS TÚ.



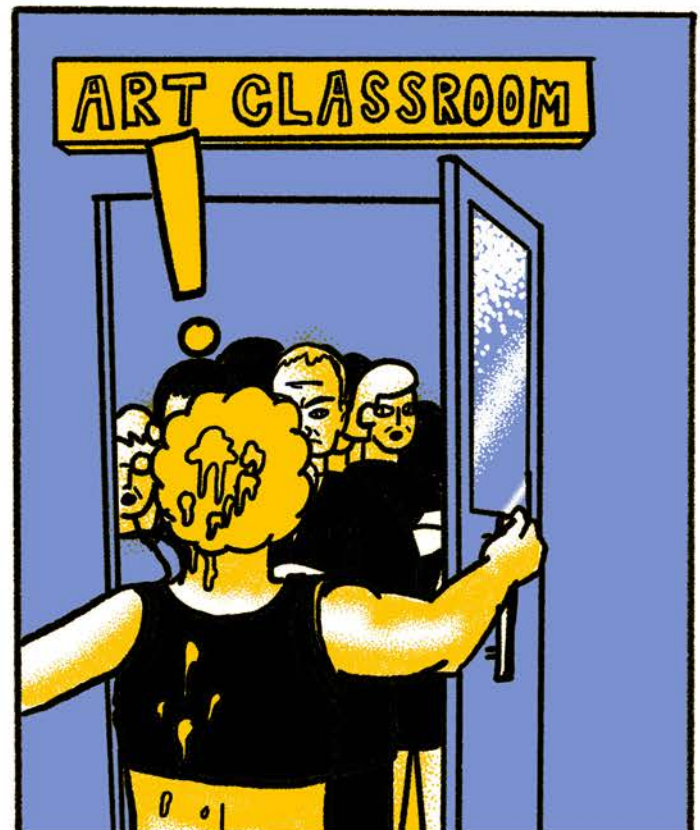
INTENTÉ CUBRIRLAS DE ALGUNA MANERA CAMBIANDO EL ESTILO DE CABELLO, PERO NADA FUNCIONA Y MIS RAÍCES SIGUEN VIÉNDOSE. FUI A MI SALÓN Y BUSQUÉ ALGO QUE LAS CUBRA EN LA CAJA DE OBJETOS PERDIDOS. INTENTÉ TAPARLAS USANDO ALGUNAS BANDANAS Y SOMBREROS, PERO NADA FUNCIONA Y MIS RAÍCES SIGUEN VIÉNDOSE.



CORRÍ AL SALÓN DE ARTE, EN MI DESESPERACIÓN AGARRE PINTURA AMARILLA Y EMPECÉ A CUBRIR MIS RAÍCES, PERO ESO TAMPOCO FUNCIONÓ.



¡AY NO! ¡SOY UN DESASTRE! NECESITO ESCAPAR DE LA ESCUELA ANTES DE QUE ALGUIEN ME VEA ASÍ.



EN CUANTO ABRÍ LA PUERTA ME DI CUENTA DE QUE TODOS ESTABAN ESPERANDO AFUERA... ESPERANDO PARA VER A LA BRUJA ARDER EN LA HOGUERA.

A PESAR DE TODOS MIS ESFUERZOS POR CUBRIR MIS RAÍCES Y SER PARTE DEL CIS-TEMA, SABÍA QUE ALGÚN DÍA DESCUBRIRÍAN QUIÉN SOY Y ME MARCARÍAN COMO UNA AMENAZA PARA LES ESTUDIANTES.



¡ESTÁS DESPEDIDO!
NOS HAS ENGAÑADO
HACIÉndonos CREER
QUE ERES ALGO QUE NO
ERES.





TIEMPO DESPUÉS...



AHORA QUE HE SIDO DESCUBIERTA, ME ENCUENTRO OTRA VEZ BUSCANDO TRABAJO.



¿QUÉ VOY A HACER... CRISTINA?! DEJA DE PRACTICAR LA COREO MÁS GAY DEL PLANETA-YA TE LA SABES.



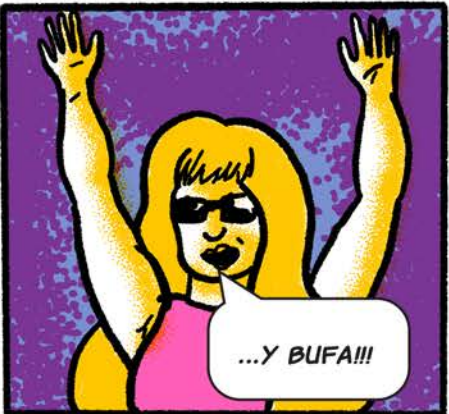
¡¡¡ABRE...



...CIERRA...



...ACARICIA...



...Y BUFA!!!

CRISTINA ME CONVENCE EN REGRESAR A LA ESCENA DRAG. SEGÚN ELLA SE HA TRANS(FORMADO) DESDE QUE LA DEJÉ.



¡HERMANA! NECESITO PRESENTARTE A HAUS ANTIFA. SON LAS DRAGAS MÁS PERRAS Y ESTÁN CAMBIANDO TODA LA ESCENA.



EN EL ANTRO LA PERLA, ASTEROID ANTIFA ESTÁ HACIENDO UN LIP-SYNC ANTICAPITALISTA QUE ME FASCINA E INSPIRA A MONTARME OTRA VEZ.



UN GRAN APLAUSO PARA ASTEROID ANTIFA.

"DESCOLONIZEMOS LO QUE NOS ENSEÑARON. CON NUESTRO PELO NEGRO..."



ENTRAMOS A LOS CAMERINOS Y CRISTINA ME PRESENTA A ASTEROID, UNA FABULOSA CRIATURA DRAG Y MADRE DE HAUS ANTIFA.

GRACIAS, AMOR. ME INSPIRO EN LA ALQUIMIA Y LAS MUTACIONES: ESTE CONJUNTO ESTÁ DANDO REALISMO ALEBRIJE.

¡TE VES IMPRESIONANTE!



ASTEROID CREA ESPECTÁCULOS TRANS IMPRESIONANTES.



...CON SUS ACTOS, MUESTRA CÓMO ROMPER LOS BINARIOS Y LUCHAR CONTRA EL PATRIARCADO.





DESPUÉS DE MESES DE CONSPIRACIÓN COLECTIVA CONTRA EL CIS-TEMA, ÁSTEROID ME TOMA BAJO SU ALA PARA EXPERIMENTAR SER UNA CRIATURA DRAG QUE HA MUTADO DESDE LA TIERRA Y ESTÁ DEJANDO CRECER SUS RAÍCES.



AL ABRAZAR MIS RAÍCES, MI PERSONA DRAG HA MUTADO A UNA BOTÁNICA META-HUMANA MISANTRÓPICA CON UN VÍNCULO SOBRENATURAL CON LAS PLANTAS QUE POSEE UN TOQUE TÓXICO CON EL CUAL ANIQUILA INSTITUCIONES CAPITALISTAS.



ASTEROID ME CONFIESA QUE SU SUEÑO ES CREAR UN LABORATORIO DRAG PARA PERSONAS LGBTQ+ DONDE APRENDAN A TRANS(CENDER) LA NARRATIVA BINARIA DOMINANTE A TRAVÉS DEL ARTE, LA ACTUACIÓN Y EL PARENTESCO ENCARNADO.



INCAPACES DE CONFORMARNOS CON EL CIS-TEMA POR MÁS TIEMPO, DECIDIMOS SER EDUCADORES DRAG FUERA DE LAS INSTITUCIONES CAPITALISTAS, ENCONTRANDO FUERZA TANTO EN NUESTRAS RAÍCES COMO EN NUESTRA CAPACIDAD PARA TRANS(FORMAR).



JUNTAS COMENZAMOS A CULTIVAR ENTORNOS DE APRENDIZAJE TRANS(FORMATIVOS) ARRAIGADOS EN EL PARENTESCO, LA DIVERSIDAD Y LA IMAGINACIÓN DONDE PERSONAS LGBTQ+ DISFRUTAN DE SU JOTERÍA CON MUCHO BRILLOTEO.



HACIENDO CONEXIONES CON AQUELLOS QUE YA NO QUIEREN ESTAR CONFINADOS AL CIS-TEMA Y ESTÁN BUSCANDO UN LUGAR DONDE PERTENECER. UN LUGAR FABULOSO DONDE PERSONAS LGBTQ+ IMAGINAN OTRA MANERA DE EXISTIR A TRAVÉS DE ENFOQUES DE JUSTICIA ANTIRRACISTA, DECOLONIAL Y DE DISCAPACIDAD.

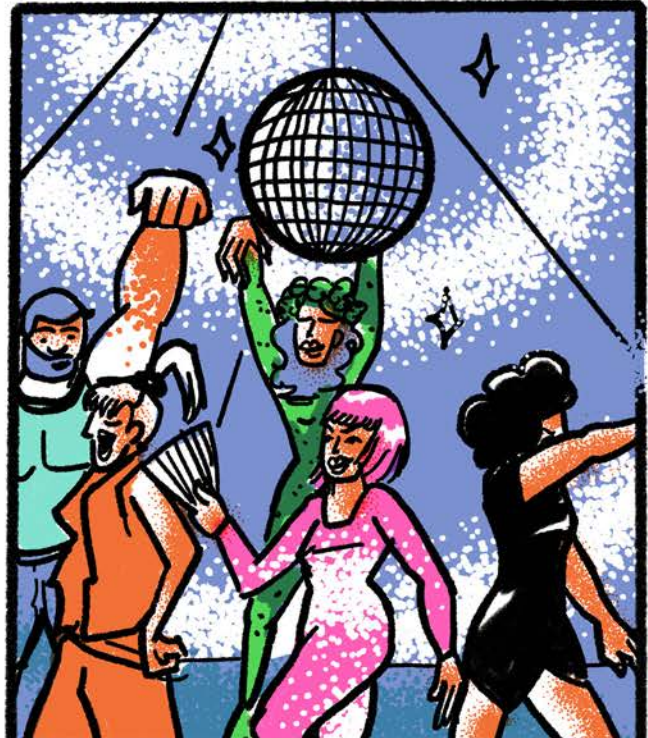
EL LABORATORIO DRAG SE HA CONVERTIDO EN UNA TROUPE MÓVIL QUE RECORRE COMUNIDADES DIVERSAS Y REMOTAS BUSCANDO PERSONAS LGBTQ+ QUE SE SIENTAN AISLADAS E INVITÁNDOLES A UN LUGAR DE LIBERACIÓN, EMPODERAMIENTO Y ALEGRÍA.



UTILIZANDO ENFOQUES DE EDUCACIÓN BASADOS EN FORTALEZAS, CONTINUAMOS CULTIVANDO ENTORNOS DE APRENDIZAJE TRANS(FORMATIVOS) A TRAVÉS DEL ARTE DRAG DONDE NOS IMAGINAMOS RADICALMENTE DIFERENTES.



ESTAMOS TRABAJANDO PARA TRANS(FORMAR) UN CIS-TEMA QUE NUNCA HA FUNCIONADO PARA NOSOTRES. ABRIENDO OPORTUNIDADES PARA QUE PERSONAS LGBTQ+ FORMEN UNA RED DE CO-RESISTENCIA LUCHANDO POR LOS DERECHOS DE TODES... SIN MIEDO Y SIN DISCULPAS.



CULTIVANDO UN LUGAR DE RECIPROCIDAD DONDE ENCONTREMOS FORMAS ÚNICAS DE EXPRESAR NUESTRA LIBERTAD Y SER NOSOTRES MISMOS SIN RESERVAS. UN LUGAR QUE SE DESPLIEGA CUANDO ABRAZAMOS NUESTRAS RAÍCES PARA TRANS(CENDER) LÍMITES Y FOMENTAR UNA HUMANIDAD MÁS COMPASIVA.



ESTA ES UNA HISTORIA DE TRANS(FORMACIÓN)...

This is a story of TRANS-forma

HOY, AUNQUE NO FORMO PARTE DE UNA ESCUELA EN PARTICULAR, ME INVITAN DE VEZ EN CUANDO A LEER A LOS NIÑOS. SIEMPRE TRATO DE CAMINAR CON ELLOS EN LA NATURALEZA Y MOSTRARLES SUS RAÍCES.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Daniel Gallardo (they/them) is a nonbinary Mestizx from Mexico and public scholar at the University of British Columbia whose doctoral research supports educators in recognizing the relationships between sexuality, gender, racialization, and settler colonialism. Daniel works in educational leadership and curriculum with a passion and commitment to decolonizing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) education and Indigenous resurgence. They collaborate with community organizations to develop curricular practices that positively affect the well-being of those who regularly experience gender-based violence. Daniel also gives life to Gaia Lacandona, a drag mutant who drags up trans and queer youth and creates a space for them to imagine otherwise.

Daniel Gallardo (elle) es una Mestizx no binarie de México y académicx público de la Universidad de British Columbia cuya investigación doctoral apoya a les educadores a reconocer las relaciones entre sexualidad, género, racialización y colonialismo. Daniel trabaja en liderazgo educativo y currículo con pasión y compromiso con la descolonización del género y sexualidad en la educación además del resurgimiento de pensamiento Indígena en la misma. Colaboran con organizaciones comunitarias para desarrollar prácticas curriculares que afecten positivamente el bienestar de quienes experimentan regularmente violencia de género. Daniel también da vida a Gaia Lacandona, una drag mutante que monta a jóvenes trans y cuir y les ayuda a crear un espacio para imaginar futuros radicales.



Martín Pech was born in 1991. He is an illustrator and graphic designer who works in digital and physical mediums. He has worked in the fields of editorial design, branding, and digital product design. He also dedicates himself to being an illustrator for different clients such as visual artists, publishers, companies from different industries, and friends. He firmly believes that the image is a powerful medium to spread any message, which begins in the collective memory and dies in oblivion. Fortunately, few images actually die: one image works between the space of the past history of many others and the future possibility of those to come.

Martín Pech nació en 1991. Es un ilustrador y diseñador gráfico que trabaja en medios digitales y físicos. Ha diseñado libros, revistas, marcas y experiencias multimedia. También se dedica a ser ilustrador para clientes diversos como artistas visuales, editores, empresas de diversas industrias y amigos. Él cree que la imagen es un medio poderoso para difundir cualquier mensaje, y que ésta comienza en la memoria y muere en el olvido. Por fortuna, pocas imágenes mueren realmente: una imagen opera entre el rastro pasado de muchas otras y la posibilidad futura de las que vienen.

A Light in Dark Times: In Overt Defense of Trans-Affirming Spaces in Education

James F. Woglom, Stephanie Jones, and Dylan Brody

A LIGHT



IN DARK TIMES

In Overt Defense of Trans-Affirming Spaces in Education
James F. Woglom, Stephanie Jones & Dylan Brody

The attacks against transyouth rights, trans-affirming education,

trans healthcare, and the very humanity of

people who don't conform to expected gender norms is monstrous.

The State of Arkansas passed a law that prohibits transgender students from competing in female sports.


They suggest this will help officials to ensure fairness in athletics...

It's hard to imagine what would fuel someone's motivation to rip away the possibility of a young person living a dignified, joyful life.

And it feeds on a fear of ourselves, doesn't it? It's a fear that all people will question cisgender norms and patriarchal values that depend on the man-woman gender binary.

It's also a fear of education and an ignorant targeting of schools and teachers as if children aren't immersed in a world of visual culture where gender and sexuality are always-already pedagogical material they are making meaning with.

How can educators make sense of the political discourse around gender and better understand a society that teaches and polices gendered norms and expectations of people from the time we are born?

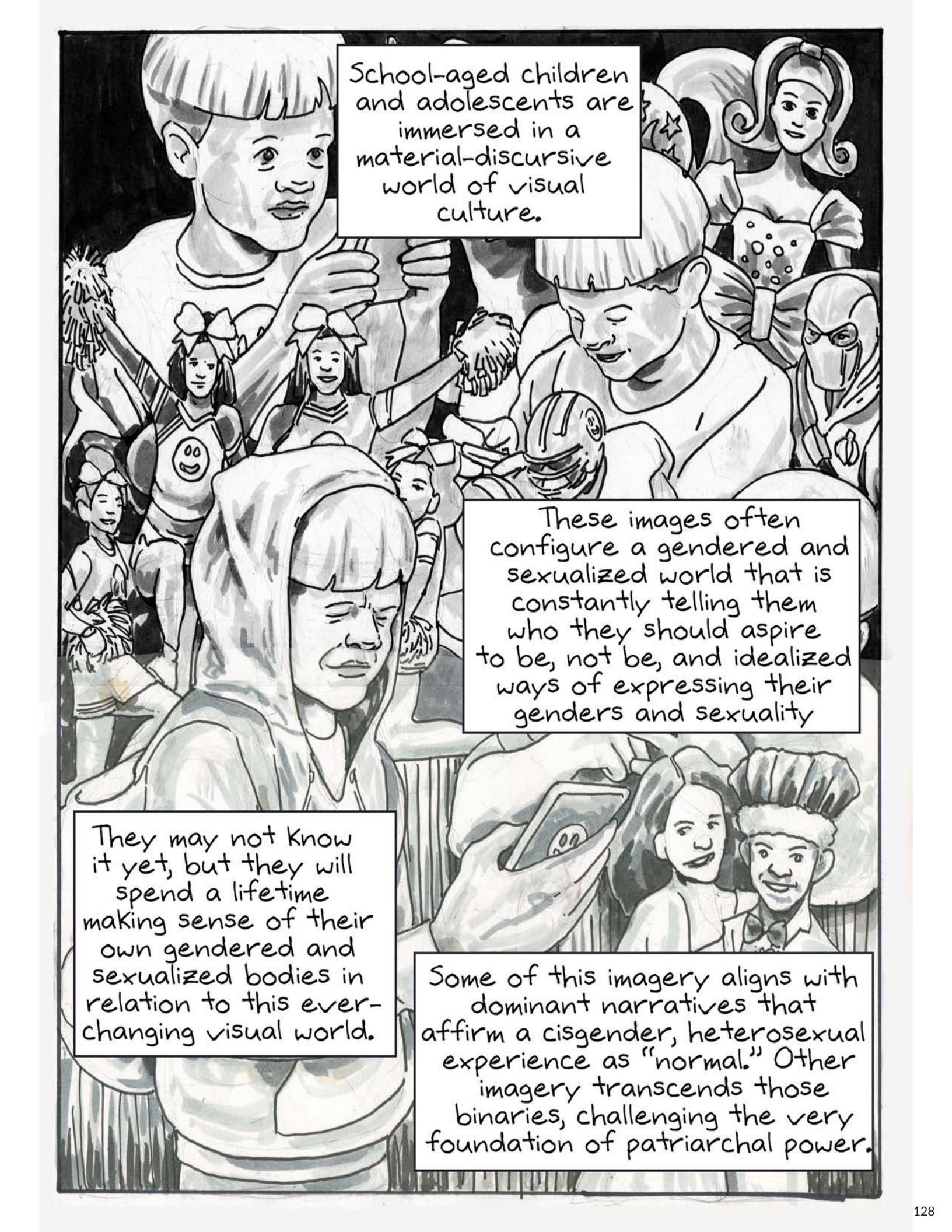


Parents and caretakers often create imagined futures for themselves and their children based on their images of gender and sexuality.

Many of these images are projections of visual culture that produces cisgender and heteronormative ideals.

The masculine-feminine binary that pervades visual culture limits what seems to be possible when it comes to living in fully human ways.

This binary is ever-present in child-focused imagery, including colors, clothes, and toys, and even very young children face backlash and resistance when stepping outside of the confines of a binary norm.




School-aged children and adolescents are immersed in a material-discursive world of visual culture.

These images often configure a gendered and sexualized world that is constantly telling them who they should aspire to be, not be, and idealized ways of expressing their genders and sexuality

They may not know it yet, but they will spend a lifetime making sense of their own gendered and sexualized bodies in relation to this ever-changing visual world.

Some of this imagery aligns with dominant narratives that affirm a cisgender, heterosexual experience as "normal." Other imagery transcends those binaries, challenging the very foundation of patriarchal power.

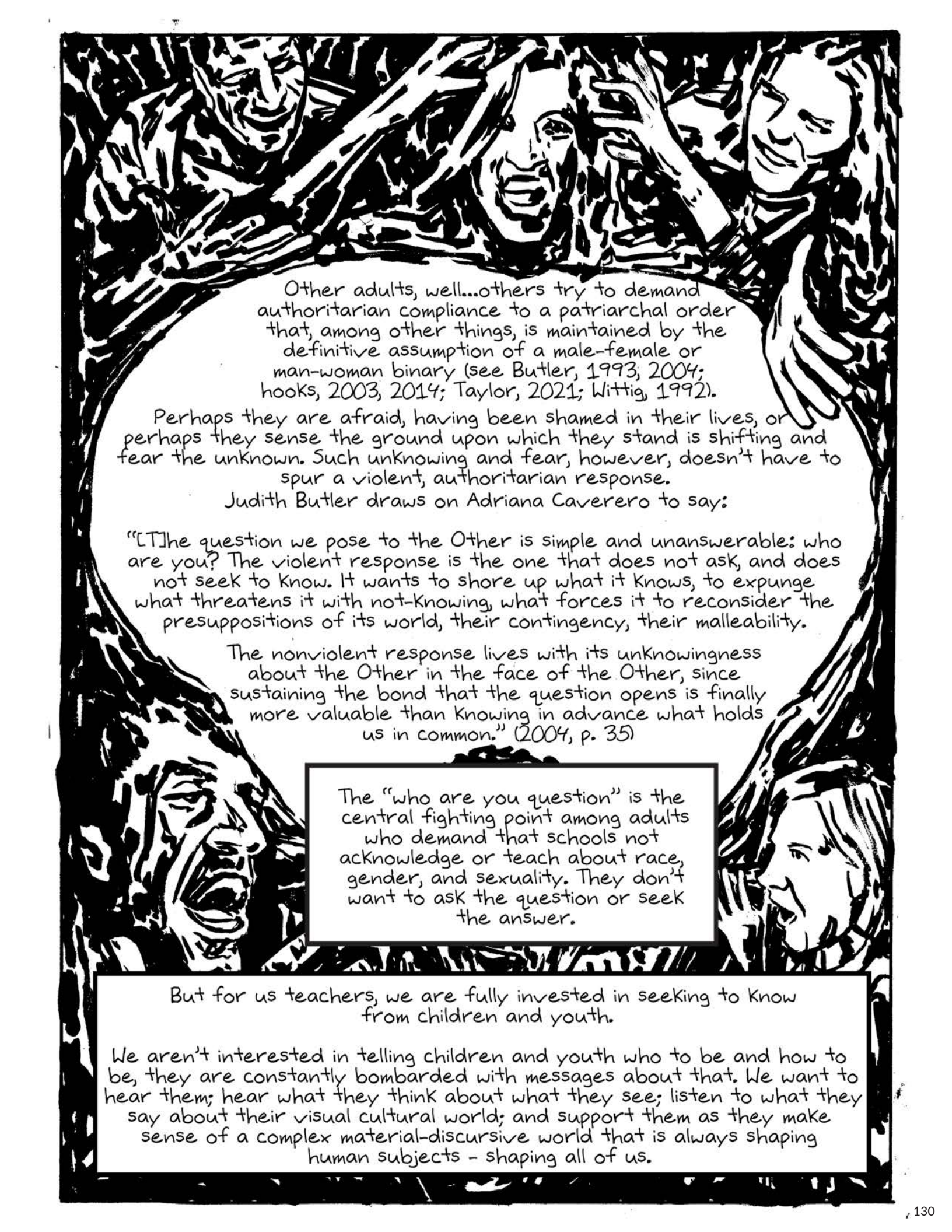


Gender-affirming and queer-centered living and learning spaces can feel more powerful and joyful for everyone in them.

In these spaces, some adults fight for their bodily autonomy and their right to be accepted as fully human. This is heartbreaking, and their resistance to these pressures is beautiful. These adults often work with and for youth's rights. They are a trusted person that youth can talk to. They establish organizations, create art, writing, and passionate protective bills. They produce school curricula that include and affirm gender queer, non-binary, trans, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and asexual people. (see Barcelos et al., 2022; Blackburn et al., 2010; Casper & Schultz, 1999; Chasnoff & Cohen, 2008; Linville, 2022; Ryan & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2018).

They make space in this difficult world for their own joy-filled ways of being, and they make space for joy-making with children and youth as well.

The overwhelming darkness of the proliferating anti-LGBTQ+ education policies and legislation can be depressing, but we know that people are still living, thriving, and experiencing joy in their bodies while still being targeted. We don't hear enough about these life-giving efforts, but they persist.



Other adults, well...others try to demand authoritarian compliance to a patriarchal order that, among other things, is maintained by the definitive assumption of a male-female or man-woman binary (see Butler, 1993; 2004; hooks, 2003, 2014; Taylor, 2021; Wittig, 1992).

Perhaps they are afraid, having been shamed in their lives, or perhaps they sense the ground upon which they stand is shifting and fear the unknown. Such unknowing and fear, however, doesn't have to spur a violent, authoritarian response.

Judith Butler draws on Adriana Caverero to say:

"[T]he question we pose to the Other is simple and unanswerable: who are you? The violent response is the one that does not ask, and does not seek to know. It wants to shore up what it knows, to expunge what threatens it with not-knowing, what forces it to reconsider the presuppositions of its world, their contingency, their malleability.

The nonviolent response lives with its unknowingness about the Other in the face of the Other, since sustaining the bond that the question opens is finally more valuable than knowing in advance what holds us in common." (2004, p. 35)

The "who are you question" is the central fighting point among adults who demand that schools not acknowledge or teach about race, gender, and sexuality. They don't want to ask the question or seek the answer.

But for us teachers, we are fully invested in seeking to know from children and youth.

We aren't interested in telling children and youth who to be and how to be, they are constantly bombarded with messages about that. We want to hear them; hear what they think about what they see; listen to what they say about their visual cultural world; and support them as they make sense of a complex material-discursive world that is always shaping human subjects - shaping all of us.

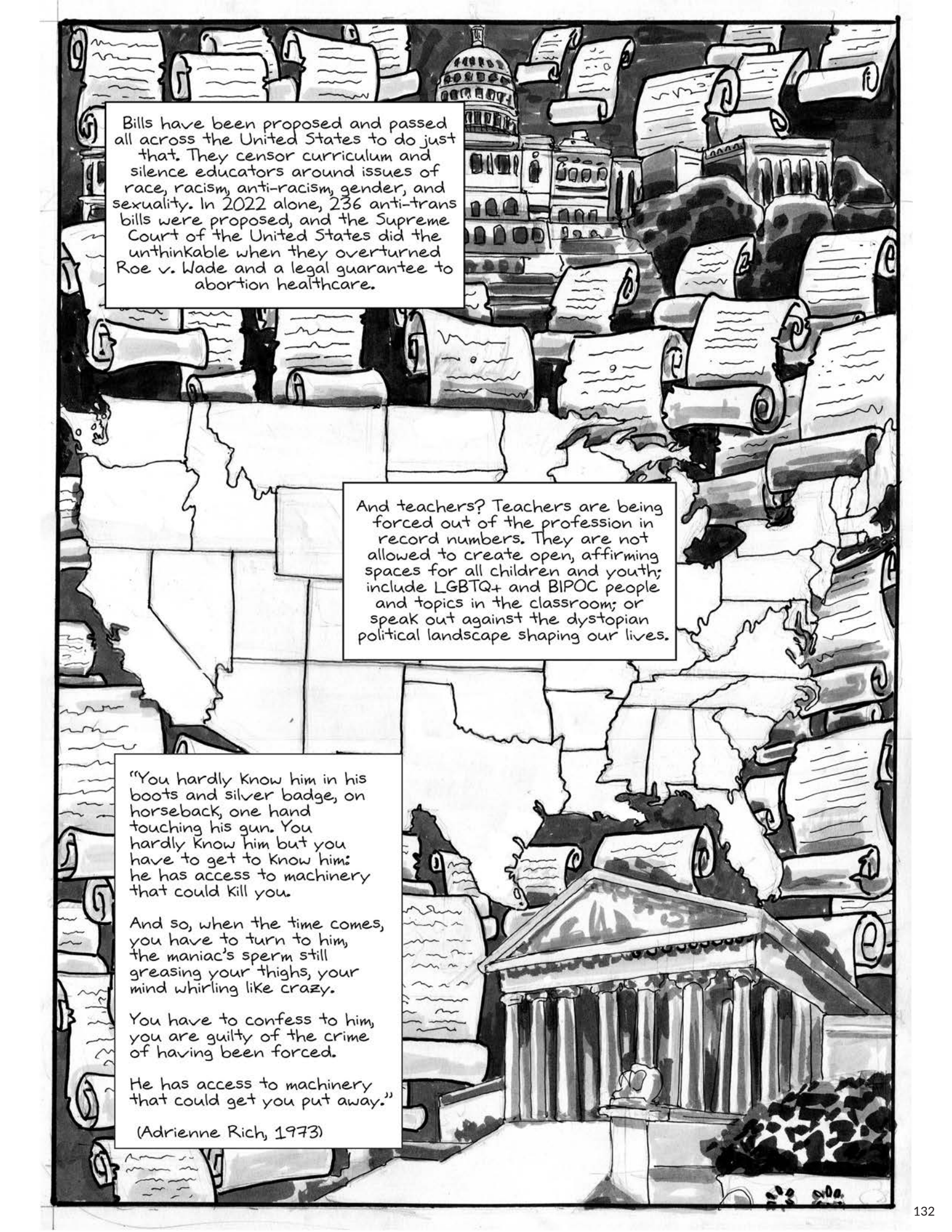


One doesn't have to look any further than the barrage of images in our everyday lives to see that our society is simultaneously obsessed with bodies and disgusted by them; outspoken about what the body should and should not be, and silenced about what might be possible.

We are actively involved in a pedagogical dance with the material-discursive world within which we live and create.

Recent legislative action constricting curriculum won't end the teaching and learning that happens in formal or informal spaces, but they will do violence, making youth and educators feel more vulnerable and dehumanized.

But that is partially the intention, isn't it? To rip away our rights to be safe and protected as we fully express our shared humanity and enforce an authoritarian script?



Bills have been proposed and passed all across the United States to do just that. They censor curriculum and silence educators around issues of race, racism, anti-racism, gender, and sexuality. In 2022 alone, 236 anti-trans bills were proposed, and the Supreme Court of the United States did the unthinkable when they overturned *Roe v. Wade* and a legal guarantee to abortion healthcare.

And teachers? Teachers are being forced out of the profession in record numbers. They are not allowed to create open, affirming spaces for all children and youth; include LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people and topics in the classroom; or speak out against the dystopian political landscape shaping our lives.

"You hardly know him in his boots and silver badge, on horseback, one hand touching his gun. You hardly know him but you have to get to know him: he has access to machinery that could kill you.

And so, when the time comes, you have to turn to him, the maniac's sperm still greasing your thighs, your mind whirling like crazy.

You have to confess to him, you are guilty of the crime of having been forced.

He has access to machinery that could get you put away."

(Adrienne Rich, 1973)



The legislators passing these bills produce hopelessness, despair, anger, resentment, and entitlement, and encourage division and violence. They create social and political dysfunction at every turn.

In an attempt to uphold the fictional, fantastical, idealized, and oppressive image of a cisgender, heterosexual, White, middle-class, patriarchal, nuclear family who reads the Christian Bible and conforms to images of life that are only found in 1950s media and visual culture, those who have been elected to serve the people of this country are harming us all.

How can we all fumble our way into being more comfortable

being a part of conversations about how visual culture

produces possible ways of being?

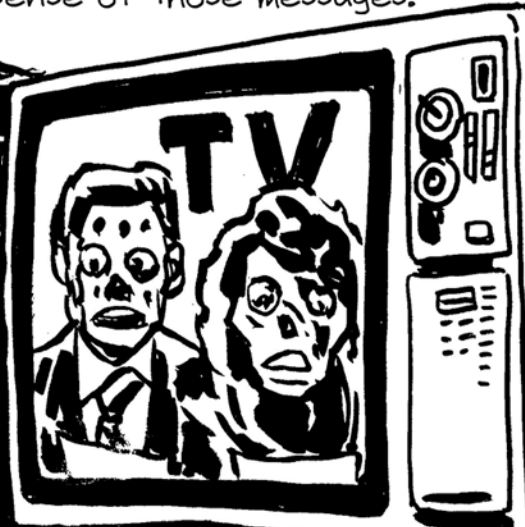


We have talked a lot about how important language is and how important it is to have words and phrases we can use to articulate things we are seeing and hearing.

We have to keep reminding people that there is no escaping a conversation about gender and sexuality. When an infant comes to preschool in a t-shirt that says "Ladies' Man" that child is literally inside the labyrinth of gender and sexuality. So instead of ignoring that, we can raise questions and point out what we notice.

Our everyday visual culture is filled with these meaning-producing images about gender, sexuality, and patriarchy. And of course the formal curriculum for education is replete with patriarchal, white supremacist, and colonialist assumptions about art and cultural imagery. Much of this centers bodies as subjects, making it fairly easy for educators to pose questions about the bodies that are produced, the messages produced through those bodies, and different ways students can make sense of those messages.

If our schools are left unchecked, there is a risk that they will overtly tell students who to be, what to think, and how they should aspire to live. By creating inclusive and affirming spaces, we can disrupt the internalized fascism of the discursive systems and histories that ensnare our society.



We can begin to recognize the manner in which fascist ideologies and hegemonic power structures are inscribed and reinscribed in our shared culture and institutions, and invite students to join us in co-authoring alternatives.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



James F. Woglom is an artist/educator, associate professor of Art Education, and co-chair of the School of Education at Cal Poly Humboldt. He received his PhD from the University of Georgia, where he studied arts-based research methodologies and socially engaged practices. His co-authored graphic novel on social justice-oriented teacher education, *On Mutant Pedagogies*, was awarded the American Education Research Association's Qualitative Research Group's Outstanding Book Award.



Stephanie Jones is a Meigs Distinguished Professor at the University of Georgia where she teaches courses on feminist theories and pedagogies, bodies and sex education for children and youth, justice-oriented teaching, critical literacies and writing, and post qualitative and post-humanist inquiry. Her feminist post-humanist scholarship focuses on justice-oriented formal and informal K-12 and teacher education.



Dylan Brody (they/them) is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Theory and Practice at the University of Georgia. Their primary focus of scholarship is rooted in Critical Studies, with particular emphasis on early childhood (0-3), dimensions of justice in play, abolition, anti-oppressive pedagogy, and wonder as a healing portal.

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