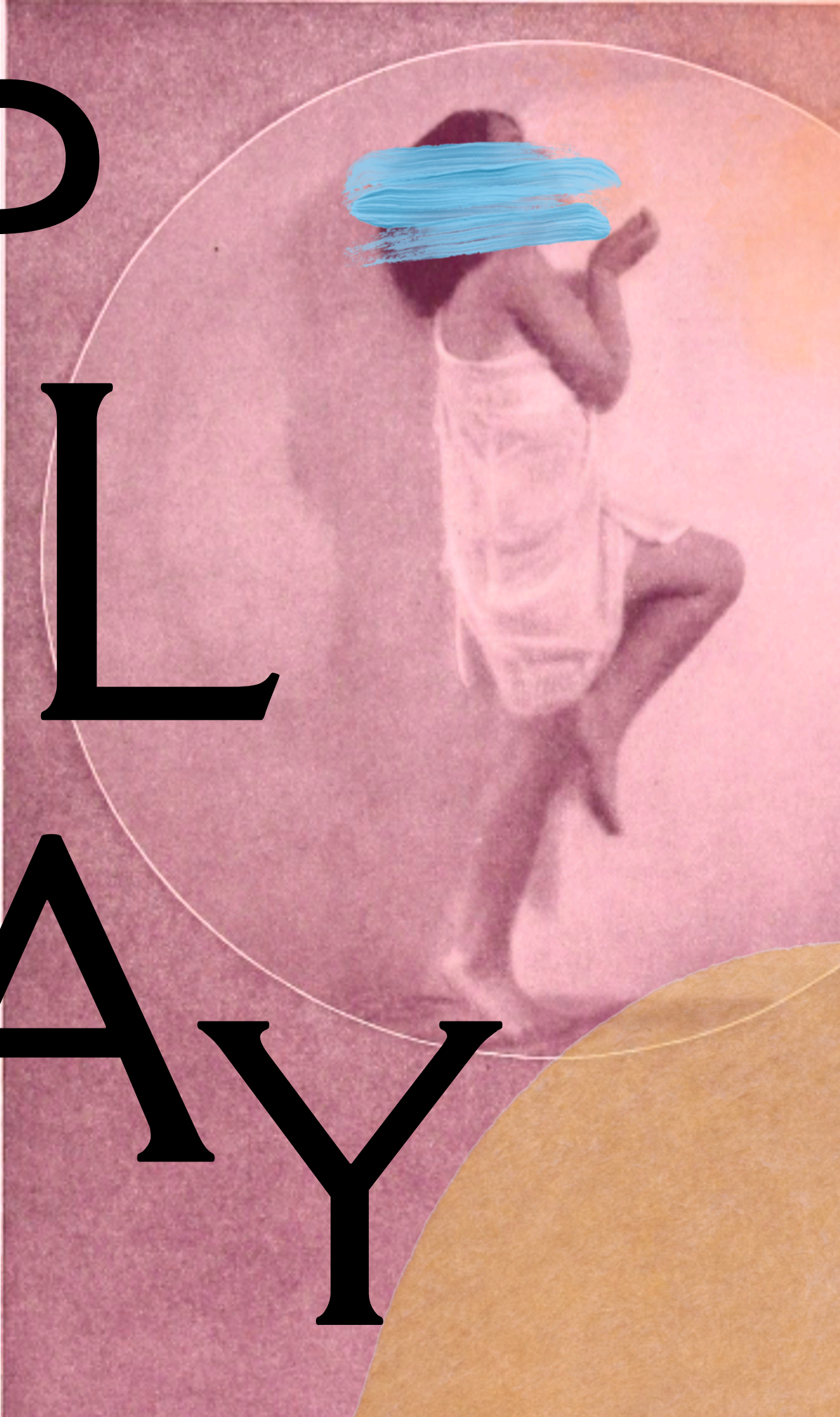


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# PLAY

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How do we resist the imperative to produce and commodify, not just in our actions, but in our inner life? We're surviving a system that demands we sell our own Transness, to produce our bodies and stories as spectacle. Continued existence as a Trans person in the U.S. relies on navigating the tension between the necessity of income, the overwhelming pervasiveness of employment discrimination against Trans people and the pressure to commodify ourselves for cis consumption in order to live. All of these are stratified across the additional lines of race, ability, and class and coupled with constant policing of gender expression in the public space. As an educator and a writer, I've felt the pressure of cis voyeurism, the craving of the cis media to package and sell flattened trans narratives to a cis audience, and with the rent always due and ConEd breathing down my neck, the pressure to produce one's self as palatable entertainment is coercive, even violent.



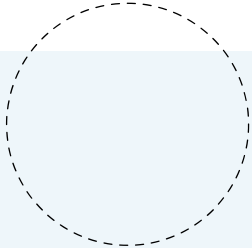
PLAY began as a celebration of the "Inner child," but while working on this issue, I reconsidered. The creative spirit decoupled from capitalism need not be a state-of-being that is defined by its relation to the past, forever in the rearview. Instead, we can practice it as part of our adult lives and incorporate it into our adult identities and relationships.

In this issue, I'm interested in centering PLAY as activist strategy and community care.

Play is a practice that liberates the imagination to inhabit new bodies and realities free from capital, from bioessentialism, from ableism and from white supremacy. It allows us to dismantle the prisons that were built in our minds without our consent. From meaningful relationships with childhood toys and media, in which we first freed ourselves enough to experiment with gender and sexuality, to the agency over identity and form granted by RPGs, to the freedom that is creating for the sheer joy of it, to building and inhabiting imaginary worlds of queer utopia. It is radical work to cultivate one's own ability to play, and perhaps even more so to cultivate one's ability to play collaboratively.

Make something for fun. Maybe alone, and you never show it to another soul. Maybe with your friends or lovers, whoever you trust. It doesn't have to be art, it doesn't have to mean anything or inspire anyone. Don't you dare say it's bad. PLAY isn't for an audience. It renders critique irrelevant. It is self-sustaining and self-justifying. It is the opposite of work.

Love & Solidarity,  
Glen Kalliope Rodman



# Maybe It's My Leo Moon Talking / charlie jasper

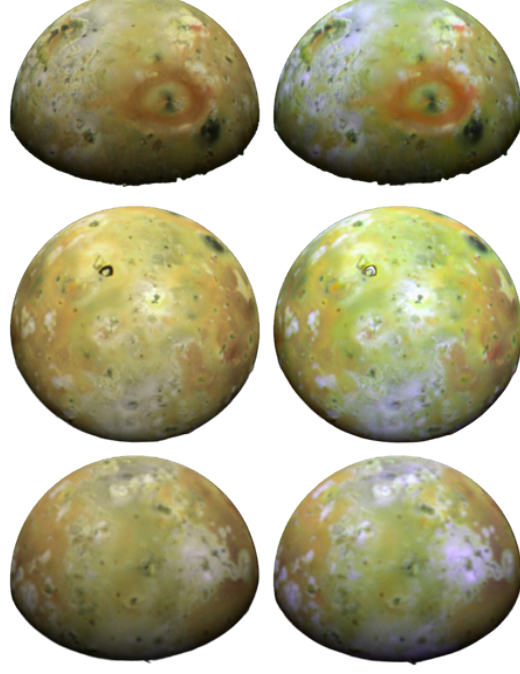
maybe it's my leo moon talking but it's all play baby

when i have eyeliner and chest hair and i feel eyes on me, sometimes i want to hide but from the right eyes  
from knowing glances, from t4t fagdykes,  
from people who see me playing  
and want to join in too

each day i shapeshift  
and get to rebuild from the ground up  
i sculpt myself to figure out what fits best  
now, today, what i know fills my heart  
and helps this body feel like home

and we share clothes and share bread  
and medicines, stories, beds, and songs  
and dance naked at riis beach  
and feel the sun on our skin  
i see you,

you see me,  
with teary smiles  
we carry one another



Playing with my friends, including myself / Wow Quisqueya





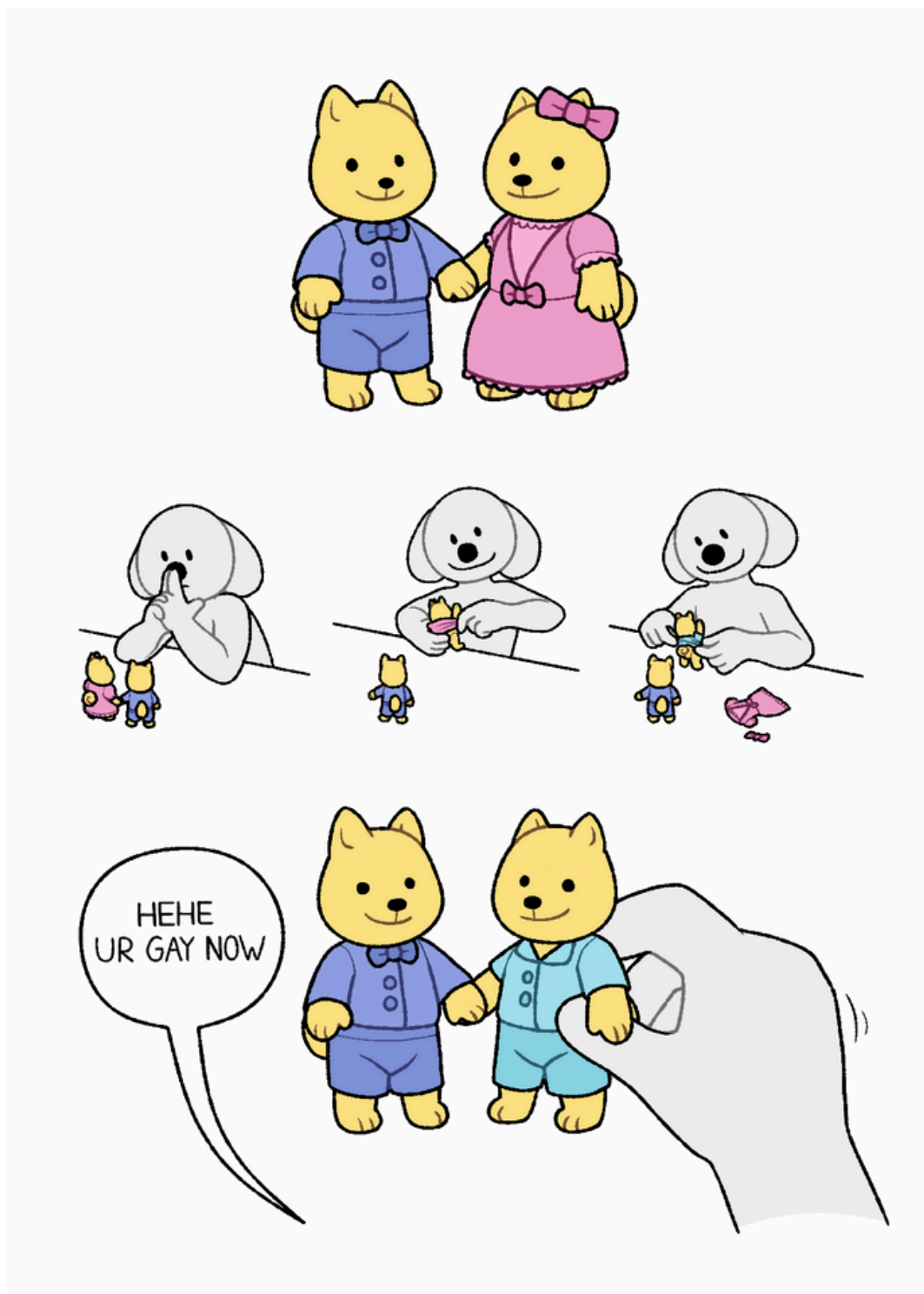
## Playing Elvis / AJ Thursday



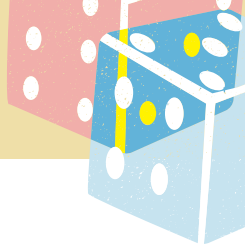
Tomorrow is my 27th birthday. It's also Elvis Presley's birthday. I've been obsessed with Elvis for as long as I can remember. When I was 10 my grandma took me to see an Elvis impersonator show in Vegas. Trent Carlini at the Sahara. He was six feet tall and I found his artificially constructed cheekbones absolutely divine. I took a polaroid with him. I was enamored. He passed away from heart failure at age 57. Elvis died at 42. Joseph Smith was 38. Fast forward sixteen years. I'm in Memphis at an Elvis Impersonator festival. March 2021. I had spent the last six months working at the front desk of a hospital. Lots of wackos from shortwave radio trying to break into the ICU. Prove it was empty. Or full. Just not full of covid. Whatever. I needed a vacation. Back to Memphis. I'm two Miller Lites in, and Elvis is onstage criticizing the PCR tests and questioning the efficacy of masks.

My soul leaves my body. Later one of the Elvii named Brandon speaks at length, in character, about his dead son. Elvis didn't have a dead son. Brandon did. There's a mix of "I love you Brandon" and "I love you Elvis" shouts from the audience. I'm experiencing something dark. Strange, beautiful, schizophrenic. American. The next few hours of the concert are the best of my life. Elvis is a conduit of the times. His finger is still on the pulse, even if it's the finger of a guy who is pretending to be Elvis who thinks Dr. Fauci is the antichrist. I love Elvis. I'm absolutely obsessed with him. For me, Elvis is everywhere. He's in my dreams and he's on my birthday. Here's to 27.

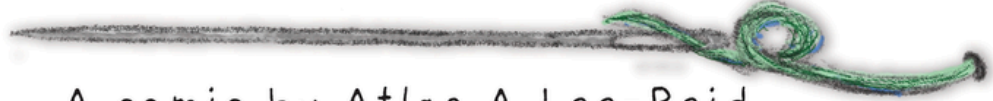
Calico Queerters / Spencer J (@spencerrainbow)







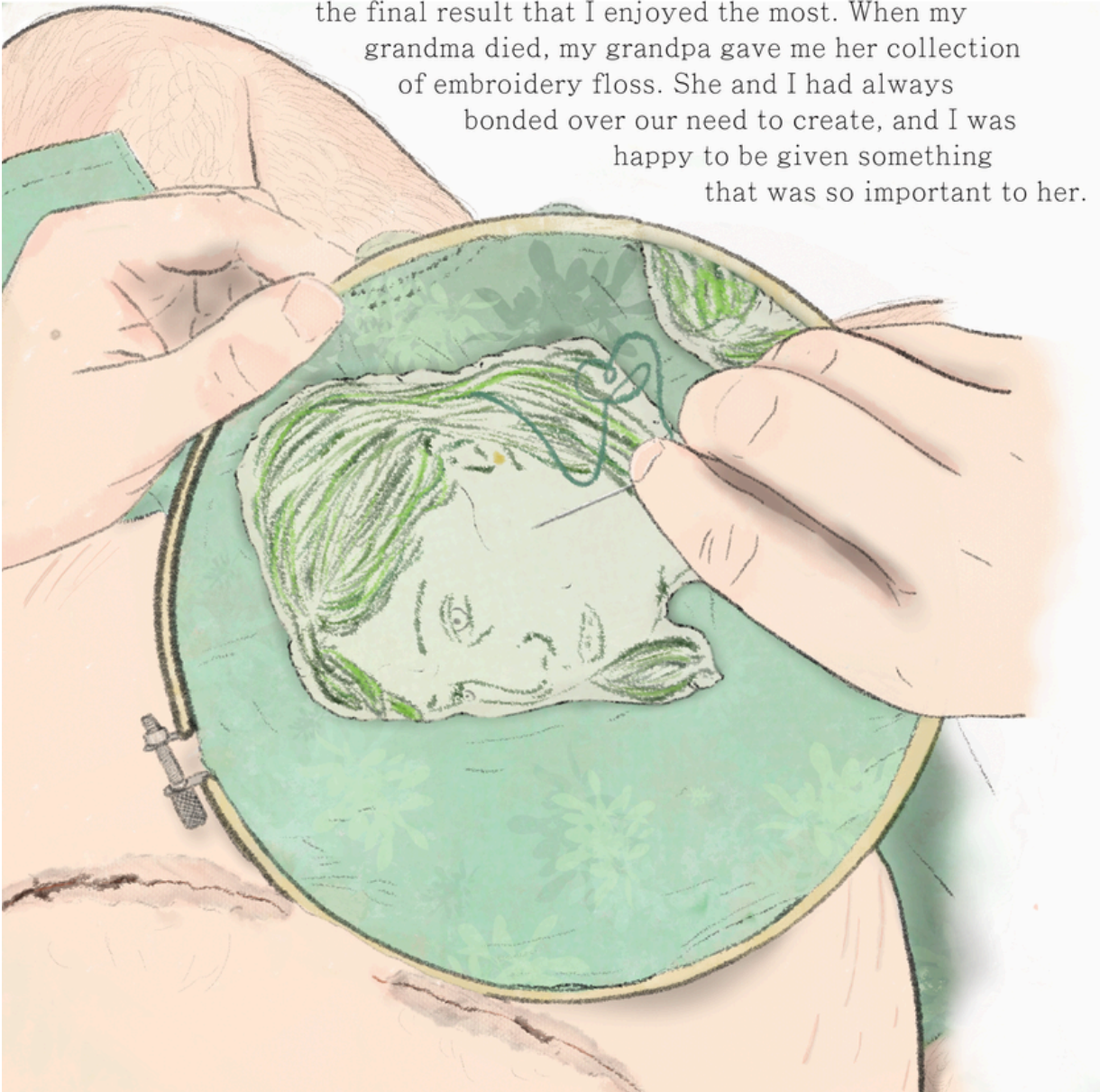
# STITCHED UP



A comic by Atlas A Lee-Reid

(they/ze/he)

Crafting has always been a huge part of my life. My grandparents would have us over to their house once a month and my siblings and I would sit their dining room table and paint birdhouses and build trebuchets while my grandma told us stories about her childhood and raising our mother. It was always so calm there, and I loved making colorful objects. It was more the act of creating than the final result that I enjoyed the most. When my grandma died, my grandpa gave me her collection of embroidery floss. She and I had always bonded over our need to create, and I was happy to be given something that was so important to her.





I had my first major depressive episode when I was 13. It was scary, and my parents didn't handle it as well as they could have. But then again, it was their first time too. To keep myself safe, I took to sewing a quilt, which I finished over the course of a couple weeks while watching movies with my dad. I had something I could create with my hands that kept my mind busy with small decisions. That quilt got me through that time when everything was wrong.

Ever since then, when I'm depressed or overwhelmed, I find myself a 'project.' And it always helps.

During my top surgery recovery, my project was to embroider a shirt. I have always had a fascination with the idea of creating my own clothes, especially as a fat non-binary person who has difficulty finding fashion that speaks to how I want to be seen. Over the course of four weeks, I painted pictures of my loved ones with thread, deciding which colors to layer over others and how best to represent curls of hair with over a hundred strands of floss. I made something important to me, that I'm excited to wear.

I love having the tools to create myself and how I want to be seen. I love that my hands can make art that keeps my brain on the tracks and my heart at ease. I want to do this work on all my clothes now, to make a wardrobe uniquely my own.

My depression will never go away, and my projects will always be there to protect me. I'm so excited for the next one.





Lyrics to "Just Friends" /  
 Steph Ferreira aka steph The Girl

I'm done fucking with  
 strangers. I just want  
 to fuck friends.

Now, you know  
 I love you regardless. The vibes and the gabs are  
 enough. But if you ever want to blow off some  
 steam, I think we'd have fun if we fucked.

Just saying.

I wrote  
 this song in  
 2020-21.  
 It's on the  
 collective

PRPL PPL's

album CARD

ONE: Eat

the Sun.

It's on

Spotify etc,

but you can

also stream

& buy the

song here:

[tinyurl.com/](https://tinyurl.com/n43rn36x)

[n43rn36x](https://tinyurl.com/n43rn36x)

Love,

Steph

stephTheGirl

We're just a bunch of  
 people who want some  
 play, and play's all it is  
 in the end. The apps make me feel  
 like an asshole. I can't flirt through this machine  
 I can't find the trust to try and link, and  
 that danger's not in my kink.



## Gone Rotten / Rho



I'VE GONE ROTTEN.  
I HAVE BUT ONE MORE  
PART TO PLAY.

P





# The Wild World of LONG-DOG & PUDD

By SG Egan





# PLAY

was a zine by

Editor.....Glen Kalliope Rodman

Designer.....Amalia

In conjunction with.....PRPL PPL

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