



# PROUD COLORS

EST. 1994

THE ZINE  
2012-2013

# PROUD COLORS\*

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

As Queers of Color, we are forced to straddle a history of division. Historically speaking, the struggle for racial equality has been heterosexist in its vision, and the queer liberation movement has been predominantly Euro-centric in its scope. As people who struggle with our own questions of identity, we are also burdened by the need to find a tenuous balance between groups that have traditionally displayed open hostility towards each other, framing their struggles as entirely separate, completely independent missions.

We reject such a view. A historical perspective shows that the highly complex processes that constructed the identities of people of color as the vilified Other also resulted in an often unspoken consequence: heterosexism. Men of color have been constructed as maniacal sexual pervers, women of color as exotic sexual objects, white women as passive sexual victims, and white men as virile sexual protectors.

While the creation of racialized gender stereotypes are obvious, what is not so obvious is the normalization of sexuality along lines of race and gender. From this normalization results compulsory heterosexuality, and its flip-side, homophobia. During the period of European imperialism that heralded the beginning of modern racism, the considerable number of institutions and cultural practices of same-sex sexual behavior in colonized societies were destroyed by an imposed compulsory heterosexuality.

Clearly the roots of racism and heterosexism are not independent, but rather intimately connected. Any recognition of racism must necessarily recognize sexism and homophobia at the same time. Any liberation movement that does not do so denies the complexity of its oppression, and is doomed to failure in its struggle against the oppression as a result.

But current conventional wisdom insists that the struggles against various oppressions must not be combined. As a result, Queers of Color are often marginalized within groups that are already marginalized. We are forced to fight racism and homophobia in society at large, as well as racism within the queer community, and homophobia within communities of color. We must face a constant onslaught of multiple oppressions, coming from all directions at once. What is lacking, and blatantly so, is a safe space in the University community where Queers of Color are marginalized no further, and are free to discuss and address issues and concerns that are unique to our situation.

But at the same time, we also recognize the importance of linking oppressions. From our perspective, we see, on a day to day basis, the intersections of racism and homophobia, as well as their connections with sexism, classism, and other forms of discrimination. We also recognize the importance of collective action and struggle, and are committed to such strategies in combating and destroying institutionalized racism and heterosexism, as well as other forms of oppression.

As a result, Queers of Color is committed to an organization that does not discriminate on any basis, especially race and sexual preference. We welcome anyone and everyone who is committed to addressing issues and concerns that affect many people, but Queers of Color in particular. We claim unity with all organizations that are committed to fighting racism and homophobia. And we look forward to the day when society is truly and totally egalitarian.

In the tradition of the Combahee River Collective, and in the footsteps of Queers of Color like James Baldwin and Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga and Jewel Gomez, and Nick Deocampo, we rightfully claim our place.

- April 17, 1995

\*Proud Colors was started as Queers of Color

# **PROUD COLORS MISSION STATEMENT**

Proud Colors is a group on Columbia University's campus for and about people. The overall objective of Proud Colors is to implement a comprehensive action program to promote an understanding of the past, present, and future experiences, problems, and needs of queer and trans- students of color as well as the queer and trans- community of color as a whole. Proud Colors intends to develop effective methods of dealing with these problems. Further, we know that neither we, nor the peoples we aim to serve are simple, fixed entities of colors and desires. We believe that the notion of queer includes, but extends past gender expression and sexual orientation. We understand queerness as the call to respect and affirm the complex intersections of one's ethnicities, gender expressions, religions, socioeconomic statuses and backgrounds, nationalities, abilities, and/or sexual orientations. It is in these critical points of collision that we situate ourselves and our activism, as it is in these intersections that we truly live: Queer and Proud.

-November 2, 2011

## **CONTACT US:**

[proudcolors@columbia.edu](mailto:proudcolors@columbia.edu)

## **FOLLOW US:**

Tumblr: [proudcolors.tumblr.com](http://proudcolors.tumblr.com)

Twitter: [@proudcolors](https://twitter.com/proudcolors)


Facebook: [facebook.com/ProudColors](https://facebook.com/ProudColors)

## **WEBSITE:**

[columbia.edu/cu/qoc](http://columbia.edu/cu/qoc)

# A SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR

**PROUD COLORS**  
FORGOTTEN FACES OF OUR TIME:  
QUEER BLACK VOICES IN HISTORY



As part of Black History Month, join Proud Colors as we remember the rich history of queer and trans\* Black folk.

Tuesday, Feb. 19 at 9pm in the IRC (552 W. 114th St.)

**PROUD COLORS**

**WELCOME BACK!**

**Checking In**  
Tuesday, Jan. 29 9pm in the IRC (552 W. 114th St.)

Proud Colors welcomes you back to campus and wants to know how you're doing! Come join your favorite queer people of color as we prepare for the new semester.

**PROUD COLORS**

**OPEN MIC**  
TUESDAY, MARCH 5  
9PM IN THE IRC  
552 W. 114TH ST.



**COME SHARE YOUR POEMS, STORIES, AND VOICES**

Proud Colors is an organization for queer/LGBT/same-gender loving people of color and our allies. We meet every Tuesday at 9pm in the IRC (552 W. 114th St.).

**Sex and Dating** **P.C. TALKS**

*We all hear about and think about queer hook-up culture on campus, but what about dating? Does it happen? If so, where and who gets to be involved? Join Proud Colors to discuss theories about the elusive (and exclusive?) world of dating as a queer person of color.*

Tuesday, February 12 at 9pm in the IRC

**PROUD COLORS**  
**BLACK QUEERS IN THE MEDIA**

Tues., Feb. 5 @ 9pm in the IRC  
552 W. 114th St.



As part of Black History Month, join Proud Colors as we discuss and analyze queer, LGBT, and/or same-gender loving Black people in contemporary media.


**PC Talks: A Critical Discussion About the HRC**

**=?**

Tuesday April 9 9pm  
IRC 552 W. 114th St.

Come and join Proud Colors as we address the issues associated with the Human Rights Campaign. If you support the HRC, stand completely opposite it, or have not found enough information to make a decision yet and are looking to hear from your peers, stop by and make your opinion known.

**PIZZA STUDY BREAK**



It's stressful enough being a queer person of color on this campus without finals.

Come laugh, eat, and have fun with Proud Colors.

December 11 7:00-8:30pm  
Malcolm X Lounge (Hartley)

**PROUD COLORS**

**OPeC Ice Cream Social**  
Tuesday, September 18 7pm-9pm  
IRC

Come to the IRC Conference room (552 W. 114th St.) at 7pm this Tuesday (September 18) to eat some ice cream and socialize with your favorite queer people of color.

Then at 8pm we will be kicking off our discussion on homophobia/biphobia/transphobia in our communities of color.



PROUD COLORS AND MEN'S PEER EDUCATION PRESENT

**FRIDAY APRIL 12**



**BECAUSE YOU'RE BROWN MONEY GURU!**

\* (indicated by a star symbol next to the title)

Proud Colors is an organization for queer/LGBT/same-gender loving people of color and our allies. We meet every Tuesday at 9pm in the IRC (552 W. 114th St.).

**Allyship** **P.C. TALKS**

*How can we build a healthy allyship among our various racial and ethnic identities as queer people of color? How do we envision the allyship between the various identities that our community of queer people of color embodies but not every individual shares?*

Join us as we navigate these questions!

Tuesday, April 23 at 9pm in the IRC

flyers by Gerardo Romo, except for (\*) by Darkmatter

# 2012-2013 E-BOARD



left to right:

Kyle Chetan-Lutah Sebastian, Gerardo Romo, Inez Bell, Xavier Jarrett, Kylie White

## WANT TO JOIN?

Come to our weekly board meetings – open to all!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Member Profiles.....	7-12
The Year I Never Said Her Name – Kassy Lee.....	14
Wicked – Xavier Jarrett.....	15
the black queer maenad – Xavier Jarrett.....	16
A Goddess Reborn – Gerardo Romo.....	17
To My Self-Proclaimed Straight Chican@ Family – Gerardo Romo...18	
Troppo – A.J. Hudson.....	19
Succubus – Rae Johnson.....	20
Striped Fantasy – David Boucard.....	21
The Sun’s Reprieve – David Luna.....	22
In Packages of Stone – Kyle Chetan-Lutah Sebastian.....	23
Feminist Manifesto – D. Inez Bell.....	24
Verbal Astheticist – D. Inez Bell.....	25
Memorial – Kylie White.....	26
Tryna – Kylie White.....	27

# DORIAN BARNWELL



**School/Year:** Columbia College/2015

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

She/Her/Hers

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

A space where I can finally cut the bullshit.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

I don't really have any advice for white first-years. To all my QPOC first-years: Find/Build your community with your people. Don't waste time. And don't listen to that "self-segregation" shit.

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

Tamarind balls. Because they have a flavor that catches you offguard and strips down your senses. They force you

to confront the reality, nay, the rawness of deliciousness. Tangy, Tantalizing, and Taking you by surprise.

# D.INEZ BELL

**School/Year:** Barnard/2015

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

She/Her/Hers

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

Proud Colors has provided for me the space to learn about the intricacies of my own identities, the ability to construct more meaningful friendships, and the heart to connect to true family. In this past year, it has been a classroom, a living room and also that weird friend's ratchet studio flat in which the cracks on the walls are covered by pictures of Angela Davis, Mykki Blanco and still shots from episodes of Noah's Arc.

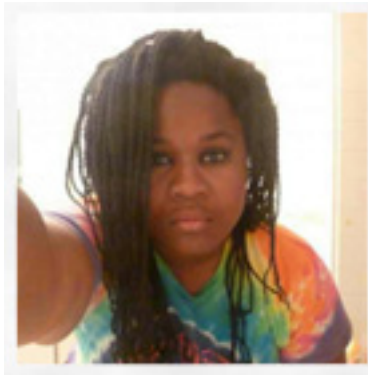
**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

QPOC youngins.... a big congrats for getting into this university/college (seriously, this shit is cut-throat, so congrats again), but if you ever feel discouraged, sad or angry, know that this place was not built FOR people like us, it was build ON and AGAINST us - a pretentious edifice which perpetuates the capitalist ideas of racism,

homophobia, classism, ableism, sexism, etc. Use the skills you learn here against the oppression of the hegemony. Also, eat your fruits and veggies (just not the ones at JJs)...

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

I'm an extra large cup of extra strong raspberry coffee with a wasabi burger (with or without extra sharp cheddar) - I'm super bold and sometimes juicy, I pack a punch, I'm a bit of a guilty pleasure, but you know exactly when you want me.





# DAVID BOUCARD



**School/Year:** SEAS/2015

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

He/Him/His

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

Proud Colors is a space that has allowed me to begin to unravel my sexuality, experiences, and history as a queer person of color. It has been a comfortable and welcoming space, since the moment I entered. More importantly, Proud Colors is a community. A community of wonderful people who are more than understanding. I feel accepted as an entire person, just as I am, and that makes all the difference.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

College is probably one of the few periods of your life when you are free to learn anything you want, free to explore your identities and passions, and free to stumble

in the process. Take advantage of that freedom. Challenge yourself to go outside of your comfort zone. It is completely worth it.

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

If my life were captured in candy, it would be a Tootsie Pop. I am the kind of person who tries to figure out how many licks it takes to get to the Tootsie Roll center. I prefer to take things at my own measured pace. When it comes to building relationships, new experiences, and life in general, I prefer the slow blossom to a sudden bloom.

# A.J. HUDSON

**School/Year:** Columbia College/2013

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

He/Him/His

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

The intersections of life are the most important places. Proud Colors is a way for me to understand the many intersections in my own life, and to grow comfortable with them.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

Change your major at least ten times. It doesn't actually matter.

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

Sourpatch kids

First it's sour and then it's sweet





# XAVIER JARRETT

**School/Year:** Columbia College/2015

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

No preference

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

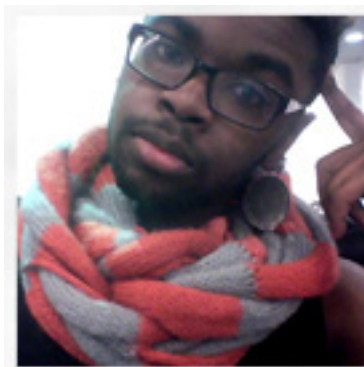
Proud Colors is a space for personal growth and discovery. Whether we're merely revisiting topics or discussions that we've had several times within the space or casually at JJ's or talking about something completely new, the voices within Proud Colors continually challenge me to interrogate my beliefs and opinions. We hold each other accountable for our words and actions, and that accountability serves as a way of maintaining a safe space as well as being a learning moment, or rather unlearning moment in the context of oppressive behavior. Having this space exist as an open forum for discourse has taught me so much about myself and assisted me in reevaluating my identities and the ways that they operate within the various spaces that I inhabit.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

Don't let the academic jargon or "radical" label scare you off. Entering into these spaces can often seem a little off-putting the first couple of times, but I feel like that was a lot of our experiences. Unlearning fucked up behavior, being critical of our own experiences, and problematizing the things that we believe, especially our attractions and desires, isn't an easy process. Most of the people within these spaces have been exposed to ways of discussing these issues that have specific academic terminology associated with them or have come to understand the ways that privilege and power operate in an extremely different manner than a lot of the other students on Columbia and Barnard's campuses. It took time and learning to get to that point, though. So, yeah, don't let the first few meetings scare you off because the members are throwing around words that don't seem to make sense or are attacking systems of power, which often seems like they're attacking the people with that power instead. Stick around and see what they're trying to get at first.

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

A 3 Musketeers bar. I just want three men in my bed with me at all times. Plain and simple.



# KASSY LEE

**School/Year:** Columbia College/2013

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

She/Her/Hers

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

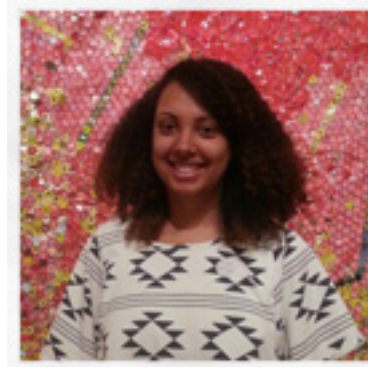
In the words of Audre Lorde, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives." To me, Proud Colors is a space to feel comfortable and capable of living in a society that respects how complex all of us are, not just in terms of how I look or whom I choose to have sex with. It's a space to be real about our pasts, pains, and visions for a future that acknowledges our existence, struggles, and triumphs.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

Give it all you got, and don't be afraid to fail spectacularly. Go in the direction of the dreams that you fear you are not capable of achieving. Find friends and love them even if you don't want to be romantic with them. There's no such thing as wasted time in college: the time you spent watching YouTube videos with your friends will be what you remember most and not the A you got in Chemistry. If you are jealous of someone, it probably means you secretly want to be friends with them. Open your heart before you open your mouth. Visit every borough. Walk everywhere. Seek support if you are struggling; there is no shame in saying that sometimes your mind feels as though it is a black box because many of us have been there too. Love the sounds of the street that keeps you up at night. Love the bad smells in early summer. Love your body; what it is capable and incapable of.

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

I guess I'm like a gingerbread cookie: a little bit of sugar, a little bit of spice.



# DAVID LUNA



**School/Year:** Columbia College/2015

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**  
He/Him/His

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

The support is uplifting.  
The laughter is rejuvenating.  
And we're all are sexy as fuck.  
That's all I know.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

- 1) Ditch the racist ass white people you'll meet at this place
- 2) Join Proud Colors

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

CRUNCH

# GERARDO ROMO

**School/Year:** Columbia College/2014

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

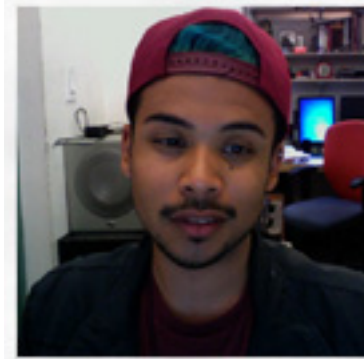
He/Him/His

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

Proud Colors is where I have found my place at this school and in this city. It's my healing ground where I've been able to understand myself better in a community of queer people of color. I've learned solidarity, love, and resistance.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

Only spend your time and energy on people and spaces that care about you. You're too good to be wasting your energy and love on people who don't reciprocate.



**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

Tajin 'cause I'm kinda spicy and sweet and go good on everything.

# ALI ROSA-SALAS



**School/Year:** Barnard/ 2013

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

She/Her/Hers or They/Them/Theirs

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

Proud Colors has been such a beautiful forum to meet the coolest, most brilliant and inspiring QPOC on campus.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

DISCOVERING WHO YOU ARE IS A LIFE LONG PROCESS.  
ENJOY THE MESSY RIDE.

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

bagels, because they are filling and fulfilling and this is how i try to approach life

# KYLE CHETAN-LUTAH SEBASTIAN

**School/Year:** Columbia College/2016

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

No preference

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

Proud Colors is first and foremost a place where I've met my first major group of QPOC friends at Columbia. It's a space that expands beyond Tuesdays at 9pm in the IRC Conference room to the rest of my life. It forces me to think about race and sexuality in ways that I previously was either ignorant of or too hesitant to explore.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

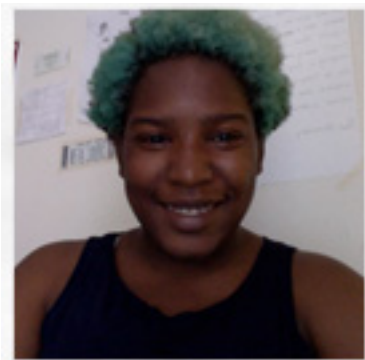
Don't dismiss things that seem radical from your own beliefs/values. And join as many clubs/organization/etc. as you can early on so you can choose those that end up being important to you (it's also a lot easier to meet new people and make friends that way).

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

I guess Starbursts because when you eat them you can't help but feel happy. I try and focus on the happy things in life. (That was an awful explanation.)



# KYLIE WHITE



**School/Year:** SEAS/2015

**Preferred Gender Pronouns:**

she/her/hers/hottie ova there

**What does Proud Colors mean to you?**

Proud Colors means a place where I can be silly, real, happy, sad, angry, forgiving, forgiven, sexy, insecure, all of it. And someone will get it, or will want to get it, and be able to share something that they might have in common.

**What advice would you give to incoming first-years?**

Find your place, but don't try to replace your home. It is so necessary to find a place that makes you feel comfortable and accepted. That said, don't expect too much. Things and people are bound to let you down. It's a learning curve, and with time, you will learn who to surround

yourself with and those people will learn how to love you.

**What candy/snack best describes you and/or your life and why?**

Sour Gummyworms!!

When you first meet me I may be a little much, even a little EXTRA. But with time I get really sweet, and delicious(... to be around)... that part will last a long time.

# OUR CREATIONS

# THE YEAR I NEVER SAID HER NAME

## KASSY LEE

Mourn the poplars hewn down by the storm. A small part of winter as an amateur chess composer, I lack talent but carry on listening to internet radio. Ebay anklets

made of synthetic lapis lazuli. It was as if, in spring, her eyes were a particular blue when she looked out my car window. See, it's not like the old days—a girl

could call and hang up the phone when a known voice answers. Old e-mails, inhaled Camel Crush. Someone, apparently, was heartless. A fluorescent light drones quietly

on at the laundromat in June where I scroll through pictures she took on my phone— a pineapple, a flag at half-mast, her hand holding a tangelo. The long absence of summer

rain. The gift of being caught without an umbrella come August. Warm, thundered. But then again, she is fall; she is always more beautiful than I remember.

**WICKED**  
**XAVIER JARRETT - PHOTO BY SERGIO SAENZ**





# THE BLACK QUEER MAENAD

## XAVIER JARRETT

the • black • queer • maenad n. 1. the — locating myself as an entity that is specific and distinct; a self that is related to others through socialization, lived experiences, and chosen spaces, yet still inevitably separated by the multitude of decisions that have resulted in this version of myself 2. black — abstracting myself from the monolithic “person of color” narrative; this is not to separate myself from other brown people, but to target some of the specific needs, desires, and wants that are explicitly linked to Black bodies and Black queer experiences; a promise to myself that i won’t forget my Blackness and attempt to reconnect with the part of myself that i repressed so thoroughly in an attempt to achieve a desired type of “gay” (i.e. queerness as whiteness); a reminder to love, and to make that love include affirmations of my Blackness 3. queer — i don’t want the legacy of a discriminatory and exclusionary “gay” community attached to my body; i must problematize and question the ways in which i understand my desires, attractions, and sexuality; a promise to myself that i will learn to better love and value my body outside of the brands and notions of masculinity that are rewarded and prioritized in our society; a commitment to being conscious of my partner’s intersectional identities and addressing their needs as well as my own 4. maenad — female worshipers of dionysus, god of chaotic frenzy, possession, hedonism, and madness; translated as “raving ones” or of relating to “madness”; a constant reminder to myself that it is perfectly acceptable to be incredibly mad at the shit around me; i don’t have to be complacent with the rampant femmephobia in my life, and i’m allowed to let that trouble me and make me feel; a promise to myself that i will try to find strength in my anger over this rather than tears that result from frustration; maenads are the fearless indestructible feminine warriors of dionysus, and i am too; he chose femininity as a vehicle of expression—a femininity that rips men apart and takes pleasure in the act along with embracing the reality of true sexual hunger.

# A GODDESS REBORN

## GERARDO ROMO

I can feel memories of that confidence  
I used to have,  
before it was all crushed  
by the tremendous weight of my anxiety.

Memories of feeling so liberated inside  
I could look at you across the room—  
a stranger then—  
and decide that all I wanted that night  
was to taste your full, racially ambiguous lips,

and find out who the hell  
that cutie is in the corner  
lookin' all cholo femme  
with his big ass smile,  
directing me like a lighthouse  
in that room full of  
straight Chican@s.

Memories of *mariposas* fluttering inside me  
a month later when you  
were walking to my room to watch that movie and  
I wasn't worried if I was too ugly or naive  
'cause all I could think about was how cute you were  
and how much I just wanted to feel you again.

That liberating echo turned into erupting volcanoes  
when we kissed and you were so warm and soft—  
much like your lips—  
and it was like your fingers were melting into me  
in warm explosions across my chest following the  
trail of your hand.

I became a goddess that night,  
born out of the ashes of the lava  
pouring inside me through  
your burning kisses.

I can feel memories of that confidence  
I used to have  
and it's like I'm alive again.

# TO MY SELF-PROCLAIMED STRAIGHT CHICAN@ FAMILY

GERARDO ROMO

Why do I have to prove to my self-proclaimed straight Chican@ family that homophobia exists? Why do I have to repeatedly open my wounds to you when you're just going to silence me? Why must I force myself to get past my discomfort with self-proclaimed straight Latin@s when you're just going to slather my wounds with your homophobic poison?

My mere existence should be enough to prove to you that being queer and being Chicano are inseparable—that homophobia bleeds through racism.

We cannot separate our communities because our communities—like our oppressions—are inextricably connected.

I cannot be silenced because, understand, you self-proclaimed straight Chican@s, my silence will be the death of me. The moment I become silent is the moment I stop living.

My wounds are bleeding again. Homophobia has carved a deep hole in me that I've been trying to close up for years. Your silencing is beating and tearing open the scars in me that take so much work to heal.

If you want to call me family, acknowledge that you're uncomfortable with my queerness. That you don't know what to do with my "in-your-face" queerness. Acknowledge your discomfort and challenge it, self-proclaimed straight Chican@s. Challenge the thoughts and anger that run through your mind when you see a brown man loving another brown man, emotions you've internalized through all the centuries of colonialism our people have faced.

Challenge it and change it because you're killing me.

# TROPPO

## A.J. HUDSON

My heart aches at night  
when I lie in bed  
But from being too full  
and not from being too empty

It swells with thoughts of sitting  
with hands clasped in lap  
Of sitting between cloudless blue robes  
An infinity as clear as the sky

And it dreams of the moment  
when I throw that cap  
But then worries of  
what will happen after

Will it fall to the ground  
gently but firmly?  
Or will it remain above  
and refuse to come back?

My heart aches at night  
when I am in bed  
because its tubes are blocked  
with too many open dreams

But do not interfere with  
the pain of a dreaming heart  
Let it suffer from dreams too big  
Rather than gift a reality in which  
The possibilities are too many  
And I am too small

After that day, when I take  
my heart from my chest  
and place it in my lap  
Gently I will comfort it

I say that the world will have beauty  
And I will tell of what what will come  
I say that you will always have worth  
And I will lie of what will be

# SUCCUBUS

## RAE JOHNSON

I watch you with my eyes closed.  
From images charred into my irises,  
by visions, and dreams, and encounters.  
Though I try to cast these scars aside  
the pleasure persists and the pain subsides,  
so I stare in humble hypnosis.

Last night I saw you,  
strolling beneath the summer rain.  
Body drenched with lights so faint  
dancing amid reds, greens, and gray of  
shades counterfeits should not attempt make.  
So I dare not recreate these days,  
only watch and wish these lights not fade.

I can feel you sometimes,  
walking barefoot on the dirty floors  
in my mind. Your soft strides  
let me know that you're trying to unwind.  
I feel your stress in every step,  
as your heart beats in sync with mine.

When I try to open my eyes  
my mind resists and knows  
that it is wise, to stay in the dark  
the only place where you reside.  
What's the point of seeing the sun  
if in the sun you die.  
So I stay behind these lies, and sink.  
This time your hair was jittery streaks  
of oranges and pinks, brilliant yet meek.  
As you rise from a sea of silver, you speak  
of all the things that make skeptics believe.

This must be what God dreams about.

# STRIPED FANTASY

## DAVID BOUCARD



# THE SUN'S REPRIEVE

## DAVID LUNA

Your shrill shrieks, monkey,  
used to pierce through the shrines  
built bleedingly with the  
brined entrails of my own prayers

Rare were the times, monkey,  
when I played my own love on the gramophone  
opting instead for the  
honing of my don't-let-go-of-this-heart  
pleas

I beg you.  
Please.  
Don't let go.

Away with the smoke, monkey,  
went the beauty of those temples  
and scattered when the dust settled  
toward the simple  
who gasped for any sheen, short or tall

All you had to do, monkey,  
was cease to shriek and see  
the supplication of the sun—  
a call to whatever it is primates call god

But the star let go of its core, monkey,  
and abolished the worship of those  
carved bare by the whispers of the petrified forest

Rest assured, monkey,  
that the shrieks that sought the company of the sun  
no longer have the sting  
to puncture even the vastest of clear blue skies.



# IN PACKAGES OF STONE

## KYLE CHETAN-LUTAH SEBASTIAN

In packages of stone and tufts of grease  
of connecting limbs moving in tireless ease.  
In bouts of glass and bowls of sand  
to the howling questions led by a forgotten hand.  
What regal thieves and smooth cut lies  
To screaming laughs and honey dew cries.  
For turpentine layers and flesh clad dreams  
do nothing, for my sickness itself, redeems.  
For all of your virtues and all of your vices these tales that you  
tell are pointless.

# FEMINIST MANIFESTO

## D. INEZ BELL

yes ma'am  
i am woman  
and when  
i preach feminism  
i preach equality  
and i use language  
to build spectrums like roots for trees  
that shed their leaves like i've learned to  
shed my internalized dichotomies  
how are we still considered cultural anomalies  
when  
this  
is  
war  
feminism is my battle cry  
i wear ties to dismantle your patriarchy  
i hold a vibrator against my clit like  
i hold you to your bullshit  
uhg  
cry me a river of white guilt  
to drown out your privilege  
i am the angry black lesbian  
who re-appropriated the word dick  
so  
yes ma'am  
i am woman  
hear me roar, bitch  
and yeah,  
in case you're wondering  
i reclaimed that shit

# VERBAL ASTHETICIST

## D. INEZ BELL

i am the verbal astheticist  
annoyed with those who ignore hypervigilance  
who are unaware of subway corner religion

i am learning that my loving  
means fucking with the system  
means bathing in resistance  
means trial by error persistence

i am the verbal astheticist

and you are caught in subtle images  
less like mona lisa  
and more like  
a roughly shaken polarioid

you are hot swig of gin on  
a cold friday night

you are a  
broken blade  
of glass filtered  
window pane light

you make my words scream bloody murder  
and when i choke of the syllables between  
your chin and your chest, you say  
"babe, that's not how we swallow love,  
that's not how a heart knows how to rest"

and i'll use grammar like  
lavender shea butter lotion  
on dry skin

i'll listen for syntax  
like the last roaring moans  
of the coldest night's  
warmest sins

i'll play ping-pong with punctuation  
as though the ball were a smirk  
and our paddles were heart palpitations

see,  
i am the verbal storm  
and when i rain  
i will not drizzle  
i will pour

and up there,  
i will harness lightning and still ask for more

i will wrestle angels until they give me a  
crown  
and i will learn to love the ground  
and i will learn to love you  
like i learned to  
walk, talk, cry and steal

i will learn to love you like a hotel room,  
like a good poster  
or like my favorite meal

you are the most well-constructed sentence

and i will write you out as big as john hancock  
but this is my declaration of transcendence

signed  
here lies the autobiography of  
the verbal astheticist  
annoyed with those who ignored hypervigilance  
who were unaware of subway corner religion

here lies the verbal astheticist  
who learned that her loving  
meant everything when written

# MEMORIAL

## KYLIE WHITE

I wish I could do her justice  
I'm supposed to be the engineer, civil  
but she uses her hands like she was born working  
Rosie the riveter from the womb  
crafting castles of mortar and perfect diction

.  
I am years behind  
and she puts me back into Freudian infancy  
every syllable caught up in my oral fixation  
before it can cross my lips

.  
if it makes it, its bubblegum sticky  
holding together two sheets of paper for ten seconds  
the secret glue sticks I use to construct my Lego obelisk  
in her honor

.  
To the woman who changes me:  
May your hands teach me to build something  
That will last.

**TRYNA**  
**KYLIE WHITE**



# CREDITS

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Ashley Ja'nae Gunter is a student at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY, where she studies Art & Design Education. She graduates spring of 2013 and hopes to be both an artist and an educator in coming years so look out for her!

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