

Peoples Oakland, Creative Writing Group
6/10/2024



"CELEBRATE PRIDE MONTH"

PRIDE is the acronym for the Personal Rights In Defense and Education organization, formed in 1966 in Los Angeles California. In 1969, the Stonewall Inn riots protesting discriminatory and violent actions against gay and lesbian people occurred for days in Lower Manhattan, New York. The fight for recognition, acceptance, and equality continues today, with the whole world participating in PRIDE awareness and celebratory events.

Dear J., Kazim Ali

It should be a letter
To the man inside
I could not become
Dressed in yellow
And green, the colors of spring
So I could leave death
In its chamber veined
With deep ore
I've no more to tell you
Last winter I climbed
The mountains of Musoorie
To hear frozen peals of bell and wire
A silver thread of sound
Sky to navel
Draws me
like the black strip
in a flower's throat
meant to guide you in
I lie now in the winter

open-petaled beneath Sirius
I cereus bloom

Vows (for a gay wedding),

Joseph O. Legaspi

What was unforeseen is now a bird orbiting
this field.

What wasn't a possibility is present in our
arms.

It shall be and it begins with you.

Our often-misunderstood kind of love
deems dangerous.

How it frightens and confounds and
enrages.

How strange, unfamiliar.

Our love carries all those and the contrary.

It is most incandescent.

So, I vow to be brave.

Clear a path through jungles of shame and
doubt and fear.

I'm done with silence. I proclaim.

It shall be and it sings from within.

Truly we are enraptured

With Whitmanesque urge and urgency.

I vow to love in all seasons.

When you're summer, I'm watermelon
balled up in a sky-blue bowl.

When I'm autumn, you're foliage ablaze in
New England.

When in winter, I am the tender scarf of
warm mercies.

When in spring, you are the burgeoning
buds.

I vow to love you in all places.

High plains, prairies, hills and lowlands.

In our dream-laden bed,

Cradled in the nest

Of your neck.

Deep in the plum.

It shall be and it flows with you.

We'll leap over the waters and barbaric rooftops.

You embrace my resilient metropolis.

I adore your nourishing wilderness.

I vow to love you in primal ways.

I vow to love you in infinite forms.

In our separateness and composites.

To dust and stars and the ever after.

Intrepid travelers, lovers, and family

We have arrived.

Look. The bird has come home to roost.

A Queerification, Regie Cabico

queer me

shift me

transgress me

tell my students i'm gay

tell chick fil a i'm queer

tell the new york times i'm straight

tell the mail man i'm a lesbian

tell american airlines

i don't know what my gender is

like me

liking you

like summer blockbuster armrest dates

armrest cinematic love

elbow to forearm in the dark

humor me queerly

fill me with laughter

make me high with queer gas

decompress me from centuries of spanish

inquisition

& self-righteous judgment

like the blood my blood

that has mixed w/ the colonizer

& the colonized

in the extinct & instinct to love

bust memories of water & heat

& hot & breath

beating skin on skin fluttering

bruise me into vapors

bleed me into air

fly me over sub-saharan africa & asia &

antarctica

explode me from the closet of my fears

graffiti me out of doubt

bend me like bamboo

propose to me

divorce me

divide me into your spirit 2 spirit half spirit

& shadow me w/ fluttering tongues

& caresses beyond head

heart chakras

fist smashing djembes

between my hesitations

haiku me into 17 bursts of blossoms & cold

saki

de-ethnicize me

de-clothe me

de-gender me in brassieres

& prosthetic genitalias

burn me on a brazier

wearing a brassiere

in bitch braggadocio soprano bass

magnificat me in vespers

of hallelujah & amen

libate me in halos

heal me in halls of femmy troubadors

announcing my hiv status

or your status

i am not afraid to love you

implant dialects as if they were lilacs

in my ear

medicate me with a lick & a like

i am not afraid to love you

so demand me

reclaim me

queerify me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q31tGyBJhRY>

Dancing on My Own, Calum Scott

Somebody said you got a new friend
But does she love you better than I can?
And there's a big black sky over my town
I know where you're at, I bet she's around
And yeah I know it's stupid, but I just gotta
see it for myself
I'm in the corner, watching you kiss her, oh
oh oh
And I'm right over here, why can't you see
me? Oh oh oh
And I'm giving it my all
But I'm not the guy you're taking home,
ooh
I keep dancing on my own
I just wanna dance all night
And I'm all messed up, I'm so out of line,
yeah
Stilettos and broken bottles
I'm spinning around in circles
And I'm in the corner, watching you kiss
her, oh oh oh
And I'm right over here, why can't you see
me? Oh oh oh
And I'm giving it my all
But I'm not the guy you're taking home, ooh
I keep dancing on my own
And oh, nah
So far away, but still so near
The lights come on, the music dies
But you don't see me standing here
I just came to say goodbye
I'm in the corner, watching you kiss her, ohh
And I'm giving it my all
But I'm not the guy you're taking home,
ooh
I keep dancing on my own
And oh, nah

Said I'm in the corner, watching you kiss
her, oh no
And I'm right over here, why can't you see
me? Oh no
And I'm giving it my all
But I'm not the guy you're taking home, ooh
And I keep dancing on my own
So far away, but still so near
The lights come on, the music dies
But you don't see me standing here

*I'm such a sucker for falling in love with a straight
guy. And I imagine a lot with the gay community,
you fall in love with the same sex, and there's no
way of telling it. The heart wants what it wants,
and you know if you're not careful, you can find
yourself in a situation where you give your heart
away and it can get broken. I think it went a little
bit unnoticed from a broad sense, but the LGBT
community really took that and was like "Oh my
God, this relates to me so much." Probably most
notable was a guy who'd come up to me at an
American meet and greet [on my] headline tour in
America. He'd hand-written this whole page, like
the front and the back of this paper, and he was
reading it out: "I was listening to 'Dancing On My
Own' from your perspective, and it was so brave
when you talk about your sexuality, and you
inspired me to be honest and truthful to myself. I
told my wife that I was gay. And my wife's been
really supportive, and my kids they've been really
supportive, and now I live my life as a very happy
gay man." I'm in tears, because I'm like, "I can't
believe my interpretation of that song has changed
somebody's life to the point where their whole life
is changed."*

