



ALL ABOUT MY SEXUALITY (II, III)

BY

ALEX ROMEO

WHY I LIKE THEM: *Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...*

In Alex Romero's two prose poems, 'All About My Sexuality (Part II)' and 'All About My Sexuality (Part III),' imagination runs wild. For some initial context, "the opening theme song to George Lopez" is and was 'Low Rider' written and performed by a funk band named War in the mid 70's on the album Why Can't We Be Friends. After that, you are pretty much on your own. I do dare say, that Romero has a most vivid, lively mind, but I believe the message he's conveying is that we are all so much more than our sexual orientation. Like, "My sexuality organizes picnics for lost ideas looking for a home." or "My sexuality moonlights as a mentor for shy clouds." And just so we don't misrepresent the man, there is this one: "My sexuality gets wasted at the beach wearing a tie-dye Grateful Dead T-shirt, swinging around its wrinkled, veiny cock." Wonder what prevented him from submitting (Part I)?

All About My Sexuality (Part II)

My sexuality is the opening theme song to George Lopez at 3AM. My sexuality is two boys holding hands at Griffith Park. My sexuality is the best taqueria in town. My sexuality has two dogs. My sexuality is a stolen vehicle cruising through the Hollywood Freeway on a hushed night. My sexuality gets wasted at the beach wearing a tie-dye Grateful Dead T-shirt, swinging around its wrinkled, veiny cock. My sexuality is a crackling radio in the sand. My sexuality is the keyboard solo in “Riders on the Storm.” My sexuality performs Satanic rituals at some cave late after dark. My sexuality is the Taliban dancing the Macarena at a sweet sixteen. My sexuality is a dingy motel room. My sexuality is un perdedor. My sexuality sells medical marijuana to the elderly. My sexuality tapes gay porn into the Bible. My sexuality abuses its Adderall prescription. My sexuality once ran over a coyote, rolled around in its hot blood and made snow angels in its guts; then grabbed fistfuls of the red muck stuck to the road and ate it. My sexuality fucked Mickey Mouse at Disneyland without using protection or lube, just spit. My sexuality is every porchlight in El Barrio blowing out one by one like candles on a cake. My sexuality tee-pee’d Elon Musk’s house. My sexuality was kicked out of home as a teen. My sexuality is an angel whose wings melted off when its feet touched the earth. My sexuality is every fat pimp on Figueroa Street in broad daylight. My sexuality wants to feel love. My sexuality has dreams too.

All About My Sexuality (Part III)

My sexuality is the autobiography of a shooting star. Meeting someone of my sexuality is like a legendary Pokémon encounter. My sexuality organizes picnics for lost ideas looking for a home. My sexuality threw the first brick at Stonewall. My sexuality is every stain on your mattress. My sexuality is Forever & Always (Taylor’s Version). When all comes crashing down, my sexuality reminds me, *We’re all a little bit broken inside*. My sexuality daydreams about eloping with the aurora borealis. My sexuality is the graffiti on the walls of a Lower East Side bathroom. My sexuality plays hopscotch with rainbows after a summer shower. Each night, my sexuality serenades the moon in French. My sexuality moonlights as a mentor for shy clouds. My sexuality collects lost socks from the Bermuda Triangle. My sexuality wears a crown made from tin foil. My sexuality is a lonely pastor. My sexuality once led a campaign against gravity. My sexuality runs a graveyard for short-lived parasocial relationships. My sexuality is the intro drumbeat to a Pornhub video. My sexuality founded a support group for the canceled. My sexuality is a volunteer taste tester for Petco. My sexuality is the best friend I am still getting to know. This right here, my sexuality, is my home. The opening line of a book and the closing line of a poem.

THE POET SPEAKS: *Regarding inspiration, I hope I’m not naive when I say I think I’ve adopted some phonological quirks from Alex Dimitrov, Todd Dillard, and Allen Ginsberg. I also love cursing. I find that there’s poetry in profanity too, the way swear words serve a purpose that satisfyingly fulfills an urge to describe an intense feeling. Like no, you’re not mad, you’re fucking livid. You’re not nervous, you’re on the verge of shitting bricks.*

My writing is also largely informed by the news, the internet, trends in social media—we’re at a point in time where we’re constantly consuming information, like it or not. As an avid

doomscroller and zoomer, these contents will inevitably seep into parts of my writing. I've also learned a great deal from the alt-lit community (e.g., how to break the rules and not feel so stifled by the confines of MFA culture).

The way I view poetry is kind of like grocery shopping. I feel like I'm navigating the aisles of the world, filling my cart with words and images that strike me. It wasn't until a year or so ago that I realized I'd actually been collecting my obsessions; throughout the day I find myself, perhaps compulsively, jotting things down in the notes app from intriguing subway observations to half-baked thoughts on a park bench. I think pinning these elements down on the pages—the messy, complicated, beautiful, or disturbing—is my way of telling myself: “Hey, are you writing this? Don't you dare forget this.” Then I revisit them days, weeks, even months later, and I almost always find that the thoughts have stewed in some way; that they are ready to emerge as a concoction of emotions and revelations. It's as if those scribbled-out fragments have been marinating in the depths of my subconscious, mingling and merging with each other, forming associations that I couldn't have foreseen myself, at least not consciously. This “incubation period” is crucial for me (and many other poets and writers, I suspect), as it allows those raw materials to coalesce into something richer and more substantial over time.

All this to say, I do think poetry goes far beyond drawing parallels between the seemingly unrelated: it's a means of distilling the essence of life, of transforming fleeting moments into something timeless. It's a way of immortalizing the parts of our existence that might otherwise slip through the cracks of memory. Just as a well-cooked meal can transport you to a different time and place, I hope my writing can invite readers to embark on journeys that carry them through the different landscapes and textures of their minds, or their own mental grocery carts, and into a complex tapestry of sensation and imagination.

AUTHOR BIO: Alex Romero is a native of Queens, New York. After earning his BA from Sarah Lawrence College, he taught English in a fishing village in the northwest of France. In 2022, he was awarded the Matt Leone Fellowship at Colgate University. He is a 2023 Lambda Literary Emerging LGBTQ Voices Fellow. His short story, “Our Little Manila,” was selected by Tia Clark as a finalist for the Plentitudes Prize in Fiction. He was also long-listed for *Uncharted Magazine's* Novel Excerpt Contest. His short fiction, essays, and poetry appear or are forthcoming in *Drunk Monkeys*, *Maudlin House*, *Mister Magazine*, *BULLSHIT LIT*, *Treehouse Literary Review*, and *The Coachella Review*, among other publications. A former reader for *Taco Bell Quarterly*, he is a staff writer for *Surging Tide Magazine*. He has received support from Tin House, the Southampton Writers' Conference, the Joseph F. McCrindle Foundation, Key West Literary Seminar, the Jane Hoppen Residency at Paragraph, the de Groot Foundation, the Unterberg Poetry Center, and more. He is completing his MFA in creative writing at Columbia University, where he was appointed as a Chair's Fellow. He is at work on a short story collection. He lives in New York.