Reflections of HerSelf

Young Women's Program

Center On Halsted

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She gives
She takes
She gives
She takes
She changes everything
Everything she changes
Changes everything
Everything changes
Everything she touches changes
Touches changing
Everything she touches changes everything
Changes touches
Touches changes

By Ava Dorenzo
April 1, 2005

Nina Houston
From the straight ally’s point of view:

Acire: So Nina, can you tell me how you feel about gay marriage in particular and them wanting to ban gay marriage as a legal thing.

Nina: I think it’s discriminatory, cause it’s on a whole different level. The government is supposed to be separated by church and state so it’s like even if it’s not right by God’s eyes, the government should still acknowledge it. It is discriminatory because we do allow interracial marriages, so why not allow same sex marriages?

Acire: I don’t know if you’re familiar with the term civil union and what the difference is between a civil union and a marriage. Do you know anything about that?

Nina: Civil unions, from my understanding, don’t have the same benefits as an actual marriage; I mean there are benefits a married couple would have versus a civil union.

Acire: So I am totally glad to know that you are for gay rights and things like that; I mean, what are your experiences with being a straight ally and having queer friends?

Nina: Umm... I don’t think of it as any different than having straight friends, they just have significant others that are the same sex as them. It’s fine with me cause that is the way they choose to live their lives.

Acire: Have you ever had friends that had issues about being gay? Like self identity issues?

Nina: Yeah, one friend of mine, she came out in high school as straight leaning towards lesbian type thing and basically she would just refer to guys as ‘eye candy’ and so now she is dancing on the line again. I look at her and I want to help her choose one way or another but I realize that is a decision she has to make on her own, I just have to be there to support her.
Being in Love

Being in love,
Is like an addiction to a drug.
A night sky with too many stars
A distant trip, a trip to mars,
Como Chocolate con fresa helado
On a hot summers day.
Or like blooming flowers in the month of May,
A hammock in between shady trees,
A complicated unsolved mystery.
Like music to my ears,
It takes away my tears,
Like a rainbow after a storm,
When clouds shape a new form.
When a baby first coos,
Like there is no me without,
Intoxicating like my favorite perfume,
Almost like a dream come true....
The girlchild who

The girlchild who-
Cried in the night.

The girlchild who-
Sought out to be spite.

The girlchild who-
Lay defenseless in the
Arms of animosity.

The girlchild who-
Lurked in her pathways into
The havens of a thousand cathedrals
But, never found the true light.

The girlchild who-
Led the dark age knights
To the victory of their village.

The girlchild who-
Died a thousand deaths
The stabbings, the rapes,
The burnings, the persecutions
Stripped of her being
And degraded.

The girlchild who-
Was forgotten.
Only to rise from the
Ashes of internal decay
To start over again.

Ava Dorenzo
The Day You Left

Shadows and storm clouds tap my window pane
You left me on a day like this
When the sun just didn’t come out
I hid my tears in the puddles that made my socks soggy
And fell into the mud of confusion
I didn’t understand why it was so hard to let you go
It was like yesterday seeing the blood on your hands,
And the pills that swallowed you whole.
The floor was your grave and I held onto you
Like I could be buried alive with you
Your face so pale and cold
Your breath non-existent
The smell of bitter alcohol lay on your mouth
And you did not move
The horrid shrills of Bunk Floyd
Flooded my ear drums
I knew it was over the minute I heard
The shrill sounds of his depressing voice
Raped
Beaten
Ignored
Hated
Because you were gay.
And because you were with me
The pressure of surviving
Took over your precious soul
And took you away on a rainy day like this one
April 1, 2005
LaToya Bailey

Views of being in the closet:

Acire: LaToya, how do you feel about being in the closet and not letting other people acknowledge the fact that you are gay?

LaToya: Um let's see... I don't feel like I am in the closet persay, I feel like it is my own personal business who I want to sleep with.

Acire: Who you want to sleep with in general or who you're in a relationship with or your sexual orientation.

LaToya: My sexual orientation and who I want to be in a relationship with.

Acire: Do you think that it would affect you business wise, to be an electrical engineer do you think that would hurt you going into that field?

LaToya: Yeah, since it is a predominately white male field, and I'm a black woman; I'm kind of like a triple threat minority. Because I'm black, I'm female and I'm gay! I have enough hurdles to jump as it is, and I feel like being gay is only going to make things harder than it has to be.

Acire: Okay, why can't you turn that around and actually make that a positive thing, you could actually become an activist towards that, like you said there aren't many African Americans in the field and you are part of NSBE and all those other great black organizations and you could do something for black gays in the field of engineering and there are plenty.

LaToya: I don't know, I am only one person I don't think that I could do everything. There is only so much I can do; I could be a black engineer a gay engineer a female engineer, There are so many things I can do, I can't do everything!

Acire: Well, no one's asking you to do everything. I was just saying, you know, what where your thoughts on that? Do you think you would have the tenacity it takes to start up a gay black engineer society?

LaToya: No. Not by myself. On campus, no one participates in the regular gay stuff. Who am I to try to start a black, gay, engineer society that no one is going to attend anyway?

Acire: How do you know that?

LaToya: Honestly, I don’t and I feel like I would be wasting my time if I put all of my effort into it and nothing come out of it.

Acire: How do you know it would be a waste of time if you tried? At least there would be an option for the black engineers who do identify as queer.

LaToya: That would put me out on the spot. I don’t know how strong I could be in that spotlight... so...

Acire: Well I see you as a strong black woman, as a strong individual who has the smarts to do certain things and I feel that maybe you would be able to accomplish that. I also feel you not exactly being out of the closet has a lot to do with this. Is this true?

LaToya: Yeah...

Acire: Thank you LaToya for sharing your ideas with me.
Thoughtless

As I sit alone in my room, I think of those thoughts of doom. I don’t know why I do it, or why they come, sooner or later I’ll be done, but what if those thoughts won? Then I’ll know for sure I’ll be done, but done with what? I have nothing to lose, so why not just give up now, then no more thoughts, then no more worries, no tears, so I’ll give up everything and disappear.

Girl thinks about her life, as she picks up a knife...for every thought comes a cut, for every tear comes more blood, all of her fears slowly draining away, as she does too, nothing to be ashamed of, it’s just another cut to you.

Why do I find my self in this position again, the position where I want my life to end? Alone I sit. Tears they fall, cuts they bleed. I have nothing at all, friends that don’t call, and everyone else could care less whether I die at all.

I have no job. No car. I have no plans of getting far. I have no talent. No charm. There, my friends, are just a few reasons for self-harm...

As she sits, she slits. Wondering why she can’t die, all alone she cried, while the blood dries she looks and thinks why didn’t it work? Try two try three her mind still disagrees one more time it says...ouch there it went, she’s sent away free.

Rain

Rain
Oppression

The word oppression
Is just an expression
That society lies
Upon our silent hearts
Tension Flared
People Scared
Dared to challenge our thoughts
They hold us down
They drown us out
And fill our minds with useless doubt
Our Children cry
Our people die
The life we live becomes a lie
It’s what they hide from us
It’s what they buy from us
The stereotypes they assign to us
Just because we’re gay and proud
The silence that we scream out loud
Hold it high say with pride
Nothing and no one can hold us down!

Vaire
Rain: The problem is that many people don’t understand it, so it’s hard in that way.

Acire: Well, thank you Rain for sharing that with me.

Rain: No problem.

*Click= Non-gendered pronoun that replaces he or she. Usually said with the click of the tounge. (i.e *Click said that *click was going to the store.)

Rain: On dating a transgendered person...

Acire: I understand that you are dating a transgendered person? I’d like to know how you feel about that since when I met you, you identified as a lesbian.

Rain: Well I’ve never had an identity until I came to the center but now I would suppose I was a lesbian - queer.

Acire: Well, when you started dating this person, this person identified as a lesbian woman as well, correct?

Rain: No; that person always kind of thought of himself as straight. He felt more like a boy than a girl most of the time, until I brought up being transgendered, and after the conversation we had, he figured it all out. He knew he wanted to be a boy, so now he knows more about it (being transgendered) and now identifies as a male.

Acire: So when you brought up the fact he might be transgendered, how did he respond and what did you do to support his decision?

Rain: Well after I asked him he really started to think about it, which led him to be very depressed, but he finally came out of it and told me that he is. Well, I told him when he started to discover all of this that I didn’t care if he was he, she, it, they or *click.

Acire: So, all in all you are completely understanding and don’t have a problem with his being transgendered?

Rain: Well in the beginning I had some problems with it, but now I just think of him as a boy, except when it comes to us having sex, so I don’t have many problems with it.
Reflections of Herself

The mirror is staring at me again
Showing me time of pain forgotten
Where did your childhood go?
The lines of age on the mirror’s face
reflect a path once taken, the reflection
of herself.
She drowned herself once before in the
shrouds of society believing she could be just like them.
She cut herself just to know she was alive.
She didn’t eat because today she just wasn’t
thin enough.
The path shows her instability
Where has she gone?
The mirror is staring at me again and
I can’t run, because it is the reflection
of me.

Blanca Parrish

Acire
Swing

By Jake/Liz

You push off
The ground to
Start the swing
You pump so
Hard to try to
Aim high
High
Into the air
But you know
Sooner or later
You have to
Fall hit the ground
And start over
With a push
Of Your feet
To try and
Swing
Thinking about you

Sitting here in class my head hurts like hell my stomach hurts as well. But all I can do is sit here and think about you. Six months together lovely and true. Long nights together wonderful cause of you. The night we met ‘twas the best of my life. You were sweet and loving all the things I want in my life. You don’t beat me, rape me nor make me cry. You take care of me and love me. You are my life. Through thick and thin. Jake and Liz. Even little penguins. Together forever never apart you are my world you are my heart. Together forever you and me together forever we will be.

I love you baby

Rain
The Young Women’s Program at Center on Halsted focuses on
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• Culture
• Creativity
• Community activism

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