

## Artist Statement

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I write plays about healing and self-discovery, processes which – like theater – never occur in a vacuum. Other people are always involved. We are hurt and learn how not to hurt in return, we struggle to find and express our authentic selves so we can be loved and known. Collaboration is the key to how we thrive, in healing and in theater.

As a martial arts practitioner with a background in physical theater and dance, I write for the whole body, seeking through physicality and kinetic energy what cannot be expressed in spoken language. The crises and questions from my life and the larger world form the crux of my plays. I savor the humor of humanness; how soft is strong. Sometimes my stories swim toward the fantastical (sometimes there are even puppets!), sometimes they bloom from a hyperreal setting. Whatever the form or content, my plays are interested in all that can happen when people come together who would otherwise not likely share space. Held in the safe anonymity of a dark room, my plays invite audiences to practice listening to and celebrating each other. I used to wonder if it was naïve to believe, as I always have, that theater can matter enough to touch the real lives we return to once a performance is done. But I suspect that listening to and celebrating each other is always going to be our way through.

My plays are full of people crying, laughing, fucking up, and communicating bravely as they stumble messily towards healing themselves, each other, and their communities. My theater making is an extension of my mutual aid efforts. I work at a shelter for families experiencing homelessness, an experience which continually gives urgency to my mission of using my writing to press on the friction points invented to divide us from each other. I'm also a late-blooming queer person who struggled with shame and disembodiment for years, not understanding who I was or why it took me so long to figure that out. My queerness was always like the sun – ever present, making my world turn, but I never looked directly at. At least, not until I was married to a straight man and sinking into despair and resentment. I was raised to believe that marriage means one person forever, so I thought I had missed my chance to discover my edges and depths. Instead, my then-husband and I carved out our own definition of marriage. Polyamory brought us closer to each other and ourselves. Through divorce, we love each other still. This yearslong process was difficult, uncomfortable, riddled with fear and frustration and doubt. But we kept showing up to it the best we could, and eventually found our way through to a love without expectations.

This journey changed me and my writing profoundly. I embrace discomfort, centering characters who illuminate the revolutions – personal and political – that are possible when we are not afraid to be uncomfortable, wrong, or imperfect; when we carve our own paths forward into a liberated unknown. My plays are invitations into this collective, liberated unknown. I subvert the fourth wall in every play, because the theater of my wildest dreams reaches out and holds us all, reminds us that we are really here, together, *and what if we could continue to live that way?* I activate this real-time collaboration between storyteller and audience to reaffirm that the theater is a sacred space in which we can imagine new futures and experiment with how we might get there together.