



NoVA Prism Center

-PRESENTS-



The Lantern 2



Overjoyed
Samantha Schrickel (@samlikestopaint)

Table of Contents

<i>Overjoyed</i> , Samantha Shrickel	1
<i>Foreword</i>	3
<i>One Thousand More</i> , Artemisia Gaska	4
<i>Speaking in Maths and Tongues</i> , Adam Church	5
<i>Level Up</i> , Layla Cassidy	6
<i>Maybe Horoscopes are bullshit</i> , Lyndal Cairns	7
<i>Repair</i> , Handmade Void	8
<i>3 AM</i> , June Song	9
<i>Standing in Anxiety (Colored)</i> , Nairu Asge	10

Foreword

It's been an *intense* year at NoVA Prism Center. In 2023, we expanded our programming, bringing new workshops and pop-ups to the region, and stretching our wings as a brand new 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We made it to Capital Pride (among several other local Pride events), and signed the lease that brought our dreams to fruition... and very, very soon, we'll be opening the doors of our little library to the public so that we can show up every single day, in person, for our community.

But it hasn't been all rainbows and parties. This year, record numbers of book challenges and anti-LGBTQ+ laws have been introduced. Our library collection has always been focused on banned and LGBTQ+ lit, but *one in four* of our books is now on ban or challenge lists somewhere in the country. Drag Queen story times have been protested in the region, purely because of queer representation. Many times, those protestors have brought violence.

Our community has not faltered. Instead of allowing fear to silence us, we have come together to connect and protect our own, sharing resources and support wider than ever. Thanks to social media, our community is able to find each other, and thrive even when we can't come together in person. We've joined in that too, with a discord server for the NoVA Prism Center community- which will also be coming soon (as of this writing).

We also publish a zine, The Lantern, which you are holding in your hands or reading on your device right now. This is our second issue, but there will be many more, because there are countless stories to tell here in NoVA. And of course, this zine could not be made without the efforts of our contributors or the donors who helped bring this zine to life through preorders, so to all of you, we extend our sincerest thanks.

Finally, always remember: when you shine a light, you just might see a rainbow.

With love,
Leon van der Goetz
Executive Director
NoVA Prism Center & Library

One Thousand More

Artemisia Gaska

—

I will scream to the heavens “i love you” a thousand times,
And you will scream back “I love you too” a thousand times more.

I will smile, laugh, and dance with you a thousand times,
And you will join me a thousand times more.

I will hug you, hold your gaze, and walk out the door a thousand times,
And you will open it up to let me in a thousand times more.

One thousand times, one thousand gestures,
But i only needed one time to know that i would be happy
Doing this with you forever.

Speaking in Maths and Tongues

Adam Church

I grew up without language
tickling my tongue and
sparkling on my lips.

I couldn't reach into my mouth
and strum the tight cords in my throat
to tell everyone who I was.

I grew up in a culture
where ignorance was law
and I was on trial when I glowed.

It started with finding the phonics
and constants and vowels
to say "You are beautiful"
to people already speaking the language.

I was learning.

And it took time to speak in tongues
and decode the verbal math
to say "I can be handsome,
but sometimes pretty".

Safe, but more than a foot outside.

Now my vocabulary stretches across
encyclopedia of definitions.

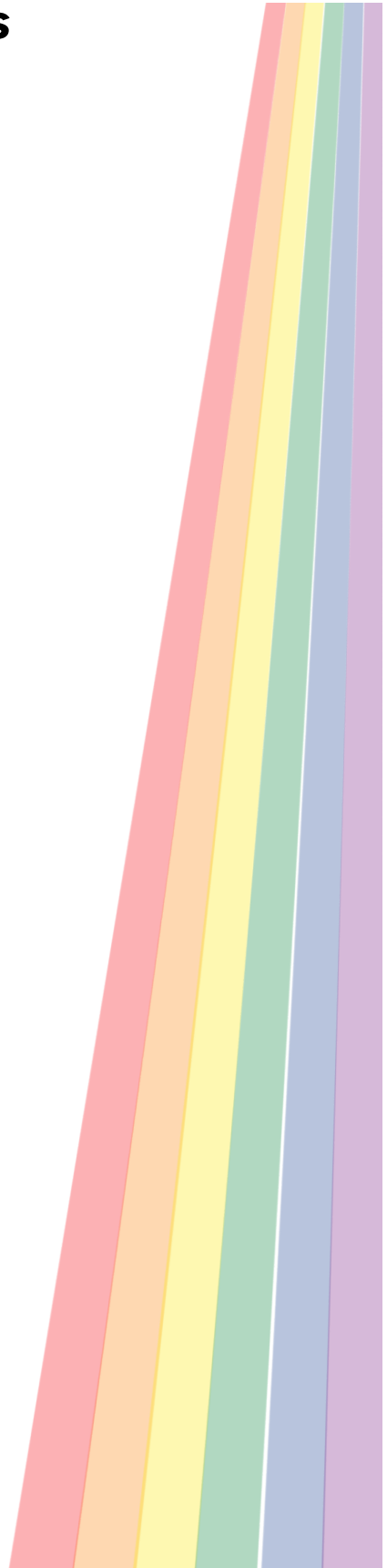
So others looking to pluck their chords
can find the words to say: "I came out".

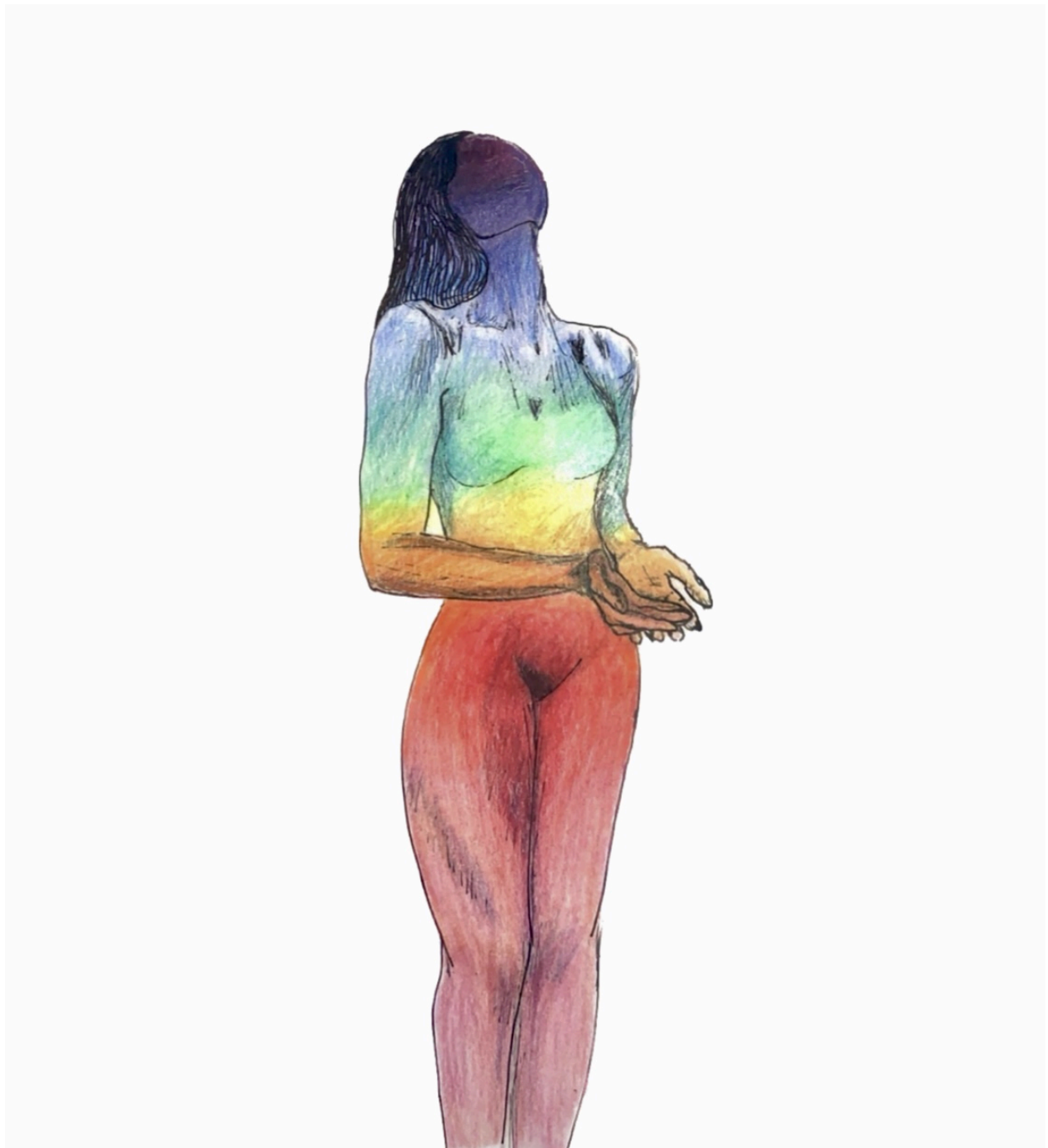
So others can solve the equations
all to say "My pronouns are".

To speak ancient tongues
that others can proclaim their love.

So those after me can look in
the mirror and whisper...

... The closet will stay open.





Level Up
Layla Cassidy (@denydivinedestiny)

Maybe Horoscopes are bullshit

Lyndal Cairns (@LyndalCairns)

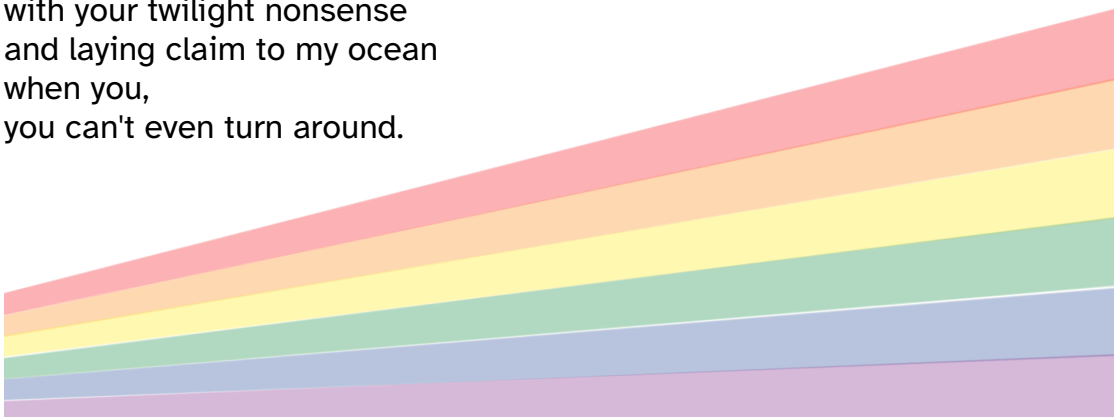
Stop
stop it,
just stop twinkling, you little fuckers.
I know what you are:
Self-centered, careless combustion machines.
Unknowable,
and always out of reach.

Every night, you haunt my sky,
little hunter little horse little twins.
Not enough light to not trip on the pavement,
not enough dark to forget we're alone.

The poets and dreamers,
we have always looked up to you—
or out, to be precise—
seeking counsel and wisdom,
as though fiery balls of gas can know anything
about what it means to be mortal and confused and afraid.
How it feels
to be a mess of shorting wires covered in skin.

We give you shapes and attributes and seasons and reasons,
as though saying *I'm a Cancer moon*
will somehow make us make more sense.

And you,
the worst of the lot,
you waxing waning freeloading little tramp,
gilding the lilies of my ovaries
with your twilight nonsense
and laying claim to my ocean
when you,
you can't even turn around.





Repair
Handmade Void (@handmadevoid)

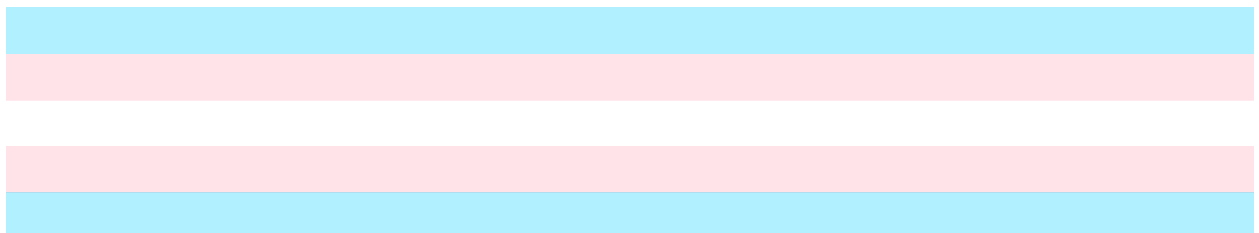
3 AM

June Song

Who forgot you there?
Are you too early or too late?
Standing all
Alone
Under the dissociating
City lights

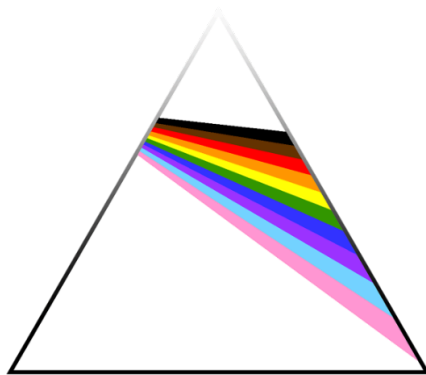
Does maggots
Crawl out of you
When it rains
Too?

I always liked your greens
It's just that
You seem a bit
Out of
Place





Standing in Anxiety (Colored)
Nairu Asge (@nile_nati_nathnael)



FIND US ONLINE

<http://novaprismcenter.gay>
facebook.com/NoVAPrismCenter
Instagram: @NoVAPrismCenter

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Your donations will allow NoVA Prism Center & Library to continue
To serve the Northern Virginia LGBTQIA+ Community.

NoVA Prism Center & Library is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization,
EIN 92-2161431. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

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