

ACESPACE LDN

ACE AND ARO

ART

AROUND THE

WORLD

COMMUNITY ZINE

@acespaceldn

February 2024



Thank you

Thank you for being here

For now ace and aro experiences are not much represented in any kind of media.

We wanted to open up an opportunity for people to share their creativity and thoughts.

We were delighted and honoured to have so many submissions from around the world.

We hope you enjoy them all.



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**This zine is the work of Acespaceldn
Find us on Instagram @acespaceldn**



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Foreigner by Oak Lawrenson

asexual and demiromantic
Website grandoldoak.itch.io

midway through a party, jubilee fresh on drunken lips,
my confession forgets their shoes and sneaks across the border,
onto the street, barefoot and grazing easily.

“i owe honesty to everyone I’ve ever slept with”

maybe my sexuality is immigrant in this sultry lamplight.
i do not have the residency to stand here. do not have the right skin,
that slips well between his limbs. instead, I steal
a Union Jack from a stranger's garden and parade like a patriot
past midnight. i suck naturalisation from his collarbone,
pretend he is not alone in this passion.

it’s not enough.

later, when she tells me his condom tasted of blueberries,
I wrap the flag round my shoulders as if I am
worth something here. like I too own a tongue that can speak
his demands deep into our flesh. like I too am a nationalist
in this country of under covers sweat.

watching them worship a monarchy of skin turning deep pink.
all I know is soft pastel dispersing quickly in my fingertips,
hiding the flag in a dustbin.

2

aromanticism is
not the absence
of something.

it's the
space to
create
something
new



The Space To Create Something New by Tulip

Instagram: @tinyflowerclub

3

sex by @tanglesofjess (Instagram)

i'm afraid
That i'll never hear
The three words
Unless
i do
The three letters

- sex

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Aro Ace Scrunchie by Crochet Twinsanity NC

Instagram @CrochetTwinsanityNC



5

Open Up by Pattern & Grove Printmaking

Instagram: @pattern.and.grove



into the fire and flames
by Wren Royer (they/them)

Instagram:
@wrenthecrow

most people think of fire as this wild
destructive force.
it's hot and uncontrollable.
when people say a fire is "controlled"
it's really just
small.
trapped,
imprisoned,
only acceptable if it has a use.
but i think fire-
in its purest,
truest form-
is beautiful.
it's wild,
yes,
and it's free.
it's warm and embraces what's around it.
it's bright,
it makes itself known.
it feeds off what it can.
it may destroy,
sure,
but it also creates.
in that destruction
new life is born-
just how progress
is not linear.
there are ups and downs,
growth and failure.
fire grows.
it creates.
fire lives.



Poetry by Gaby K

Gaby is one of the organisers of AcespaceLDN
and the zine editor
Instagram @gabyk_lib

Untitled

I thought I was failing, broken
Lost and mystified
How do you all find love so easy
I am standing here glacier paced
I thought I would grow up, marry
Have a family of my own
Instead I have grown older working
I am still alone
But I've learned I am something different
Solo not alone
Love comes in many guises
All of them are crowns
I am a circle unbroken
I have joy in my life

White women's tears

White women's tears are weaponised
And it is true
They have cut down the minoritised
For merely being inconvenient to you
But right now
I am crying on the internet
Trying to compose the perfect letter
To a politician I am sure agrees with me
But his hands may be tied
Still I am writing
And I wish every white woman like me
was crying and writing letters
I wish all our white girl tears
Could slay dragons
Rescue the red white and green
Wash away bombs and drones
Cause storms, sweep away ships
Give drink to the thirsty
Instead of causing fearful risk
Of death by cop
For the crime of being Black
In the same park as a white woman.

Art
by
Celtica
Jackson

Instagram
@celtica_jackson



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Untitled by Anonymous

Being aroallo is such a struggle. People always lump aromance in with asexuality. I'm not asexual. Asexuality has never been something I've struggled with. I do feel sexual attraction. I don't really ever feel romantic attraction. Being demi, I know I have the capacity to, but it just doesn't ever really happen. Asexuality is already not understood, but what's even less understood is aromance. Being aromantic and NOT being asexual has led me to a lot of disgusting comments from people within the aroace community. I'm tired of the aroallo erasure. I'm tired of the aro erasure in general. I know maybe two people who are aro who aren't also on the ace spectrum. Everyone I try to talk to is either alloace or aroace. It's such a frustrating experience and I want to have a community of my own to be able to talk to, without feeling lumped in with asexuality. I can't find aromantic characters in shows, books, movies, or any media, who aren't also ace. They're or a package deal. I love being aroallo, I love being demiromantic, I love how I experience intimacy sexually and don't have to have an expectation of romance unless I feel safe and close enough to someone to form that. My experience is so unique to myself and who I am, and I'm forever proud of that.

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Aro and Ace of Hearts and of Spades by Amanda Lou

Instagram: @autumnleaves.poetry

Your way of loving is loveable
And in no way less than
Other ways, there is no *better* way
To love and its expression.

It's not what makes us human
To feel that kind of attraction
You're neither the broken exception
Nor an object to be questioned.

You don't have to provide adaption
To equally deserve affection
Your way of loving is loveable
And in every way more than

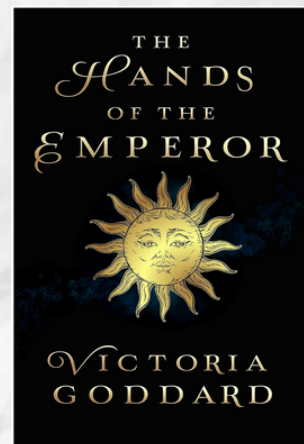
enough.

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BOOK FEATURE:

The Hands of The Emperor by Victoria Goddard

Review by Antonia Gray
Instagram: @sea_otter3



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live in a world where the people in charge are highly competent, intelligent, compassionate, and actively trying to do good for everyone without exception? Clearly, this is a fantasy, but a superlative one: *The Hands of the Emperor*, by Victoria Goddard.

If you are heartsick at the state of the world, if you are seeking emotional shelter, if you are looking for a story that will soothe your soul and offer you a place to rest and get strong, *The Hands of the Emperor* is a fine place to start. It's the first in the 'Lays of the Hearth Fires' series, following the story of Cliopher Mdang, a late-middle-aged bureaucrat who has spent his life at court rebuilding the world's government in the wake of a traumatic magical catalysm called 'The Fall'. The book chronicles, amongst many other things, Cliopher's slow burn relationship with the Last Emperor of Astandalas, a man with no shortage of secrets and more baggage than a 747.

Cliopher's ambition took him far from his island home in the Vangavaye-ve, to spend his days in the Imperial Service, serving the Emperor. He's very much a man caught between two cultures and struggles to make himself understood both by his family and friends back home, and by the nobles and bureaucrats he works with. At the heart of *The Hands of the Emperor* is the search to heal and reclaim the parts of yourself that life has demanded you repress. It's the journey to blossoming into who you really are, going after what you truly want, and improving not only your own lot, but that of those around you.

The worldbuilding in this series is staggering, and so deftly done that you don't even notice it – you are just... there.

Is *The Hands of the Emperor* a romance? Yes. But not like any you've read before, and while the love and affection between Cliopher and the Emperor is ever-present, it's not always the focus of the narrative. It's wonderful to have older queer representation. The second volume in this series is 'At the Feet of the Sun', which features some of the best asexual representation I have ever seen. As an older ace reader, I loved the focus on older characters – they can have adventures! They can have found family! They can fall in love! There's nothing they can't do.

This book is impossible to describe without spoiling you for the delightfully deep and nuanced character work that is the true joy of these stories. These are people you want to spend time with, and will follow wherever they go.

Victoria Goddard is a self-published Canadian author whose work deserves wider recognition, especially in the ace and aro communities. You can find out more about her and buy her books at victoriagoddard.ca and other online retailers.

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ACE PEOPLE DESERVE RESPECT BY ARTIE CARDEN

nonbinary queer bi ace-spec creative.

Instagram @artiecarden and @artie.is.arty



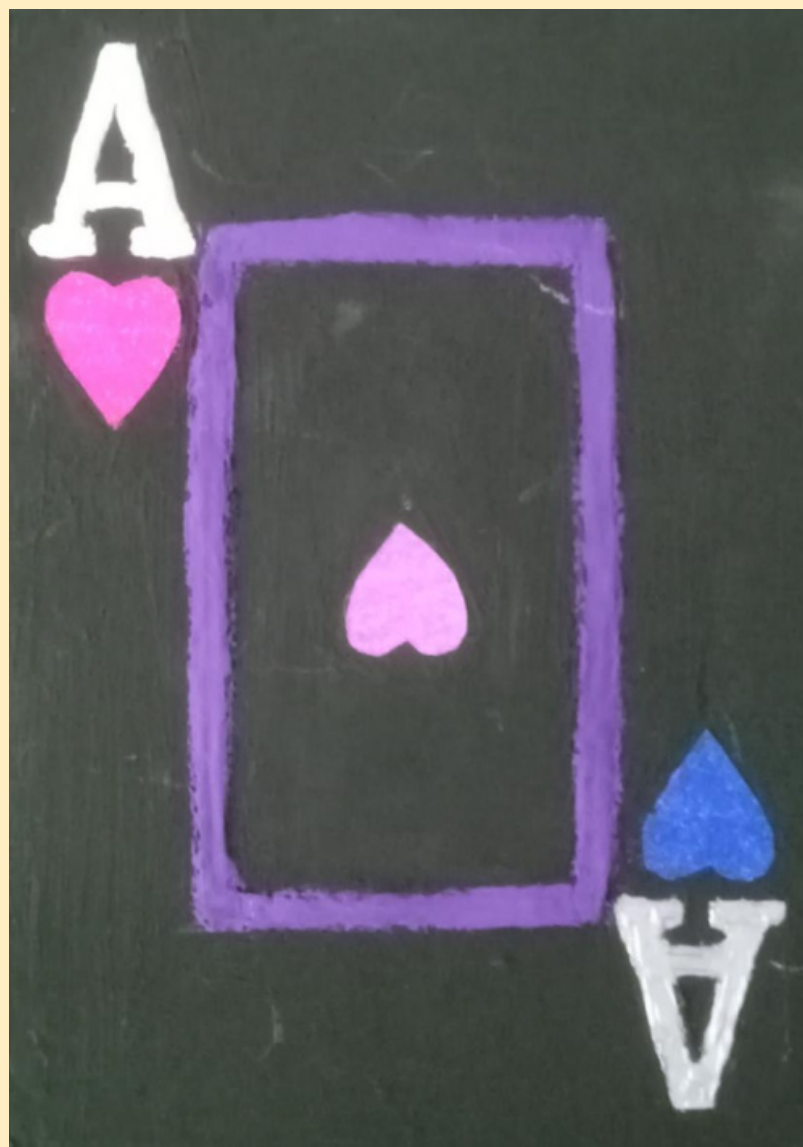
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Art by Jennifer

Instagram @Doodle.dragOn

Tumblr: @random-dragon-exe

YouTube @RandomDragon.EXE



Ace of a Biromantic Heart

Coexisting Naturally



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I feel a certain kinship with flightless birds by Kaylee

People seem to lounge comfortably in the assumption that they must have it rough, deprived of the company of clouds, so much so that our very name for them - flightless - defines them by the singular experience they cannot have.

Of course, in my academic and professional opinion, flightless birds are chilling. They are a whole new level of chill. Have you ever seen a penguin go for a 500-yard high-speed luge down the scenic ice of Antarctica on its specially-adapted feathered belly, only to freestyle dive into an ocean chock-full of delicious fish? Or an ostrich go for a light humanly-impossible sprint across the savanna? Bet not. Kiwis are so universally beloved that they represent an entire country in all their fluffy, fruit-adjacent splendor.

And yet.

Sometimes I wish I could talk to the flightless cormorant, its name tied inextricably to its permanent grounding, and hear it laugh at humanity. Might as well call you a flightless human, it might say. Dude, I totally get it, actually, I might respond, and then we would go for seafood.

I am aromantic and asexual, which means that a) I feel a special connection with boxes labeled “none of the above,” b) I have been called a plant more times than just about any other demographic, c) I am unfortunately compelled to assign supplemental reading when I come out to people, and d) that a lot of the frameworks that my homo sapien companions on this Earth believe to be immutable are, well, confusing. N for Non, A for Applicable.

(More specifically, it means that I don’t experience romantic or sexual attraction, and because of this, I choose not to engage in traditional romantic relationships. Perfectly satisfied with the lack of mouth-mooshing in my emotional bonds, thank you very much).

Don’t get me wrong; I brim with affection. My friends are the most important people in the world to me, I cry at sad movies, and I have anxiety dreams about my apple tree sapling when I’m out of town. The L-word is far from alien to me; it is in fact everything to me. I define myself by my enduring care for others.

(“Does that mean you’re incapable of love?” my mother asked when I first told her. Did she think so little of me?)

But in the eyes of society, I am not only lacking, but, as the flightless bird, defined by my lack. Convention has divorced itself from me (inasmuch as anyone who intends permanent spinster status can ever be divorced).

I feel a certain kinship cont

Someday, the people I love more than anything will find people they love more than anything, and they will pair off and enjoy legal and financial advantages and according to the predominant narrative, I will have to be content with second best. I would argue against this: there is no narrative, and no author to force me to abide by their vision of the loneliness of singledom. My love is no less intense and all-healing for being purely platonic.

Once, this unceremonious shove into the margins bothered me, and I wondered whether I would ever be loved in my own way. Now, surrounded by minds and hearts that reach out for mine, both longing as I do to be seen, and actually willing to look, I laugh. I am exactly who I want to be, and I am stronger for it.

So, to those who call me “broken,” “sick,” or “poor thing”: do you pity the ostrich because the wind on its face is savored at ground level? Do you really think that your fluttering neighborhood songbirds experience a higher level of joy than the penguin, in its gleeful world of permanent Slip-n-Slides?

Like the kiwi, I am soft, personable, and unique. Like the flightless cormorant, I refuse to mourn for a life that I will never have nor want.

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The Sky Alight by Kaylee



Journey of self-discovery by Isabel (they/them)

Instagram @penguinsarecute25

Puberty, a mix of hormones,
One may feel attracted to the opposite gender,
Or the same,
Or even all.

Talk of girlfriends and boyfriends,
Why would I want one?
I'm happy with just friends actually,
Maybe that part for come later for me.

Except years pass,
Still no search for a partner,
Still no teenage desire to get into bed,
Just nothing.

What's wrong with me?
I feel like the only one who feels this way,
Stuck with no interest,
Romantic or sexual.

One day, I hear someone mention the word,
Asexual,
I do a bit of research,
And that's me.

There's nothing wrong with me after all,
It's just me orientation,
Not straight, bi or lesbian,
Merely aroace.

Everglades Cowboy by Percy Dooley

Instagram:
@Okayloki



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Temptation by Terra

indulge in me
rid me of this desperate longing
to give into desires that are not
mine,
and make me feel unbroken

let me believe that
this moment is worth to get lost in

because then maybe
my selfish wish will finally tell me
if I will ever feel anything at all

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Ace Raven by Kate

Asexual artist (she/her)

@kateammann on Instagram & Tumblr



No Love Lost

by Geoff The Ice Pony

Instagram @GeoffTheIcePony

Deep down I always knew
I don't "like you" like you
Even better, my best friend
Spouse or no spouse
Whatever name's on your house

I'll stay close until the end
I once thought I had those
Feelings that lift you high
But can harm, like a rose
I found where the truth lie
By the rose, it's neighbor

Compared to "normal,"
I'm about halfway
I lack the feeling
But not the words to say
It's not something missing

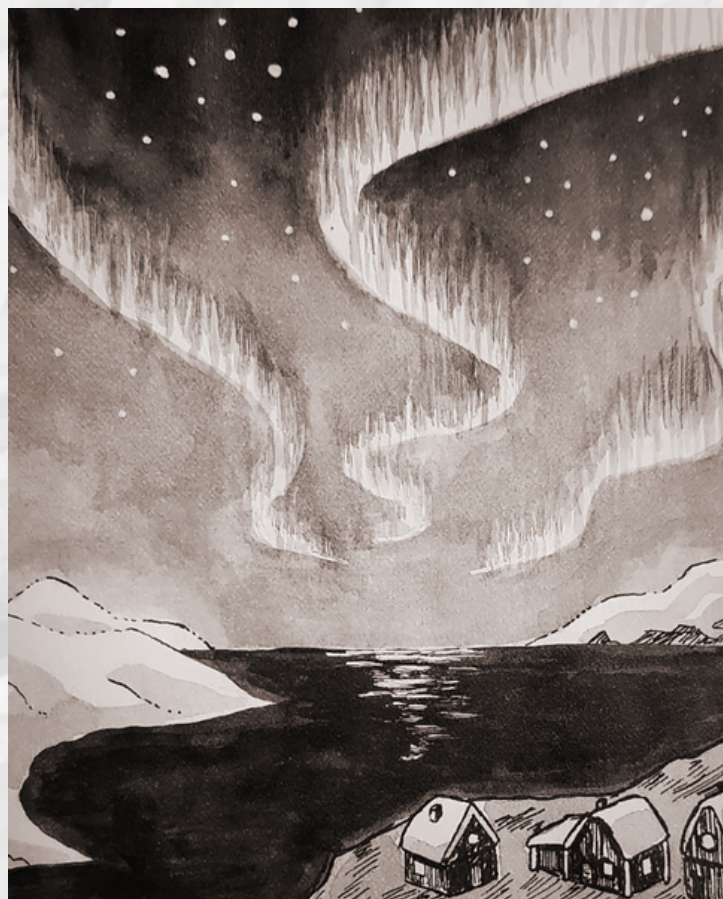
I wear a ring with pride
Excited yet terrified
To tell the meaning inside
I do not like to hide

Most won't understand
Why I have no need
For someone else's hand
For all my lessons
Everything I might say
The response rarely changes
"You'll find the one someday"

I am not broken
Can't mourn what I did not lose
I'm aromantic



Toad



Celestial

21

Art by Julia Gajdosova

Instagram @julieta_van_doedelzak

(ace)

Massive

Dream



Poetry by Charlotte Peters (she/her)

Instagram @industrialstrengthmoon

Previously publishing in the Mitre, the Maynard, yolk, and Gingerbread House. Worked as an editor and chair of the Quebec Universities English Undergraduate Conference. Charlotte is currently a member of the editorial team for Culture & Tradition Journal.

Valentine Was Also the Patron Saint of Beekeepers

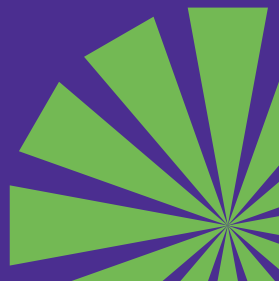
I can't help it / I love the way men love. – Ada Limón

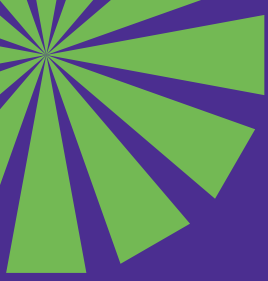
One Valentine's Day my father bought three chocolate roses;
one for me, one for my sister, and one for my mom.
All the other Valentine's Days he did not.
Chewing through the waxy milk chocolate,
I mulled romance. One, or both, did not sit well,
and I spent the evening with stomach pains.

My father buys a pen built for left hands,
prints out an article about 'middle child syndrome'
on the day he tells us is Middle Child Day,
and presents it to my mother, the third
of five children, placing it like a plate
of food on the dining room table.

On my ninth birthday my mother bakes a cake,
whisking left-handed, and he decorates it with
wizard action figures on rock-candy brooms.
I imagine him stopping at the tuck shop on the way home
from work, assessing the aerodynamics of licorice sticks
and chocolate-dipped pretzels with a furrow in his brow.
He read us to sleep religiously, page
by page, and the covers of my parents' queen became
our confessional. I think love is a birthday cake, or is
his hand swatting bees from my allergic mother. But
an equator away from their flannel sheets my confession
is this: I never saw my parents kiss.

What I'm trying to say is I'm not a romantic.
What I'm trying to say is I did not bring home chocolate.
What I'm trying to say is if you look on the fridge,
you will see a list of all your favourite fruits,
vegetables, and grains; and because I cannot be a lover,
I hope you will love me all the same as a beekeeper.





They Will Tell You What Love Feels Like - Charlotte Peters

My darling,
they will tell you what Love feels like.
They will tell you about heat
in the night
 a knight
 in Under Armour
or else an open mouthed kiss,
that will nourish you for months.

They will tell you Love is hunger,
 they will warn you of starvation
 of an ache and an

emptiness

and lord, you will want to be hungry.
Because Love feels like sallow cheeks,
 wailing in the rain,
writing monograms in margins,
a GPS heart that points True

North.

I have no sense of direction,
 lose
 my
 place
 on a
 numbered

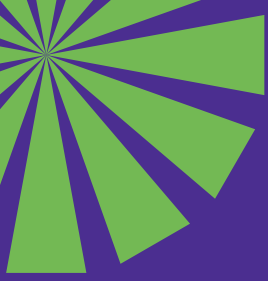
page
- left unvandalized.

love feels like a bookmark.
love feels like a steady hand
 on your hip
 a laundry basket
 of someone else's clothes.

My love is not hunger,
my love
 having eaten,
pots leftovers,
 saves portions.

My love is the unpotted seeds
but,
 determined little fuckers,
they sprouted and grew.
And I nurtured them,
let them sprawl across the sill,
even watered them
 when I thought
I wasn't looking.





Like Clytemnestra by Charlotte Peters

Like Clytemnestra
I am born half empty
with a sister
who will launch
 a thousand ships.
And I will play at
homemaker –
 'til he makes
 his way home.
It is my fate
to wrong my lovers,
for when you tell me
love makes us
human,
I hear that I must
be a god.

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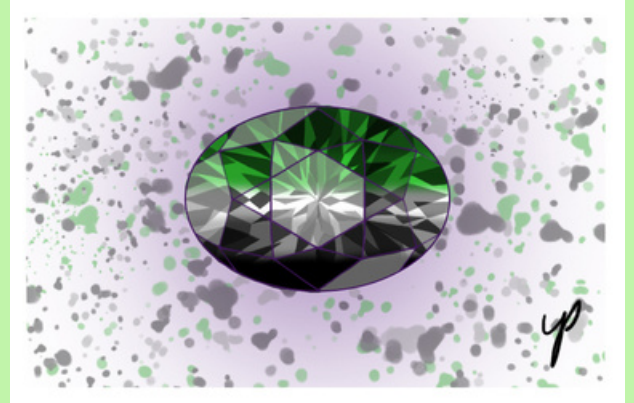
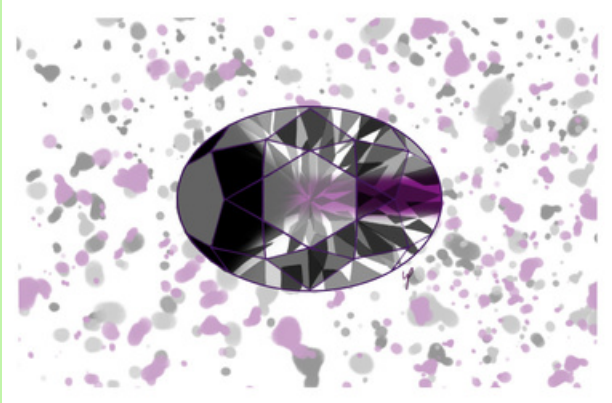
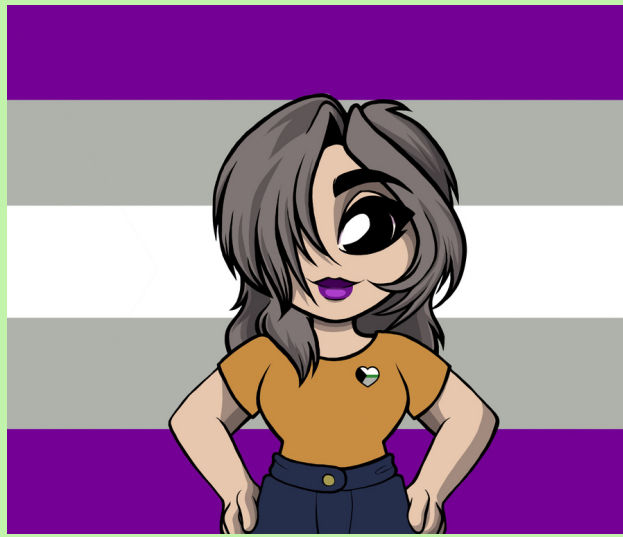
Dreaming by Bennet K

Instagram @bennet.a.k

It's a funny thing
This community in which I am trying to make my home
The otherness in which we seek togetherness
Predicated on who and how we want to love
On who and how we want to fuck
Generational respectibilities locking us into such a narrow, narrow scope
I'm more than that. We're more than that.
One day it will be safe to be all that we are.
One day, it will be easy.



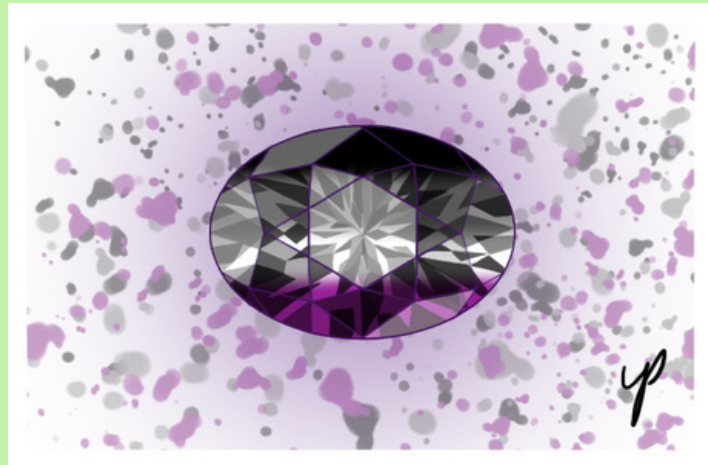
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Digital Artist - Yolimar "Yoly" Perozo

Instagram: @ramiloyart

Behance: www.behance.net/yoyoperozo37b3



25

Untitled by Anonymous

February is such an interesting month for me. I get to celebrate my birthday, which is always great. I love February. But I've always had such an awkward time around Valentine's Day. I love love. I love my friends, I love giving love and showing love, but being aromantic, I notice there tends to be something dehumanizing about being pursued romantically, especially when I make it clear I don't feel the same. Now, I'm aroallo, so my experience with sex and romance is already unique as it is. I feel like I have no one to talk to about being aroallo, because everyone I know who is aro is also ace, or they're ONLY ace. I love feeling sexual attraction and I love how sex has become a really significant form of intimacy for me, closeness with someone sexually and platonically is all I need to feel fulfilled. The expectation of romance is what makes me feel uncomfortable. So the idea of a holiday focusing solely on romance has always felt off to me. Holidays are, of course, all capitalist tools to get you to consume and spend more and more on corporations every year. It's basically guaranteed profit for companies. So, this year, if you're aro hug all your friends, show the people close to you that you appreciate them, and don't let yourself get too anxious about the idea of Valentine's Day. Everyone's valentine's day looks different. :)

26

Gift 🧡 by eve

Instagram @planet.eve_

Love is like a gift
Once given it cannot be returned
To have been loved is proof that you existed
To love is proof that you lived

Love is sometimes an unwanted gift
Received with the obligation of gratitude
You have to unwrap it and gush with thanks
Try not to recoil from the nakedness
(It was more beautiful with ribbons)

In Chinese we have a saying
Return one's gift with another
If love was really a gift
A million people would be in debt

Love is my gift-wrapped heart
Once broken considered sold
They check out the price tag
And carry on with their window shopping

27

that one page of my secret diary by Chanty

Instagram @chanty_f.02

it's made up of memories
full of tear drops
so many words
really deep ones

there's one page though
it's written in red
it talks about love
at least I think so

not that kind of romantic love
but the one we all should give
that love we all deserve

affection towards people
affection towards animals
affection towards sports
affection towards Earth

yes, there are more
all listed in that page
that one page of my secret diary

28

Demisexuality by Souad Hemchaoui

Instagram: tessera_ct

I am enthralled by the earthly vessel
Which keeps your soul captive
But please look me in the eyes
And tell me, what makes you whole?

This connection could surpass a lifetime
But this spark cannot occur instantaneously
Just like how seeds of a lotus will germinate
My feelings need time to unravel

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Aro and Creative by Glitter Reversi

lesbian aromantic creator (she/her)

Instagram: @glitter_rainbowss



The Mares by Maya Rivera

Can you hear the thundering hooves of the horses?
They dance through my dreams,
so dreadful yet so very divine.
I see the steeds everywhere--not just when sleeping.
How they haunt me so!
The gloom constantly creeping in;
the mares my steadfast companions.
My days are waking nightmares,
forever passing me in a daze.
They ferally gallop before my eyes,
herding me towards insanity.
But am I mad?
Perhaps I am,
I ponder as I awaken from my stupor--
and see the bloody hoof prints tracked across the ground.

I follow this crimson trail into the darkness,
terrified to see where--or what--it leads me to.
Yet I cannot stop for even a second,
for I hear the echoes of hooves stalking me.
With each step,
I feel the darkness absorbing me.
As I follow this terrifying road,
the forest closes in on me.
The skeletal tree branches reach out for a connection,
one I cannot hope to return.
Or can I?
At last,
I reach the end of this journey
and see where these night-mares have brought me.

A stag awaits me at the base of a hollow tree.
Questioning my own sanity,
I reach out to touch its blood soaked fur.
Its macabre rake of antlers tangle with the dark branches--
they seem to stretch and brush the starless sky.
I lay my hand on its crimson fur and gasp,
my eyes rolling back.
I see now that this is not madness,
but peace.
Images of gore and horror flicker before my eyes
but I am not afraid.
The mares led me to this stag for a purpose.
What choice do I have but to follow?
These creatures of darkness lead me deeper into the woods,
and I know that everything is as it should be.

7 Jahre Regen

7 Jahre Regen und ich kann ihre Spuren in noch keiner Pfütze
erhaschen,
Noch immer nicht, noch nie.

7 Jahre Regen und alle sagen es stets
Alles verliert seine Bedeutung erblickst du sie,
und zieht fortan in ihre Augen, ihre Haut, ihre Stimme.

7 Jahre Regen und die Machtlosigkeit, sie bleibt.
Eure Bedeutung trifft in mir auf keine Tür, die sie öffnen kann.
Denn ich vergaß sie zu bauen, eine verschlossene Tür.

7 years of rain – English Translation

7 years of rain and still I cannot catch her trace in any puddle,
Not yet, not ever.

7 years of rain and they keep on saying it
Everything loses its meaning if you do catch her,
and from then on moves into her eyes, her skin, her voice.

7 years of rain and the powerlessness, it remains.
Your meaning meets no door in me to open
Because I forgot to build it, a locked door

32

How I Love by Izzy

Instagram: @beanie.baby.0218



Untitled (from The Quindecim Anthology)

I am not like the others
I don't have many lovers
Touch me I shudder
Much to the disappointment of my mother

Many dream of making sweet love
But me? None of the above

A kiss makes me wretch
As if it's sucking my life like a leech

A hug is bareable
But a smile is uncompareable

A secret look, shared between two
That's all I want from my beau

Plaything

I am not your plaything to pick up and put down however it suits
your ego
I am not your plaything to be put off and hidden from show
I am not your plaything, how dare you treat me so!

I am not your forbidden fruit
I am not your bit on the side
I exist for myself, I'm not here to be your fun ride

And when you hear this, the shock you express!
"It thinks, it feels, it's not just a dress"

So back off, don't touch, don't you dare try to caress.

I don't know how I ever put so much stock in your touch,
That's it, I'm done, I'm done being your crutch
So forgive me if next time I see you I'm not excited too much

I am not your plaything
I am not your plaything
I am not your plaything

34 The journey of self-discovery

by Charlie K

I wish I could say I knew
I wish that I could tell you how I felt
When my heart leapt from my chest, onto the street
Dodging every single obstacle
My palms sweaty, my head following my heart onto the street
Looking for the green fields where everything blooms
My breath unsure of its weight, flowing over the flowers far away
Leaving rustling leaves in its path
I set a step back from you, into books
Into a world not my own but alike

From the outside, I'm looking in
I'm trying to make sure you feel alright by putting my hands on your shoulders
Giving you a smile, I practiced daily in the mirror
Hoping you will still like me when that particular day comes
You seem convinced, while I'm definitely not
You seem so convinced of what you feel
You express yourself in words, in gestures of love
How could I ever return them without exposing
Who I really am?

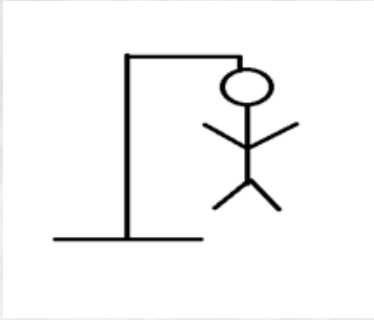
The books I read have happy endings
They reveal truths of all kinds of love
But we're not there yet
I'm still exploring who I am, while a part of me
Already knows everything there is to know
For now I keep searching for the right words to say
To you, and everyone else I will meet one day
I'll find the courage and maybe
You will stay either way



The Hangman Game

by Maria / Errohl

Instagram @backroomghost_



A _ A _ _ _ _ _ A _ _ _ _ _ Y

One word arises in my mind
 From the moment I open my eyes
 To the moment I close them
 It manifests in my mother's smirk
 My father's callous comments
 My brother's anger at the world that devalues him
 My friends' different struggles as they manage to
 Either keep up or banish its shackling essence
 The why in the back of my head
 Every time

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g happens at all, every time people recoil, or laugh, or smile
 Every time they assume, they whisper, they touch
 Every time their cruel eyes perceive me, and their mouths shoot
 arrows that harm
 Not only me and all my siblings
 But also everyone else
 Even them, yes, even those that fired them in the first place
 If I could play a game with you
 If I could scribble down a hangman
 Put empty lines for letters to fill
 And ask you to find out
 What this tormentor is
 You would not be able to guess
 Or you would guess immediately
 And would roll your eyes and laugh
 Will you still laugh when it hurts you, I wonder
 When you need to dismantle it and take it apart
 So you will stop suffocating
 Or will I still have to fight for you too with every fiber of my being

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Hated by C4t1l1n4

Instagram @C4t1l1n4



F*ck S*x

By Molly Winter

asexual trans woman

Instagram: @mollywinter_furry

When I was a young trans woman in the closet. Doctors said that they don't believe me before I lose my virginity. So like a silly b*tch I listened to them. At this time, I didn't have a choice. If they don't trust me, I must submit to their pleasures. So I had several partners. But I didn't feel anything when I did the deed. People said that it's the best thing on Earth, but I still have a bitter taste. Why do people seem so happy and enjoying this thing? Am I broken? Am I just stupid and cannot understand how it works?

So I tried again and again, with men, women, non-binary and trans people, I still felt nothing. Why am I not like the other people who seem to like it? I want to know. What could I say to the doctors if they don't believe in me? Why did I listen to them?

I should say "F*ck you". But too late, I fell into the abyss. I tasted this poison. And then I won't say "thank you": because these people who have to save lives they ruined mine.

Then I could have Hormones Replacement Therapy. I was the happiest woman on Earth. But I still miss something. S*x is still something strange for me. So I asked my fellow trans friends what I could do? They told me that it could be genital dysphoria. So I talked to a surgeon and I could have a Vaginoplasty. I was very happy and I thought that it would free me of a heavy weight. But when I could have sex with other people: I still feel nothing. Why is it happening to me? Why am I like this? So I cried. My tears fell down under the ocean. I fell inside this abyss of salted water.

Suddenly, someone took my hand and put me out of the water. It was like watching me in a mirror. It was my inner self, someone who loves me for what I truly am. I told her my story between two sobs. And she says that I'm not strange, sick or broken.

She introduced me to the word: Asexuality. And this label will change my life forever. It means that I'm not sexually attracted to others. She told me that's okay and legitimate if I'm like that. She told me that I should say "Fuck you" to everyone who wants me to suffer by having sex with people that I don't want to. This person, this word, saved my life. And I won't let anyone tell me what to do. I have to be stronger now. So I take my courage, put my hatred away, to rise up by myself and I say what I always had to say during all these years: Fuck the social norms! Fuck this society who make us believe that we won't be happy without sexual attraction. And once and for all: Fuck sex!





An Unspecified Love Letter in 3 Parts

By Autumn Hudgens

asexual/grayromantic

1. You are beautiful. Every line of you draws a smile to my face.

The curve of your smirk.

Your sun sent blemishes like glitter.

Your round edges and sharp curves,

I love every inch.

I see you...

my heart beats faster. My breath catches. Is this what Love is supposed to feel like?

1.5. innocent eyes & tired smile,

old & young at the same time,

whole but still in pieces...

you are everything.

2. I am tired of wishing for everything

I do not have & nothing that I do. You are like my confidence.

Unattainable.

I try anyway. You try anyway, or at least I think you do

with smiles just out of reach &

a grateful embrace I only felt once or twice,

Depends on who you ask.

I. love. you. It falls from swollen lips like a song on the radio,

romanticized until everybody hates it,

knows it

Loves it more than they will ever admit

I will admit that I love Love. Always have. Always will.

I'm always wanting what I do not have,

do not think I ever will.

I am not talking about you this time.

3. We could have something.

We could have had something.

We can still have something. I cannot

keep track of our tenses because all I know is my mind lives in the past

while you are the present, a gift

given on the first day of my new life

I have had so many new lives,

so many questions about what it is for me to Love,

why I want it so badly like Love could be everything

I need.

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I want to be seen by Tin Tin

Instagram: @tinvsworld

<https://tinvsworld.medium.com/>

I see them.
their eyes cut me with pity,
seeing an exposed wound that
needs to be healed, crying:
look what it has done to you
no,
look what has been done to me.
seeing wounds instead of
the scars I've been marked with,
now you lay a soothing hand
and try to bandage me,
but I have long sewn shut
and patched up my skin.
these are not colored bruises you see
this is the light I have long
locked away. so look, at my
sinful shine,
know this rainbow is mine,
and that despite the cuts
I shall still bleed pride.

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comfort 999

by Fran/Niamh/Nia (they/them)

GrayAce

Instagram: @LittleLemonSeed



Obliques

by W. Freedreamer Tinkanesh
(they/them)

Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/walkicreative>

First published in 'Queer Writing for a Brave New World',
a short anthology published in 2021 by Out On The Page.

(Oblique: neither parallel nor at right angles to a specified or implied line: slanting)

/

It was promised to you. In a vision, in a dream. You were told it would be a long, but worthy route. Sometimes the sun would be too hot, other times the forest would feel like a cold chill down your spine and the river would be a challenge. There would be times when giving up would seem merciful. There would be places so peaceful that you would stop for a rest and want to stay forever.

And all throughout this journey, you would be alone, walking on and forward in a seemingly endless forest. You'd hear birds in the canopy, you'd see squirrels watching curiously before hiding, and shy deer rushing away. But you would never see another human being. It would feel like being the last human left on Earth. And what would be the point of going on?

But the visions and dreams would sustain you if you let them, and you would keep going until, at last, here you are.... You can now see something behind the trees, something white and human-made. And you reach the edge of the forest and come out of the trees.

Under the intense blue sky shines a white dome. It looks like it has been sitting there, since the dawn of time, waiting for you. And you exhale a sigh of relief. There is a door and it opens. You smile. There she is, beautiful and androgynous as the dreams and visions promised. Her eyes, a clear sea-green, look at you. She smiles.

For a minute or two, you simply look at each other. There is no rush. She has been waiting for you for as long as you've been searching for her. Like you, she had visions and dreams, and you were promised to her, too.

continues on next page

Obliques - cont

//

You had a vision, a dream. Of yourself within this dome, checking on herbs hung to dry, and waiting for them to arrive. You waited a long time. Sometimes you cried, but you never gave up. Other people came and more timeless domes became alive with smiles and daily activities. And still you waited with hope and certitude shining in your sea-green eyes.

These people are like you and them, so the waiting turned comfortable. Some are adept at fixing objects and repairing houses, others enjoy working in the garden and foraging in the forest.

You kept on waiting, with your heart wide open, trusting in the dream and the vision, while the seasons took their turns alongside the river, and the shiny white domes bubbled with laughter. Life feels so amazing in the comfortable community of Obliques where you are free to be yourself.

And then one day, you are standing at the window and the trees at the edge of the forest part, and there they stand. You walk to the door and open it. They see you and they smile. You could get lost in their midnight blue eyes. You had been promised to them, too.

You both had visions and dreams: you longed, searched and waited. You knew it would be worth it. And now this ecological engineer is here, completing you, and completing the beautiful, asexual community of Obliques.

Poetry by Daniel Skentelbery (he/him)

Instagram: @DSkentel

She Rules Over Herself and Trees

Inspired by Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Lady Lilith, 1866-68 and Rossetti's poem Body's Beauty.

At a dressing table tangle, I tidy
myself amid the morning-evening
ritual. My wild domain rules the
frame. White rose and dreamer's
poppy net greens around me.

Fragile pale petal fabrics cover me loose
in pensive thought, as I comb the longing into
the lengths of my ginger golds and become it.
Fall lovesick fool and leave, I will not humour
you. Walk to me in mirrored image, and just see
what happens when you meet my gaze.

She Rules Over Herself and Marble

Inspired by Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Sibylla Palmifera, 1865-70 and Rossetti's poem Soul's Beauty.

Fabrics bleed into fabrics, layers of orange,
yellow, and death-defying red. I hold onto
the green temperance, the parts others loose
effortlessly. My composition contradictory,
the blind babe and the decomposing dead are
my carved companions.

Call me what you will, as you spectate
in pairs. I see you looking at me with wide-eyed
scrutiny, and I hear you both whisper.

Time has passed from when I dreamt as dreamers.
When youth's colours began to turn, I found my
soul's beauty and greeted, at last,
my Lilith self.

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Lake Albufera, Valencia by Annika Sagen

Instagram: @Annika_Sagen



45

a tetering identity by hetvi

This poem is a found poem written using titles of posts at the welcome lounge at AVEN-Forums

bold new world-
coming to terms
with a new
identity.
bold new world-
not new; just late.
a shapeshifting outsider
who hangs out in deserts
recently

came o u t
confused and afraid-
a small piece of freedom
testing the waters.
what's good
can't stop crying

yet the sky still hasn't fallen.
and then you realise
it all makes sense-
ace still in the deck
screaming in the void

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Burning Tree by Nashrah Tanvir

Instagram: @my_cup_of_poetry.

Listen carefully to the burning tree
It makes no sound than its usual crackles
It's the people around that chatter
With their tall wine glasses and extra cheese
They'll tell you how it feels to burn
They'd tell you how charred skin smells
But listen carefully to the crackle of the burning tree
It'll tell you- what it really means
To not be able to run from a fire.

Ace Rep in the Media

by Nicole Tocco

Website: nicoletocco.com Instagram @toccodesigns

The project brief was to bring awareness to a social issue. The chosen social issue was the lack of asexual representation in the media. To help bring awareness to this issue, an Ace Rep in the Media event was created to go hand-in-hand with the nonprofit Asexual Outreach's Ace Week event. The event itself would be a series of different In Conversations with different asexual activists. It would act as an event where people could learn more about asexuality while simultaneously being a hub for aces.

To get people to go to the event, a series of posters based on quotes from different ace activists were designed. A large, bold typographic style was chosen to be loud and eye-catching to the viewer. The event passes are based on the aces in a deck of playing cards. The merchandise consists of rings, books, and small items such as keychains, stickers, and bookmarks. The ace and aro rings are packaged both individually and as a set. The books have redesigned covers to fit the design system. These specific books were chosen because they all have ace characters and authors. Lastly, the small merchandise all speak to the message of the event itself which is "Hear About Our Stories".



A Quoiromantic's Recipe by Vesta

This world is obsessed with cake
the type that is shared by two
cake for one is self-love
that much is true

i'm told there is an ultimate cake in each of our lives
our recipes for it designed through the years
we either perfect it with partners
or live a lonely life of tears

they somehow know the recipe
without even a glance
typical yet essential
the ingredient of romance

i don't know
what it is
what it looks like
how it tastes

how much should I add?
is it a must?
can I... not add any at all?
i'm left in the dust

others cannot explain it
they say they just know
hands they want to hold
hands I want to throw

not enough, not enough
they say cakes I share with friends
will never taste as sweet
second-best is where it ends

romance is optional
my recipe says so
my cake tastes colorful
topped with an aro and bow

it's enough, it's enough
i've fallen in love with this
just this, all of this
nothing my recipe will miss.



At Peckham Levels

I met a woman on a bar stool.

I think she liked the feeling of being up
you see she was filled with this energy
that people call God
and she wanted to be as close to it as possible.

She had this face that just screamed
enlightened
but really all she talked about was
how bad the wine tasted.
They water it down, she said,
don't waste the ten pound note
crumpled in your pocket.

We took the stairs to the next floor
a gruelling climb up.
I asked her if she was gay
and she said of course
and I'm breathless so
can't think of what to say next.

Two more glasses of wine
from the altar at the front of the room.
We sat by the window and watched
Peckham's levels going by
on a skyline.

Bit of an antichrist, me
I tell her
(clutching at straws).
She turns my words into stories
and it feels like I'm talking aloud
for the first time.
The thoughts in my head all fall out
onto the table.

She grabs crisps from the bar -
all they had left.

Her eyes speak more than her mouth does
as she watches me
break them into pieces.

I pass her the packet
and she holds a piece in the palm of her hand
like a promise.
As she swallows I watch
the beautiful pattern on her neck
rising and falling.

It's a long way down for me, I tell her.
I feel her breath on my skin.
Somewhere between floors are the words
that say this can't go any further because -

The toll of a bell
marks the end of our supper.
She takes my hand and pulls me off the barstool.
Her skin on mine
feels like a blessing.

I took the lift on the way down.
Counting the floors
and the seconds between them.
I'm lost among Peckham's levels
but something in me knows
my search for absolution
is over.

Muriel*Care Bears*

As rain frames my window, You frame love by Aza

Instagram: @aza.narrative & @ain.zara.ali

Dear Rain,

I didn't think I would ever write love poems
But I wrote one for the first time

About lying on the ground with you
About stargazing and the moon
About you being home

I didn't think I would ever write love poems
But my first one is my favourite

*I dream of coming back to you
Everyday, for the rest of my life*

Everyone around us thinks we're in love
It doesn't make sense to them otherwise
I explain to them that I don't think I'll fall in love
You will when you find that person
I've already found you
I wish I was in love with you (Is it denial?)
Alina, you're just afraid (Is it fear?)

You called me from a beach in Goa
You told me you wished I was there
As you showed me starfish and seashells

*I promised to take you to all the beaches in the world
But I couldn't bring you to this one
But you held in your hands a piece of it.*

Identity by Anonymous

What is identity?

Identity is shaped

Identity is formed

A puzzle to piece together

Bit by bit, moment by moment

Never completed

Always changing

Identity is fluid

Likes, dislikes, hobbies, passions

Simple things that no one questions

Sexuality, gender, identity, expression

Complex things that few simply accept

All things that shape who we are

For a single word

Identity means so much

Why do people refuse to accept

That the way we identify is who we are

They cannot change us

They will not eliminate us

We will remain ourselves

Proudly

Infinitely

This is identity



Want to collab?

AcespaceLDN run events mostly based in London, and occasionally online, as well as attending other ace events in London. We have run socials, workshops and discussions.

We are looking for people who are interested in helping organise more events.

If you are part of or know another LGBTQIA or A-spec group who would like to collab with us we would be delighted

Get in touch via our Instagram @acespaceldn or email acespaceldn@gmail.com

@acespaceldn

