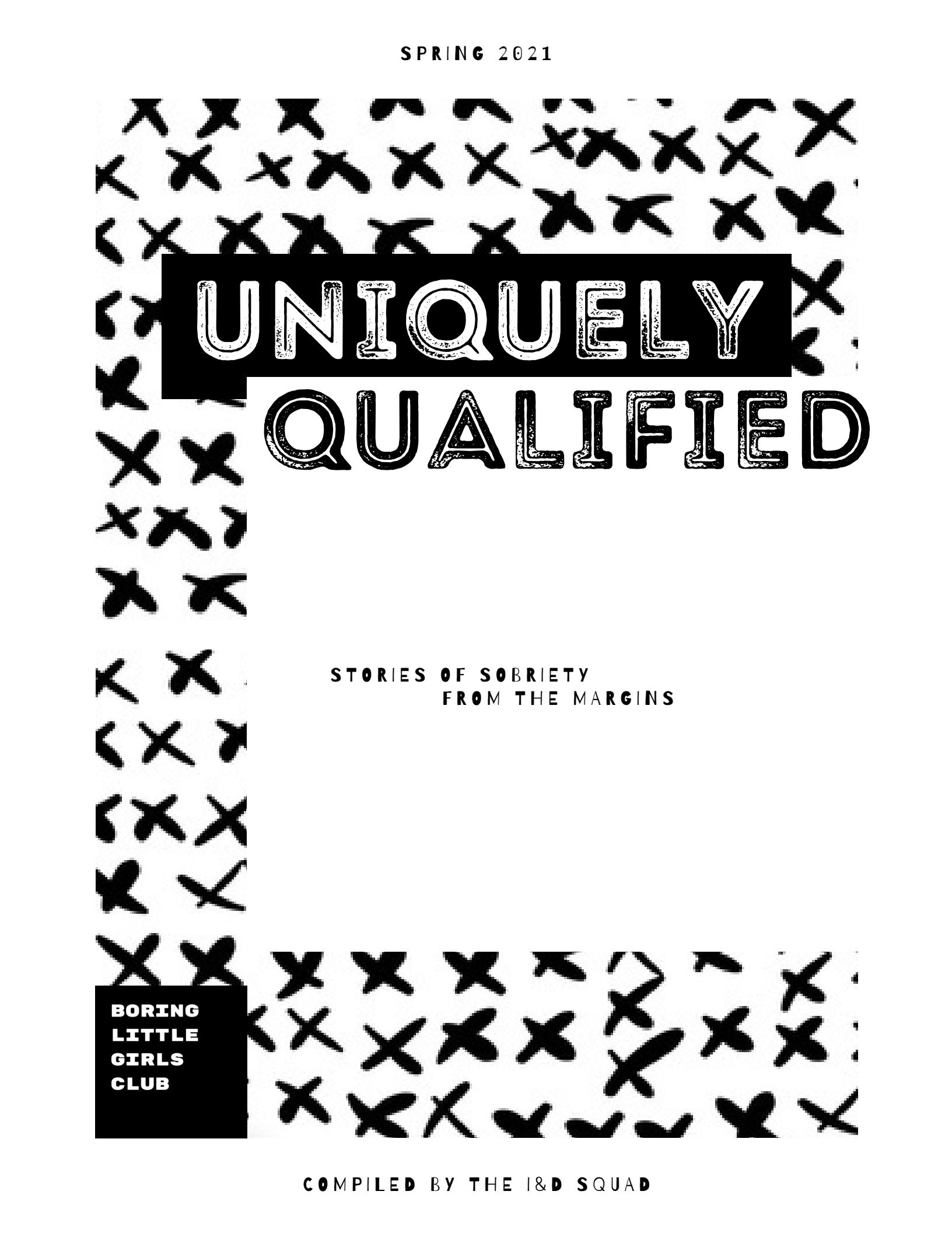


SPRING 2021



UNIQUELY QUALIFIED

STORIES OF SOBRIETY
FROM THE MARGINS

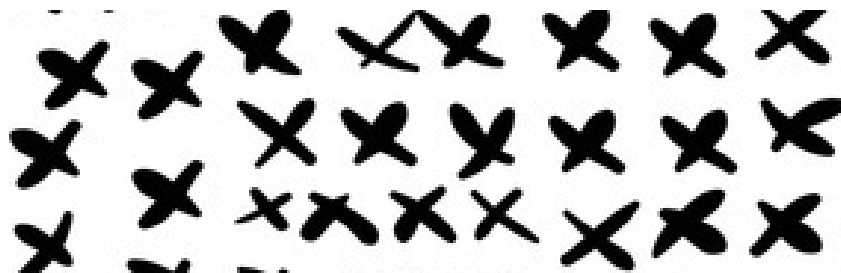
**BORING
LITTLE
GIRLS
CLUB**

COMPILED BY THE I&D SQUAD

TABLE OF

CONTENTS

1. WHAT IS THE BLGC?
2. WHAT IS THE I&D SQUAD?
3. MESSAGE FROM THE I&D LIAISON
4. BEER
5. ON BEING A WEEK SOBER
6. THE REAL ME
7. CHOICES
8. DISTANCE
9. SOBER SPACE
10. NO ONE CARES
11. FIND A CLEAR PATH
FORWARD
12. I WANT TO DANCE WITH SOMEBODY
13. I WANT TO FEEL THE HEAT
WITH SOMEBODY
14. UNTITLED
15. RESOURCES



WHAT IS THE BLGC?

1) The Boring Little Girls Club is a community of sober women, trans and non-binary folks who support each other and have fun without alcohol and recreational drugs

2) The Boring Little Girls Club defines:

i) Sober Space as 100% alcohol and drug free. There is zero tolerance for coming to any BLGC hangout under the influence of any recreational substances.

ii) Safer Space as inclusive and supportive of all race, sexual identity, gender, age, ability and socioeconomic standing

iii) BLGC Safer, Sober Spaces aim to be free of judgment and harm

iv) All BLGC hangouts will be Safer, Sober Spaces.

3) Our purpose is to have fun without alcohol and drugs and to make sure that those of us sharing sobriety don't feel alone. We propose to do that through:

i) Creating a community of sober women, trans and non-binary folks who will support each other through what can feel like an isolating choice to take alcohol and drugs out of our lives

ii) Creating visibility and raising awareness surrounding living a sober life, and the need for safer, sober affirming spaces

iii) Fostering conversation and education surrounding sobriety, substance use and mental health

iv) Attempting to reduce stigma surrounding substance use, sobriety and mental health

v) Engaging with and giving back to organizations of which we support the mission, vision, and goals.

WHAT IS THE I&D SQUAD?

The Boring Little Girls Club acknowledges that many sober and recovery spaces are primarily comprised of white, able bodied, non-queer folks, and can feel unwelcoming or unsafe for LGBTQ+ folks, BIPOC folks and Disabled folks.

We are actively working to make our events, meetings, hangouts and leadership not only inclusive and affirming of these identities, but ones that centre the needs and experiences of some of the most marginalized in our community.

The intention of the Inclusion & Diversity Squad is to make the BLGC a space where LGBTQ+, BIPoC, and Disabled folks feel safe and seen in sobriety.

**BORING
LITTLE
GIRLS
CLUB**

FOLLOW US:

On Facebook & Instagram
[@boringlittlegirlsclub](#)

BECOME A MEMBER:

boringlittlegirlsclub.ca/membership

JOIN THE I&D SQUAD:

id@boringlittlegirlsclub.ca

A MESSAGE FROM THE
I&D
LIAISON

Myself and the Inclusion & Diversity Squad are thrilled to not only facilitate, but participate in submitting and compiling this creative and diverse collection of the expressed lived experiences of our BLGC community.

Seeking Sobriety and Community where you may not typically find safety and acceptance in mainstream sober spaces is another unique challenge on the path of recovery for many folks. It is important to the I&D squad that we provide a platform and amplify these voices and experiences. I absolutely love that we could do this with something as accessible as a zine!!!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miranda Milligan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Miranda Milligan
Inclusion & Diversity Liaison
Boring Little Girls Club

Sober

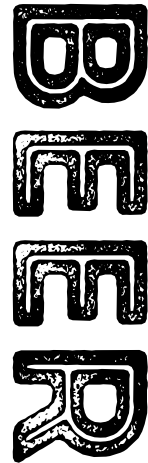
Home alone in a lived in basement suite.
You open the fridge with magnets and a small white board clinging to it.
On the white board, a sappy love message scrawled in your boyfriend's hand.
You see the beer your boyfriend has kept for another day.
It winks.
You look it up and down.
No one is home.
No one would see.
Your boyfriend, at work tonight.
He wouldn't know.
The fridge door stands open for a few minutes too long.
The can's aluminum glistens, drips condensation, drops sliding down it's sides.
You feel the hiss in your throat.
You remember the feeling of loose limbs.
The chill from the fridge moves through your central nervous system.

You could have it.
Hold it icy in your hand.
Hear the rules break as you snap it open, fizz on your tongue.
Your limbs a little looser.
Thoughts cleared clean from ethanol.

Your car hasn't been repaired since your last swig's consequence.
It's parked outside your basement suite.
The hood has hollows that hold secrets: where you went and how you got there.
You go from your old apartment to the liquor store, to apartment to men.
Men who would come and go.
Men with rings that symbolized fidelity, with round bellies.
Men with hairy chests that collected sweat.
Men with clubbed fingers.
They'd drive you to their house or a motel.
Drinking or smoking.
Always dropping a few fifties on the 80's style desks in those motels that smelled
of fake dominance and felt like hangovers.

You remember they brought gin.
They knew it was your favourite.
You had to drink it to touch them.
They brought it so you would.
You can remember kissing them.
But names or the shape of limbs you lay on, you don't know.

Now, you live in a basement suite with a kind man.
He makes you pancakes and asks if he can kiss you.
The grey of the aluminum stoic in the fridge looks like the past, a tasteless flirt.
Always thirsty never filled.
Stout and moist, begging for your mouth.
You should close the fridge.
Even though it whispers a choice.
The froth would crack in your throat.
You've tasted bitter.
Close the door.
It's getting cold.



CARLEY MAYSON

CW: *physical
feeling when
drinking, thoughts
of relapse, mention
of sex work and
intoxication*



ON BEING A WEEK SOBER

CARLEY MAYSON

CW: description of being intoxicated, mention of alcohol, blacking out

on thanksgiving I had a bottle depot in my room
three days of marinating in white wine
my mother's table was set so perfectly with a cream table cloth and crystal glasses
I don't remember what we ate
but memory holds that I didn't understand why my mom wouldn't hand me crystal
filled with wine
I slurred that she was overreacting

nothing lies like an addiction
but I wore gin and tonic perfume
yelled in my mom's bedroom on Christmas eve
eyes streaming a pity party, drank until I slept

boxing day's night I went to a guy's house
we had been sleeping together for months
but he didn't know
about the dark spots in my brain that crave numb

beers were cracked, we both drank one
he went to get water
I preferred wine, checked his fridge, popped the bottle
he thought I lived a cool-girl life so he just laughed
that's all I know of that night
the next morning walking straight was hard

my right arm sore and bruised
he said the night before was frightening, he couldn't be around me anymore
then I knew that I didn't know how to stop once I started
it's strange, once you learn how disturbing you are, you can accept it



THE REAL ME

Standing tall, I've always known who I am.

Through years of addiction, I never once questioned who I really was.

In the beginning, still so sure of myself.
Wouldn't question why it was, I didn't quite fit in.
Especially in places stamped with a gender.

After months in recovery, the mental fog had been lifted I found myself isolated by a global quarantine. Extra time on my hands, I finally discovered who I really am.

Deep down inside, I think I always knew
however unable to accept it all to be true.

No longer *her*, now only *me*.
Without a gender I finally feel free.

All it took for me to see, was sometime into recovery.

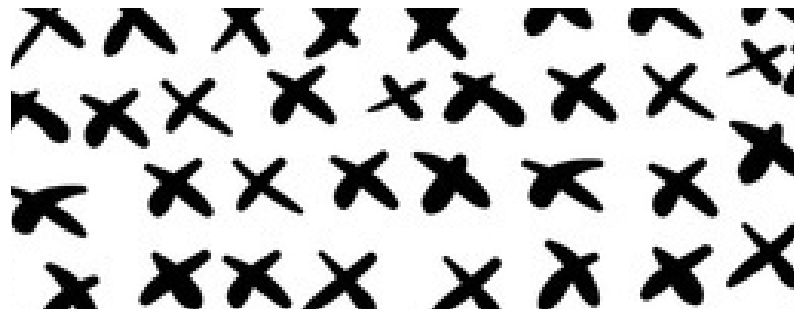
- B.L.



MIRANDA MILLIGAN

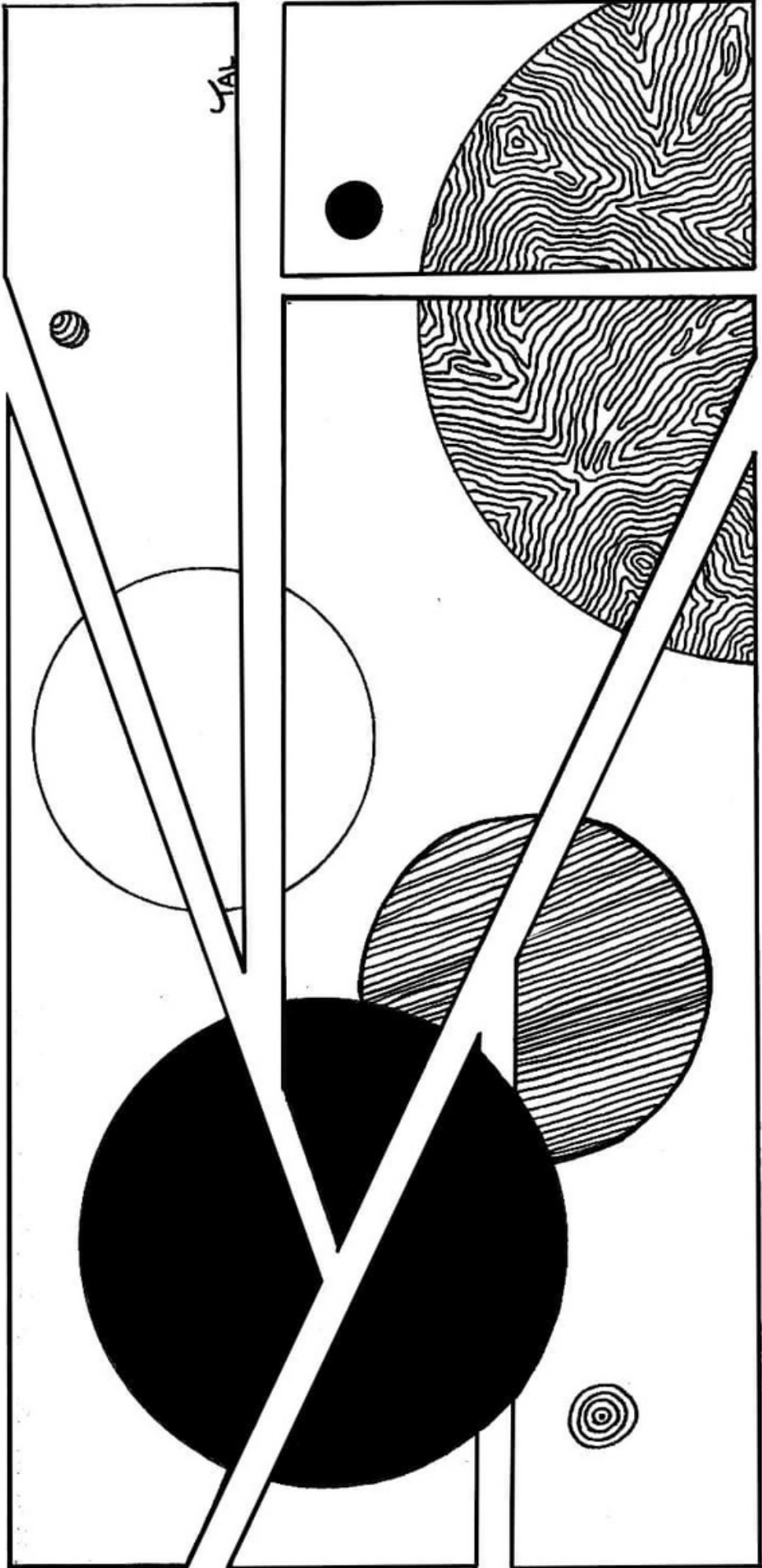
CHOICES

At the beginning choosing sobriety seemed inevitably linked to losing my community. So much of my social interactions were in gay pubs and bars and those pubs and bars were basically the most accessible inclusive spaces for folks like me to meet. In my sobriety I had a hard time finding meaningful representation in sober spaces. Women's meetings were mostly cis het stay at home mom types, and the LGBTQ meetings were mostly rooms filled with men. I did not feel comfortable in either room and admittedly did not spend much time at all seeking out any other sober spaces after my first failed attempts. Ultimately I did give up community for sobriety the first couple years. I spent all that time basically alone, turning down gatherings centred around alcohol until the invitations fizzled then stopped completely. Of course I don't regret choosing sobriety over Anything but it certainly was unfortunate that the choice had to be made in the first place. I am now slowly piecing together an amazing and supportive sober community and it feels great to be able look into the future and not be afraid of living such an isolated life. Inclusive sober spaces are out there thankfully and I feel like I need to do my part now to hi-light and bring attention to them for anyone else who may be seeking such spaces from the margins.



TAL THACKER

DISTANCE



SOBER

BILLIE SCHULTZ (SHE/HER)

SPACE

Taking up Space in the Sober Community

I've been struggling with this essay for a couple of weeks now. I can't seem to find that magic combination of words that will perfectly convey my thoughts to the page. But, as the old saying goes, "Perfect is the enemy of the good". So this won't be perfect but I hope it'll be good.

I've been sober since January 1st, 2020. I decided to try for the Boring Little Girls Club's Try Dry event. 31 days without drinking and donating the money I would have spent to their fundraiser. Easy game, I thought. And I was right. It wasn't hard for me to stop drinking for that month so I decided to try it again for February. Again. No problem. Then the lockdown happened. I wasn't going out to bars at all because nothing was open and we were all self isolating. This made it even easier for me to avoid booze and keep my house free of it. Even while all the memes and jokes about Quarantinis were circulating, and Zoom Happy Hours became a thing, I was uninterested in having a drink. I was proud of myself. But then I ran into some interesting imposter syndrome.

I felt that I didn't deserve to be as proud of my achievements compared to someone who had struggled with addiction and pulled themselves out of it by grit and determination. These were the types of stories that permeated the sober spaces I was exploring. Stories about how people had hit their rock bottoms and had to choose between living or dying. These were the inspirational stories of people who turned their lives around and "made something of themselves". When I looked at my own journey, there wasn't any struggle. I wasn't losing friends and family over my struggles with alcohol and I wasn't in a dire situation where I had to pick life or death. So, I began to think that my story about just stopping because I wanted to was not important. I was afraid that I would be taking up space and drowning out other more valuable stories. I think that all of the stories of sobriety are inspiring and hopeful and great and anyone who shares theirs deserves the biggest stage possible.

Just because my reason for getting sober was different than other people's didn't make it less important though. It drew, for me, a parallel with my journey in transition. When I came out, I had a lot of worry around "not being trans enough" or transitioning the wrong way. I quickly learned that there are exactly as many ways to transition as there are trans people and every one of those stories is helpful, meaningful, important and contributes to the larger tapestry that makes up the transgender experience.

I feel that the parallel here is that every sober person finds sobriety in their own unique way and every story is worth telling. My story is a simple one. It may not be told perfectly but that's ok. I got sober because I wanted to. I found that I could live a life without alcohol and be as happy and entertaining and fun as I always was before. Severing ties with alcohol was easy for me to do and if it was easy for you then I'd love to hear your story. The Boring Little Girls Club gave me a space to be proud of my sobriety and I will take up that space, gladly. As it turns out, there's room for everyone to tell their story.

Thank you for listening to mine.





NO ONE

CARES

I remember being told *no one cares*
arms flung below floor-to-ceiling stars, tossed over bass undulations
the commitment of my empty grip was deemed unessential among a
guised solidarity of full hands
and the expectant anonymity they proposed

I remember being told *no one cares*
Mediterranean heritage touted as reason to replace the water glasses
childlike confusion at perceived pressure from my elders was enough
to decline, and continue on
amid laugh-lined charges of betraying our culture

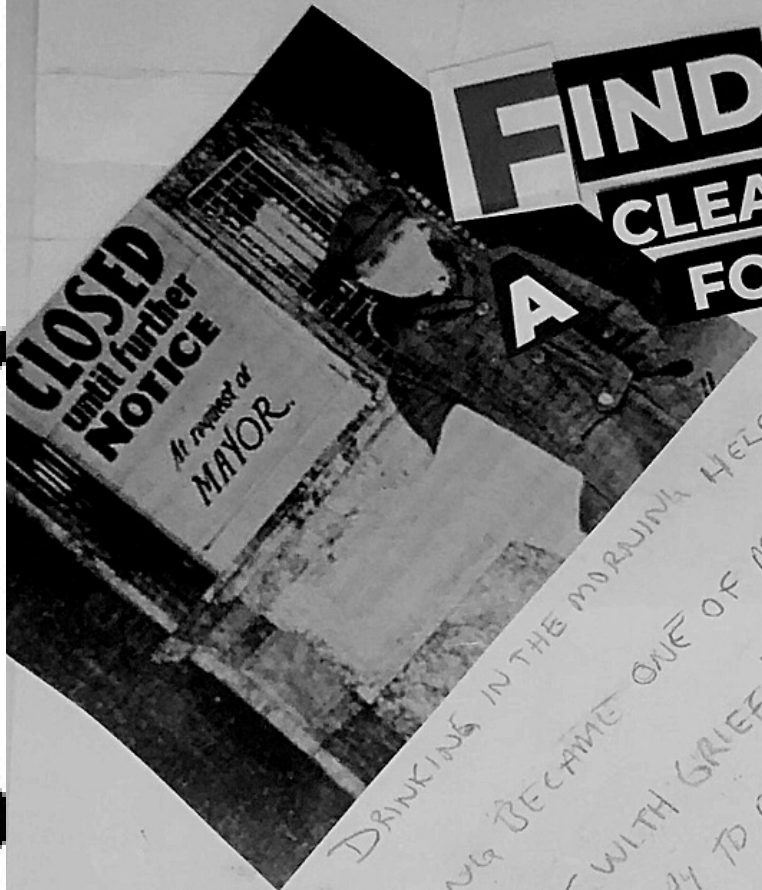
I remember being told *no one cares*
slack with underwhelming motive for all varieties of bodily context
returned claims of normalcy informed 'ace' was not the answer but
that everyone needed a boost
some counterintuitive liquid jumper cable

I remember being told *no one cares*
pocket stashes of fuel sloppily disguised under assertions of rights
alleyway afterparties were a Stampede passage and the authority of
my badge could not balance my gender
or their stricken justifications for the expense

I remember being told *no one cares*
open abandonment of comparison inherently suspicious, proven true
substance-free socialization not quite the recluse of auguries past but
an epicentre of connective voices

and for once
no one cared

-Sasha (Mohkinstsis/Calgary)



**FIND
A
CLEAR PATH
FORWARD**

superpower

recovery programs

DRINKING IN THE MORNING HELPED MY
DRINKING BECAME ONE OF MY MAIN
I HAD ISSUES WITH GRIEF I DRANK TO
I FOUND A WAY TO DRINK ALL DAY
LIFE STARTED TO BECOME
MY HEALTH BEGAN TO
I HAD TO

HANGOVERS
PRIORITIES

SELF-MEDICATE
MOST DAYS
UNMANAGEABLE
DETERIORATE
STOP
OR DIE

NO
suffering

FIGHT FOR
?

m.m.

I WANT TO
DANCE

WITH SOMEBODY

Think of the last time
You closed your eyes
Exhaled through your skin
Your limbs
Each toe and fingernail
Freedom

Leaned in with your lips
Back arched
Hand swaying
And the step of each foot
Perfectly in synch
You touched
God

Or she touched you
Caressed your face with
A personal rhythm
A beat so intimate
Those without your heart
Were stranger to the
Tune

Each movement the chorus
Your body a verse
One moment meaningless
An entire love language the next
You knew connection and
Sweetness

God never left
Hand outstretched
More than the music
That made you move
She was the movement
The dance
Inside of you
Freedom

Kyle (they/them, treaty 6)



I WANT TO FEEL THE

HEAT

WITH SOMEBODY

CW: mention of drugs, talk of sex, negative associations with sex, sexual violence, trauma, God, and 12-step work

I had sober sex for the first time when I was 27 (despite losing my virginity in the 10th grade to a guy named C****. Virginity is made up, by the way) with a guy I was about to hinge my recovery off of. I cried. Not because it was physically or emotionally painful, or that it was particularly beautiful and moving to be with that particular person, but because it was the first time I was spiritually present and physically in my body. I came out as gay the year prior but hadn't said it outloud until treatment (continuing to hid, just like in the 10th grade. The things we do to survive High School). I think I cried, too, because despite being safe and not having to live by lies I still couldn't give myself the dignity of living by truth. I cried because I wasted the first moment not disassociating and treating sex as a survival tool with someone who represented my cover story (J****, if you're reading this, please don't take it personally).

I stayed sober after that and 3 months later, I had sex again with a woman named J****. We dated. She cheated me. It was short lived (I decided never to date a person in recovery again), but I did finally get my pinnacle Queer "Ah-ha!" moment. The one I'd heard every lesbian talk about when they got to be with a woman for the first time after years of compulsory heterosexuality. I had slept with two other women prior to that, but it was so drowned in booze and cocaine, and I was still so scared of myself that I don't think I gave myself the permission to enjoy it, The way I did in that moment with J****, when I could feel where my toes were and trace every single touch of her hand on my body with my eyes closed. Where I didn't have to escape to my grocery list or imagine how pleasure might feel.

I consider myself one of the lucky ones. To be born into this world and coded female and to have never (to my knowledge) experienced sexual violence or trauma in this area of my life (how fucked up, to feel lucky for this. I hate our world). My dissociative tendencies weren't related to this, though my therapist suggested once that survival sex, for whatever kind of safety you seek, can be traumatic. I think about that sometimes when I am working on rebuilding my sober, recovered mind and full-body connection. Some days it fits and makes sense, some days it feels like calling it trauma undermines people who have experienced *real* trauma ("this isn't the trama Olympics.", my therapist would remind me).

In the end, it all made it on to my first Step 4: The Virginity Fallacy, C****, and all the guys I'd blamed for my drinking, the Lesbian Whisperer (what I called my first sober sex mate), the cheating girlfriend, every man I was convinced would be salvation, The woman who received my Step 5 took it all in to hold for a while, while I took a moment to stretch my legs free from the burden of carrying the weight of this confusion, shame, secrecy, deception, self-centredness, and fear. We sifted through it all and it was here she pointed out that "our sex powers are God-given and therefore good". On the other end, she shared with me how she created what she called a "sex ideal" and it was here where I realized that I had the right to build one of my own. A safe, sane ideal of what I wanted in my future sex life, intimate partners, and how I wanted to show up in this area of my life.

She reminded me that God wanted me to feel happiness, connection, fulfillment, safety and freedom in relation to sex. And so I moved forward from here, still with old bits of the past hanging on, but with a more clear vision of what I wanted, needed, and deserved.

And I no longer had to settle for imagining what pleasure might look like.

Kyle (they/them, treaty 6)



UNTITLED

NICOLE OLCHOWECKI
(SHE/HER)

CW: Mention of drugs and alcohol, isolation, disease concept

You are young, unsure, insecure and shy.
You do not know where you belong or fit in.
You are searching, trying to discover who you are.
You are looking for that place where you belong.
I am here, waiting patiently for you.

You find me, or do I find you, friends introduce me.
You welcome and embrace me and enjoy my presence.
Suddenly things start changing; you come out of your shell.
You become more confident, outgoing and accepted.
Time passes and you become who you think you need to be.

I have become your best friend, your constant companion.
I introduce you to friends of mine and you embrace them.
WE are welcomed with open arms into your life.
WE are with you now always and forever.
You do nothing without us. With us, you feel invincible.

As more time passes life, leaves you behind.
It is just us now, your other friends have slipped away.
Family is but a distant memory.
You have us now; who needs them anyway.
WE are everything your whole world.

Your life belongs to US now; you surrender all to us.
WE take your family, job and freedom.
WE take your hopes and dreams and even your very life.

WE came into your life unassuming like a thief in the night.
WE promised you the answers to your problems.
WE have caused you to lie, cheat and steal.
For us you have given up all that matters.

WE are the enemy of life and connection. WE are EVIL.
WE are alcohol. WE are drugs.
WE are the disease of addiction.
You may overcome and defeat for a time.
WE are patient and waiting for you to return to us.
Be wary and vigilant for we are ETERNAL.

I wrote this poem about 1 year during a very troubled time in my life. I was in the early stages of coming to terms with being a trans-woman. After I had accepted that I am trans I was able to connect with the supportive humans in the BLGC, I was welcomed just as I was at the time. The acceptance and connection I found with the BLGC has allowed me to grow and embrace who I am. It has given me freedom from my addictions.



ONLINE & IN-PERSON

RESOURCES

Boring Little Girls Club

Calgary, AB

boringlittlegirlsclub.ca

A community of sober women, non-binary and trans folks who support each other and have fun without alcohol and recreational drugs

*coffee chats (online/in-person depending on COVID restrictions, days & times vary)

*sober parents group

*sober book club

*other sober fun

Sober Synonymous

Edmonton, AB

[@sobersynonymous_yeg](https://www.instagram.com/sobersynonymous_yeg) (Instagram)

2S & LGBTQ+ centred peer-support for those managing their relationship with substances & mental health

*weekly online coffee chats every

Tuesday @ noon MST

*monthly guest speakers to help build wellness tool kit

*all expressions of sobriety welcome but attendees must be sober during meetings and events

UNCOVERING

Saskatoon, SK

Online 2S & LGBTQ+ meeting for sober/sober curious folx

(not 12-step)

Sundays @ 8pm CST

email: uncovering@outsaskatoon.ca

for link and password

Rainbows to Recovery

Edmonton, AB

Online 2S & LGBTQ+ A.A. meeting (open)

Tuesday @ 7:30pm MST

Zoom ID: 7809144629

PW: rainbows

Sex Work & Sobriety

Online meeting for those currently or previously engaged in sex work and recovery (not 12-step specific)

Thursdays @ 7pm MST

email : recoveryandsexwork@gmail.com

for link and password

Recovery from the Heart

Red Road to Wellbriety Circle

Tuesdays @ 7pm PST

Zoom ID: 270 166 279

Movement for Mental Health

Fort McMurray, AB

[@movementformentalhealthymm](https://www.instagram.com/movementformentalhealthymm)

A queer and sober owned and operated initiative to support mental health and recovery through movement (online, in person - check instagram for details).

Trans Lifeline (24/7)

Canada

translifeline.org

1-877-330-6366

Hotline run by and for trans folks offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis.

AHS Addiction & Mental Health Helpline (24/7)

Alberta

1-866-332-2322

The Distress Line (24/7)

Calgary, AB

403-266-4357 (HELP)

Edmonton, AB

780-482-4357 (HELP)

Suicide Prevention Hotline

1 800 SUICIDE (784 2433)

WANT MORE?

BORINGLITTEGIRLSCLUB.CA/RESOURCES-1



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO KYLE BOSCH
FOR COVER DESIGN AND ZINE LAYOUT

CRAFTED ON TREATY 6 & 7 TERRITORY