



QUEER WORDS

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Queer Words is an ongoing archive of writing by Friends' Central students, alumni, faculty, and staff of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The Gay Straight Alliance is thankful to all who contributed to this collection and is proud to publish these submissions.

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Queer Words began in 2002 when the following note was submitted anonymously to a teacher's mailbox:

"I don't know exactly what to say but I still want to add my voice here. I am gay... and it's really hard to even write that statement. I know Friends' Central is supposed to be really accepting, but I still have not come out to anybody. I guess I'm afraid. I don't want people to change around me. I will never be straight, but sometimes it feels good to pretend I am, so that I can just act the way I always have, and feel less out of place. I wonder how many other FCS students are in the same position: always pretending. I wonder how long it will be before I can't pretend any longer?"

The Gay Straight Alliance created *Queer Words* in response to this message to offer a forum for L.G.B.T.Q. (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) members of the Friends' Central community and their allies to express their voices.

We hope that *Queer Words* will be a powerful resource for everyone who reads it, and that these selections will deepen our understanding of LGBTQ issues in our school and world and encourage each of us to work towards a safer, more supportive, more fulfilling environment for individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Al Vernacchio

▼ Table of Contents: ▼
Volume 8: Spring/Fall, 2012

▼ Top Ten Fabulous GSA Moments, 2011-2012

▼ The Medical Perceptions of Homosexuality: A Research Paper
Jibreel Powell '12

▼ Unity Prayer
Nick DeFina '12

▼ Trolley Car:
Jibreel Powell '12

▼ Reinterpreting Classic Fairy Tales Through An LGBT Lens

▼ The Twelve Dancing Princesses
Sofia Seidel '13

▼ Jack:
Andrew Hitt '13

▼ The Little Mermaid:
Anna Lynn-Pavlesky '13

▼ The Great Gay Musical Trivia Quiz

TOP TEN FABULOUS GSA MOMENTS 2011-2012

10: World AIDS Day Assembly

9: Gossiping During Our Weekly Meetings

8: Chelsea's Amazing Cakes

7: The Big Gay Music Trivia Assembly

6: Fairy Wing Bowl

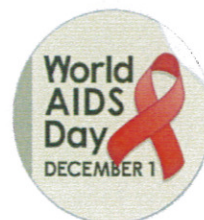
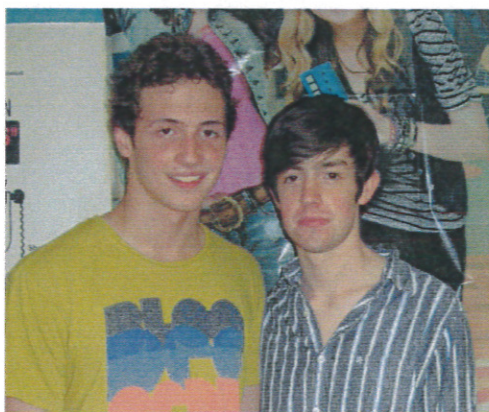
5: Coming Out During Meeting for Worship

4: Nickelodeon / Cartoon Network Dance

3: The Gay Gavel (aka The Gayvel)

2: Ms. Ewen and Santiago's Visit

1: Jibreel and Nathan



MEDICAL PERCEPTIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

JIBREEL POWELL

U.S. HISTORY PAPER

In 1973, The American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, its list of medical disorders. This decision resulted from a change in medical reporting on homosexuality. The amount of coverage, as well as the nature of that coverage changed throughout the twentieth century. In the early 1900s, the coverage focused more on attempts to understand the factors producing homosexuality, with causes ranging from hormones to masturbation. In the middle of the twentieth century the conversation shifted towards curability; a debate over how, and, if homosexuals were to be treated for their affliction arose in the medical community, as well as over the normalcy and pervasion of gender deviancy. As the 1970s drew nearer, the question of whether or not homosexuality was in fact a mental disorder arose, eventually sparking a debate within the American Psychiatric Association.

In 1993, the journal *Gender and Society* published an article that analyzed the coverage of homosexuality in medical journals from 1900 to 1950. The article looked specifically at the perception of the relationship between gender and sexual orientation, and sought to show that it was from this relationship that the stigma against homosexuality stemmed, as homosexuality fell outside of the conventional view of both of these categories. The author, Karin A. Martin, divided the time period into two distinct eras, the first of which, from 1903-1925, focused on

lesbianism, masturbation, and suffrage. Martin states that this time period focused on the relationship between the newborn Women's Rights Movement, and the emergence of lesbians in society. According to Martin, the connection that the medical reporting drew between these two ideas stems from their divergence from the societal perception of sexual orientation and gender; women were supposed to be not only dependent on men, but also unable to satisfy themselves sexually without a man's help. In the second era of coverage (1934-1942), the focus lay more on "Constitutional Factors,' Masculinity and Femininity." At this point, the medical community sought to define the physiological differences between homosexuals and their heterosexual counterparts, analyzing the genitalia, muscle and hair distribution, as well as vocal pitch and width of the hips. The scientific community attempted to assign values of masculinity and femininity, in order to attempt to explain the deviance from the gender norms¹.

As this research progressed into the middle part of the twentieth century, the questions of treatment arose, as did the ethical questions of treating people who did not believe that they were sick. This would ultimately lead to homosexuality being removed from the *Diagnostic And Statistical Manual*, but not before the homosexual population was to be thoroughly analyzed and deconstructed medically. The coverage of homosexuality in medical journals represented a changing medical perception, moving from confusion and bewilderment, to careful analysis and

¹ Gender and Sexuality: Medical Opinion on Homosexuality, 1900-1950. Karin A. Martin. *Gender and Society*. Vol. 7, No. 2 (Jun., 1993), pp. 246-260. Published by: [Sage Publications, Inc.](#). Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/189580>

eventually acceptance, while the coverage in the *New York Times* represented a more stagnant social condemnation of deviancy from the sexual norms.

For the issue of the medical and scientific views of homosexuality, the twentieth century was divided into three distinct eras, with defining events separating them. Before 1948 homosexuality was seen as gender deviancy, and homosexuals were classified as abnormal and in some cases dangerous to the heterosexual community. American psychiatrists made efforts to identify the physiological differences between homosexual males and heterosexual males:

The homosexual male is characterized by a feminine carrying of the angle of the arm, long legs, narrow hips, large muscles, deficient hair on the face, chest and back, feminine distribution of pubic hair, a high pitched voice, small penis and testicles and the presence of a scrotal fold. Not uncommonly there is an excess of fat on the shoulder, buttocks and abdomen, occasionally the penis is very large and the hips are unusually wide.

Homosexual females underwent the same type of categorization

The homosexual female is characterized by a firm adipose tissue, deficient fat in the shoulders and abdomen, firm muscles, excess hair on the chest, back and lower extremities, a tendency to masculine distribution of pubic hair, a small uterus and either over- or under-development of the labia and clitoris. There is a tendency toward a shorter trunk, a contracted pelvis, under-development of the breasts, excess hair on the face, and a low-pitched voice.²

These supposed physiological differences were innately contradictory, as a result of the medical community attempting to define homosexuality as something other than attraction the same sex. This physiological definition required these contradictions in order to create a category into which doctors could place those who

² Henry, George W., and Hugh M. Galbraith. "Constitutional Factors in Homosexuality." *Am J Psychiatry* 90.6 (1934): 1249-70. Print.

did not fit the societal ideas of sexuality. However, these categories needed to reach equilibrium – loose enough that all homosexuals could be made to fit into them, and rigid enough that they could be used to separate homosexuals from the rest of society.³ These opposite qualifications arose in the contradictions in the definition, making it so that homosexuals and homosexuality could be related to specific physical characteristics, but at the same time extend the label to those who did not seem to fit the homosexual stereotypes. This label served to brand homosexuals and to emphasize that they were different from and dangerous to the heterosexual society.

This type of categorization created ways in which to simultaneously define and separate homosexuals from the rest of society. Fear arose that homosexuality could be contracted, or develop in heterosexual people. Centered on the women's rights movement, newly outspoken lesbians were seen as a threat to the wives of married men. It was hypothesized that masturbation in women could lead to this sexual inversion. Homosexuality was seen as a failure to develop sexually, making homosexuals less fit for society than heterosexuals.⁴ Their gender deviancy derived from their failed development, and was the reason that homosexuals were not attracted to the opposite sex, as society deemed that they should.

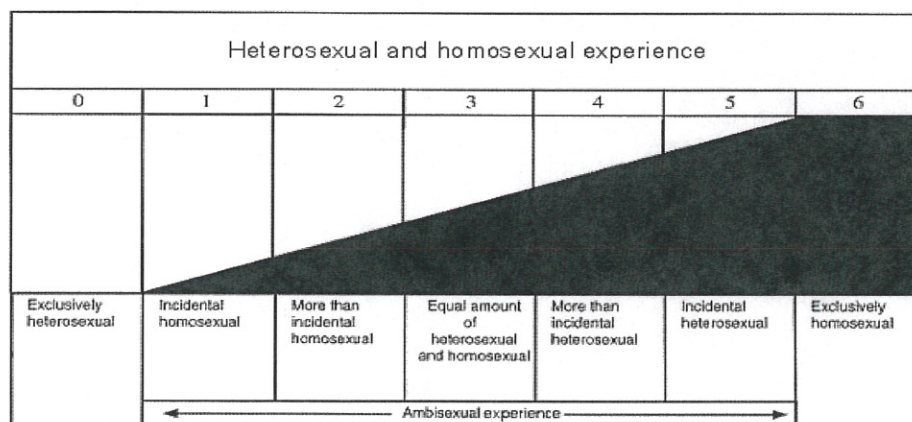
Medical reporting detailing this developmental retardation was used to insist that homosexuals were inferior, and that they were unfit to receive the rights given to other Americans. *The New York Times* portrayed homosexuals as perverts, unfit to

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Greenspan, Herbert, Campbell, John D. The Homosexual As A Personality Type. *Am J Psychiatry* 1945 101: 682-689

serve in government.⁵ At this point, both the medical and political reporting seemed to reach the same conclusions: that homosexuals were inferior to heterosexuals for a variety of developmental and constitutional reasons, including deviancy from gender norms and susceptibility to blackmail and other forms of social pressure. At this time homosexuality was seen as unnatural and an affront to nature and some authors even used the inability of the rising number of homosexual couples to have children to represent the downfall of mankind.⁶

In 1948, Alfred Kinsey published his book *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, and established the Kinsey scale, which rated sexual behavior on a seven-point scale, from exclusively heterosexual at zero to exclusively homosexual at six.



[Illustration of the Kinsey scale, with white depicting heterosexual behavior, and black depicting homosexual behavior.]

⁵ Williams White Special to the New York Times "Inquiry by Senate on Perverts Asked: Hill and Wherry Study Hears there are 3,500 Deviates in Government Agencies a Quick Guess," He Says 12 "Whereases" Struck Out Finds Deviates Everywhere." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, 1950, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/111575016?accountid=10986> (accessed April 11, 2011).

⁶ Osterhout, Hilda. "A Moral Dilemma: STRANGER IN THE LAND. by Ward Thomas. 373 Pp. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$3.50." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, 1949, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/105832627?accountid=10986> (accessed April 10, 2011).

With this scale of sexual behavior, Kinsey hypothesized that the majority of men fell somewhere between homosexual and heterosexual; while there are some exclusively heterosexual men, and some exclusively homosexual men, the majority lie closer to the range of “bisexual.” Kinsey said:

Males do not represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual. The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats. Not all things are black nor all things white. It is a fundamental of taxonomy that nature rarely deals with discrete categories. Only the human mind invents categories and tries to force facts into separated pigeon-holes. The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects.⁷

This way of thinking about homosexuality, as more normal, more pervasive, and more fluid, changed the way that the medical society viewed what they had perceived to be a disease. The era of American history from 1948-1973 would be defined by this change, which created confusion and discussion within the medical field, as psychiatrists attempted to reconcile Kinsey’s findings with the diagnosis of homosexuality as a mental disorder. The political reporting was affected by a much stronger voice of the homosexual community, especially towards the later part of the period.

This conflict between Kinsey’s data and the conventional view of homosexuality led to questioning of the way in which the perceived disease was dealt with within the medical community. Although it was still perceived as a disease, the treatments of homosexuality came under scrutiny by the

⁷ Sexual Behavior in the Human Male; Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell R. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin; *Am J Public Health*. 2003 June; 93(6): 894–898.; PMID: PMC1447861

homosexual community.⁸ As these so-called gender deviants became more vocal, the amount of resistance to the psychiatric community increased greatly: homosexuals maintained that they did not need to be cured, as psychiatric community insisted.⁹

While the process of treating and curing homosexuals was scrutinized, research to understand homosexuality continued.¹⁰ The scientific community did not understand what caused the “disease”, but the label of sickness remained attached to a population who refused to believe that they were ill and who increasingly refused to remain silent. As the twentieth century progressed into its second half, this conflict between patient and doctor raised the question of how to classify homosexuality: was it fair to place a label of sickness upon people who other than not complying with the gender norms, had no negative impact on themselves or on society?¹¹

In *The New York Times*, the view of homosexuals remained that of incomprehension, and in certain cases, lingering contempt. Homosexuals were seen as a separate society, and in some cases, represented as hardly human. Articles with

⁸ "Homosexuals Disrupt Psychiatrists' Parley." *New York Times* (1923-Current File) (1970): 38-38, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/118842048?accountid=10986> (accessed March 1, 2011).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ "He and She: The Sex Hormones and Behavior: Sex Hormones and Behavior." *New York Times* (1923-Current File)(1972): SM30, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/119591743?accountid=10986> (accessed March 1, 2011).

¹¹ STOLLER, ROBERT J., MARMOR, JUDD, BIEBER, IRVING, GOLD, RONALD, SOCARIDES, CHARLES W., GREEN, RICHARD, SPITZER, ROBERT L. "A Symposium: Should Homosexuality Be in the APA Nomenclature?" *Am J Psychiatry* 1973 130: 1207-1216

titles such as "The Homosexual Woman: More Assertive, Less Willing to Hide"¹² showed the supposed threats that female homosexuals pose to the heterosexual community. The article describes homosexual women as hardly human and potentially dangerous, and emphasized the protest of this group: "The young homosexual woman, to an increasing degree, is refusing to live with the limitations and restrictions imposed by society and are showing a sense of active rebellion at a condemnation she considers unwarrantable and unjust." This rebellion of the homosexual community ultimately prompted the most exaggerated medical change of the twentieth century for homosexuals.

In 1973, The American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, meaning that it was no longer considered a psychiatric disease. People who were uncomfortable and distressed about their sexuality would be diagnosed as having "sexual orientation disturbance," but homosexuals as a group would no longer be classified as mentally ill.¹³ This change allowed for a new medical reporting in regards to homosexuality. Homosexuals could now be talked about as people rather than as patients, and medical professionals could seek to help homosexuals without necessarily having to try to cure them. In the *American Journal of Nursing*, two articles were printed; one in 1969, before the removal of homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* and one in 1973 just after, reflecting two completely separate views of

¹² "The Woman Homosexual: More Assertive, Less Willing to Hide." New York Times (1923-Current File) (1969): 62, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/118615850?accountid=10986> (accessed March 1, 2011).

¹³ "Psychiatrists, in a Shift, Declare Homosexuality no Mental Illness: HOMOSEXUALITY HELD NO ILLNESS Self-Appraisal Deplore Discrimination." New York Times (1923-Current File) (1973): 1-1, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/119586555?accountid=10986> (accessed March 1, 2011)

homosexuals.¹⁴¹⁵ The first article focuses almost entirely on the necessity to treat people who have a serious medical problem, and blames the parents of homosexuals, primarily the mothers, whose behavior served to “produce a son who was overly dependent and submissive to his mother, was hostile and competitive to his father... and lacked confidence in his own masculinity.”¹⁶ This implies that a son’s homosexuality was the fault of the parents who did not properly direct him into masculinity and heterosexuality. Contrastingly, the 1973 article speaks compassionately about the need to maintain the mental wellbeing of homosexuals, who underwent huge amounts of stereotyping and discrimination, and emphasizes that “[homosexuals] are no more ‘like’ each other than heterosexuals. They have all the individual differences found in persons, identified as a group for any reason.”¹⁷ These two articles illustrate the way that medical opinion of homosexuality dramatically shifted over a short amount of time, and homosexuals increasingly became viewed as people rather than purely patients. This changing opinion was not echoed by an immediate social change, and homosexuality continued to remain stigmatized in public perception.

Even when homosexuality was removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, *The New York Times* continued to report it negatively. This trend mirrored the fact that although it was no longer seen as a mental illness, the public opinion of

¹⁴ Homosexuality, Irving Bieber, *The American Journal of Nursing*, Vol. 69, No. 12 (Dec., 1969), pp. 2637-2641, Published by: [Lippincott Williams & Wilkins](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3421112), Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3421112>

¹⁵ Homosexuality, Shirley J. Braverman, *The American Journal of Nursing*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (Apr., 1973), pp. 652-655, Published by: [Lippincott Williams & Wilkins](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3422972), Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3422972>

¹⁶ see footnote 15

¹⁷ see footnote 16

homosexuality remained that of condemnation and contempt.¹⁸ Part of this division could be traced to the Catholic Church, which maintained a condemnation of homosexuality.¹⁹ This split of public opinion and medical opinion continued throughout the rest of the twentieth century, as the gay rights movement became larger. Even the American Psychiatric Association's decision was not without scrutiny. Some psychiatrists felt that homosexuality's classification as a mental disorder should stand.²⁰ This continued struggle between conventional gender views and the homosexual deviancy marked the rest of the twentieth century, however the question of the medical perception had been settled: homosexuality was not a mental illness, and homosexuals were not to be medically treated as if they were sick.

The way in which homosexuality was defined and treated by the medical community changed drastically throughout the twentieth century. As scientific studies concluded that there was no medical disorder associated with homosexuality, the ways in which homosexual patients were treated changed remarkably, moving from placement in psychiatric hospitals to concern about the mental effects of discrimination. But even after homosexuality was removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, the stigma against the "gender deviants" remained. This social perception continues today, and because of its persistence, the struggle to remove homosexuality's label as a mental disorder is often overshadowed by the protest for

¹⁸ "Extensive Homosexuality is found among Seagulls Off Coast of California." New York Times (1923-Current File)(1977): 12, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/123263885?accountid=10986> (accessed March 1, 2011).

¹⁹ "Vatican Statements on Sexual Ethics: Fundamental Values on Homosexuality Masturbation a Disorder Neglect of Modesty Reality of Sin no Manichaeian Prejudice." New York Times (1923-Current File),1976,<http://search.proquest.com/docview/122993535?accountid=10986> (accessed March 1, 2011).

²⁰ Psychiatric Unit Upholds Stand that Homosexuality Isn't Illness. NEW YORK, NY, United States, 1975, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/120380381?accountid=10986> (accessed April 17, 2011).

gay marriage and other gay rights; The gay rights movement has, however, undergone a long struggle to define homosexuality in its own terms, and social perceptions have proven to be the most resistant to change. Through the beginning of the 21st century, we have begun to see cultural change on the large scale, in many ways mirroring the protests and struggle that defined homosexuality throughout the twentieth century.



Unity Prayer

by Nick DeFina

There is no explanation
for why I hold you still;
four letters I suppose,
but funny
how a motion,
a look, a blessing
can be funneled
into one

two

three

four times I saw you
before I knew
that I could bottleneck
all my memories into
a ghostly syllable of recorded time,
neglect myself in favor of
a second

(or four)

to dance the waltz with you
(anything

perchance,

to hold on to,

to dream

the little dreams of you,)
and until that time

when men fall asleep

beneath each rocking of a tree limb

I wake for the transient beast within,

symmetric and inert,

the beast with four letters: but

is this real

or simply a

figment of

transubstantiation?

And with each gentle caress
of breathing I

run a dainty hand along

the spine of this memory

of you:

a fox
a field of lights
and the puttering embers of the milky way
memories invasive
to each inhalation
each rising like waves
along my chest,
irreligious, ternpestuous,
and, my dear, you are a storm to me,
ghostly, yes
and hostile,
begging for death among the living
and you are an omen to the hissing of insects
and
I steep myself in the treachery of you,
the base confrontations of the night sky
and this is a Deconstruction
of the things that sparked my heart once
before things grew soggy with distance and travel
and now I am alone
but at least I took the chance
to dip my toes into your life
for a spell
to test the edge of you
the spurs of your eyes
and yet in the end
we say nothing to each other
anymore.



"Trolley Car" by Jibreel Powell

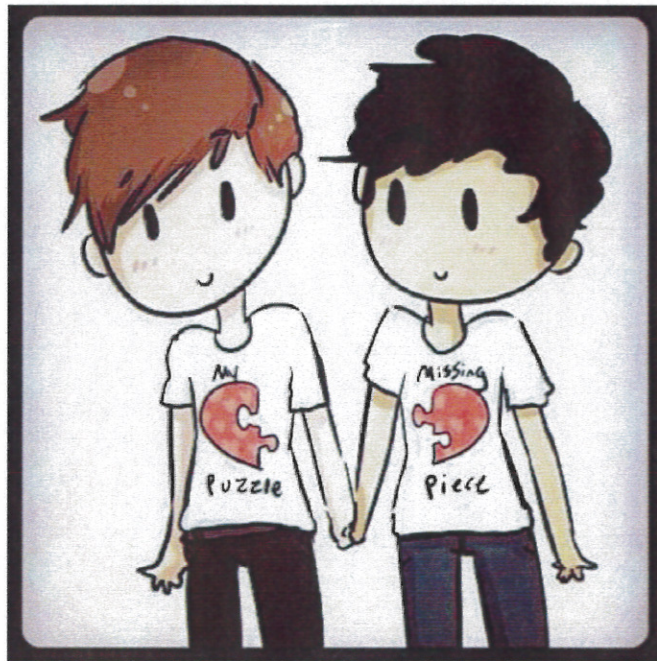
We walked back from the playground,
Past the diner
"Trolley Car"
and up to the beer distributor
to wait for my bus

He waited with me
just for a few minutes
until the bus came
"Goodbye"
"See you later"
a kiss
a hand
on my hip
my hand
on his back
oh, right
the bus

onto the bus
swipe my pass
past the driver
stares
I could hear them
silent but loud
"did he just..."
"was that..."
"homo"
"fag"

They kept looking
first at me
then at him
crossing the street
then back at me
exchanging glances
and back to me

But I was too happy
he was too cute
and we were together



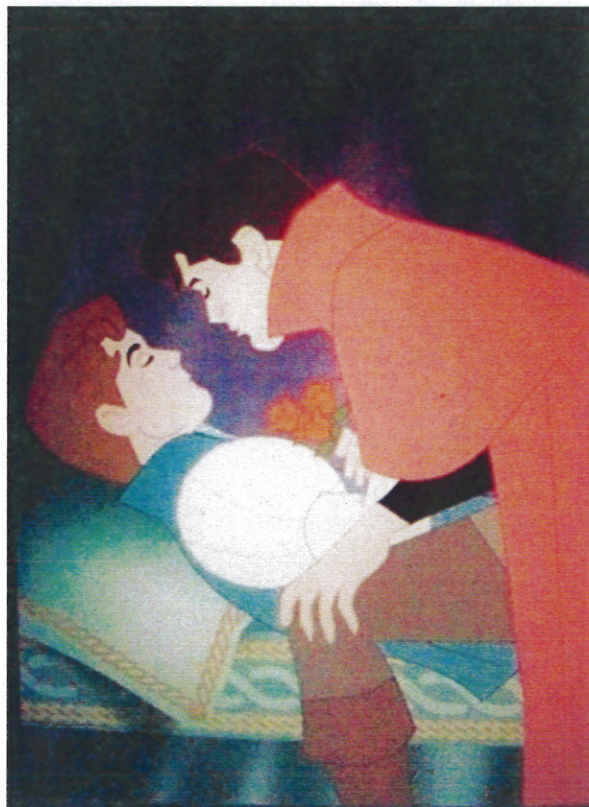
Reinterpreting Classic Fairy Tales Through an LGBT Lens:

The “Speaking Out: Queer Voices in Literature” spring seminar examines how LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) individuals are portrayed in literature, both through their own words and the words of allies and opponents.

In the class we seek to understand how the experience of being queer shapes views of self, others, and the world. We cast a wide net to see how being queer informs a variety of experiences – joyful, tragic, humorous, romantic, mundane, and extraordinary. We work to develop a queer sensibility by studying aspects of Queer Theory and Queer Literary Analysis.

One unit of this class involves reading classic fairy tales that have been reinterpreted for an LGBT audience. Fairy tales are powerful creations. They teach important lessons about life and about ourselves. They may be the first love stories we hear as children, and they give us hope in our own quests for “happily ever after”... unless it’s not *your* story. Like everything else in life, fairy tales work best when we can connect with them. For queer people, it can take a little bit of tweaking to make a fairy tale, and all its magical possibilities, applicable.

After reading and discussing several reinterpreted fairy tales, students are invited to try their hand at re-envisioning a fairy tale of their choice through an LGBT lens. What follows are three stories from this year’s class.





The Twelve Dancing Princesses by the Brothers Grimm Reinterpreted by Sophia Seidel

There were once twelve kings, living in twelve neighboring kingdoms that surrounded an immense forest. The kings were on fairly good terms with each other, they each had an abundance of wealth, land, and children so they prospered together and called it friendship. However, in the midst of their perfect lives, each king had exactly one problem. As it turned out, the kings had exactly the same problem, but they were too afraid to admit it to each other. Afraid of what, it was unclear, possibly asking for help, which the kings saw as a sign of weakness, but most likely they feared rejection from the other kings at the possibility that their family might be different, because difference was wrong and rejection hurt.

All of their youngest daughters would go into her bed chambers at night wearing the finest of slippers, and come out the next morning with holes worn through the bottoms of the shoes! Each king was beside himself with confusement, wonder, and a touch of anger at all the new shoes that had to be purchased. When the angriest of the kings demanded his daughter tell him to where she was going and how she got out of her room, she flipped her fiery curls and told him he would not understand. When the nosiest of the kings questioned his daughter about meeting a boy, she smiled knowingly and told her father, she couldn't risk telling him. When the kindest king knelt beside his youngest daughter, Lila, and asked her very gently to tell him where she went at night, she wept that she could not tell him the truth because she was too afraid he would not accept her.

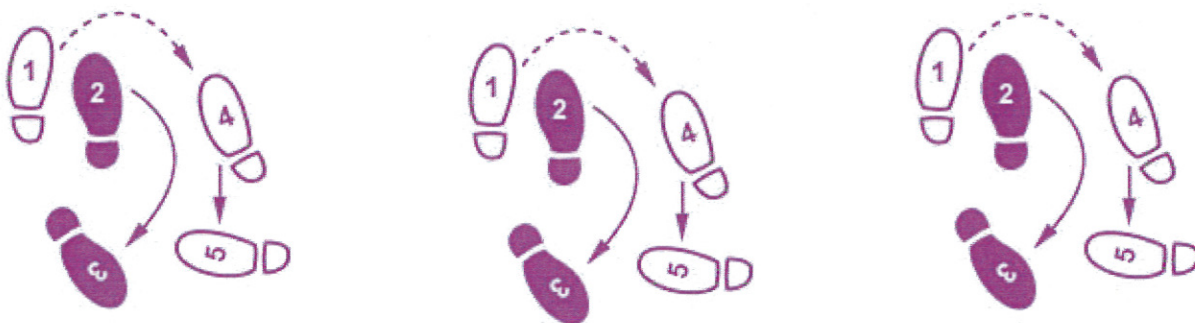
After many weeks passed like this, the most fearless king had had enough, and decided to risk his reputation as a problem solver and man of power amongst his fellow kings and announce his problem so that he might seek help. He announced to his kingdom that any young man who could discover in one night the secret of his daughter, could have her hand in marriage. The other kings heard of the proclamation, and one by one began to realize that they were not alone in their predicaments, and the twelve together decided - though Lila's father had some objections - that the man who could discover the secret could have the princess from his kingdom in marriage.

Hundreds of men, young and old, rich and poor, lined up around the castle of their kingdoms to await their chance at solving the mystery.

But the princesses were clever. They teased and flirted with the men, giving them enough wine to make them good and drowsy, so they would sleep through the night and leave the princesses undisturbed. Every day for months went like this and the kings were losing all hope, when a young man, Daniel, came to the grand doors of the kindest king's palace. He was a youngest sibling as well, and rather shy himself, only taking the challenge because his father had pressured him to. He was not "manly enough," apparently.

Daniel was not enchanted by the beautiful girl as his predecessors had been. She batted her eyes and giggled and offered him the wine as she always did, but the only thing he could think of was how unhappy she seemed doing it. He turned down the wine and flirtations, preferring to talk instead about the girl's beautiful dress, her handsome older brother whom he met earlier, and her feelings about her father. The princess opened up, and both of them had a very nice time, and the king- who stopped in to show Daniel to his room across from Lila's- hoped very much that this would be the man to discover the secret.

Since Daniel had drunk no wine and was not sleepy, he waited outside the princess' door, which was slightly ajar. He felt sneaky, but reminded himself of his disapproving father and waited. Eventually he heard a soft rustle of fabric and a creaking hinge, so he peaked his head inside just in time to see the princess climb down a trap door under one of the stones of her floor. He waited a minute, then went after her.



He descended the steps, and felt his way along the dark and wet tunnel for almost an hour, until he reached a second set of steps leading upwards, which he climbed eagerly to meet a most surprising and beautiful sight. Daniel saw the twelve princesses, and they were dancing. He had never seen anything so graceful; the torches attached to the trees surrounding the clearing in the forest offered a flickering warm light on the laughing faces of the girls. Though there was no music, they danced with perfect synchronization, grace, and energy. Lila's eyes which were so burdened in the palace, glowed as she waltzed from arm to arm of her beautiful friends. Daniel ducked behind a tree, so as to avoid frightening them, and watched as the imaginary waltz tempo slowed, and the princesses paired off, gently wrapping arms around waists or necks, foreheads touching, or rested on shoulders. Realization began to dawn upon Daniel, and he was mesmerized. Not disturbed, but enthralled. And not by the beauty of each princess, but by the beauty and sadness of that which they had all created: a dance in the heart of the forest where they could each be themselves in the dark.

After hours passed, the first light of dawn had risen - and 24 slippers were much worse for the wear - each princess kissed another goodbye, and hugged the rest, stepping into their own underground tunnels, which circled the clearing. Lila was the last to go, and it was then that Daniel revealed himself. She gasped when she saw him, and almost immediately began to weep.

"You'll tell, my father," she choked "And I'll have to marry you, even though I can never love you." Daniel did not know what to do, for while Lila was beautiful and kind, he did not love her either.

"I- I don't know why I am this way," she continued, "but it is *Ruth* who makes my heart flutter as you should"

Daniel took a step towards her. "And it is your brother who makes my heart flutter as *you* should."

She looked up at him, and they both began to laugh, and not because they were both terrible and wrong, but because they were just different, and different together.

They strolled back through the tunnel together, arms linked, smiling. When they both came down to breakfast the next morning, the kind king turned to Daniel and said, "Well, have you something you want to tell me in exchange for my daughter's hand? Where does she go at night, and why must I constantly be purchasing slippers?"

Lila and Daniel looked at each other, and in that moment decided that the truth, no matter how scary or unacceptable it may be, was best. Lila told her father how she went to dance with her fellow princess, Ruth, along with ten other girls who had similar feelings. She told him that she loved Ruth as she was supposed to love Daniel, and wished to marry her.

Well, the king was flabbergasted, but he loved his daughter and only wanted her to be happy. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I feared you would not accept me."

Something had to be done of course! The king called a council with the eleven other kings, wherein they discussed what should be done about their daughters. After hardly any time at all, they realized that what each one wanted most was for his daughter to be happy, and at last, with Ruth's father, the angriest king finally consenting, they agreed to change the law of marriage: any man & woman, man & man, or woman & woman, may be wed. And the kings became true friends when they learned that they had all been in agreement about what love could be this whole time, and had simply been too worried about rejection.

There was a huge and beautiful wedding, with six marriages performed.. All the festivities gave Daniel plenty of time to talk to Lila's brother, who upon his sister's declaration of love for a woman, realized that he could no longer lie to himself: he much preferred men, and that was ok. In fact it was great. He and Daniel danced all evening next to Lila and Ruth, and all the other princesses who had once been so afraid, but could now dance in the light for all the kingdoms to see.

Hours passed, the sun was setting - thousands of shoes were a little worse for the wear - and the newlyweds rode off in carriages to cottages that had been built for them in the country. The kind king invited Daniel to stay in his palace in thanks for helping him solve the mystery, and bring he and his daughter together. The king smiled as his son rested on Daniel's shoulder during the carriage ride home, and pretended not to notice that they both went into the same bed chambers.

The king smiled to himself as he sat by the fire and thought about everything that had transpired. His daughter had waited so long to tell him her secret out of fear of rejection for her difference, which is exactly why the king had avoided asking for help for so long. He vowed to be even kinder, but more direct too, because as it turned out, honesty was the best way to find happiness.



Author's Note:

In this story, I tried to illustrate the kind of fear of rejection a gay person might feel before coming out. The princesses had to dance secretly at night in the dark, because they so worried about their fathers not accepting them. This kind of self alienation seems like a habit that a closeted gay person could slip into, if they could find no support or role models in their community. However, not being able to admit the truth out of fear of rejection does not necessarily feel like an experience that is exclusive to a closeted gay person. The kings also feel similarly about admitting their problems and asking for help. I did this because I wanted to show how straight and gay people are not actually so different; they have a lot of the same sort of problems. The princesses were lucky to have been so warmly accepted, but this is how it always should be, because aside from the orientation, the kings and princesses were not too different.



Jack and the Beanstalk

Reinterpreted by Andrew Hitt



Once upon a time, there was a young adult named Jack. Jack was an average lad with average dreams and lived with his kind and caring, albeit average, mother, who looked after him, in addition to a variety of relatively average farm animals. One day, when Jack had finished his morning chores, his mother gave him a goat and told him to take it to market and trade it for food or coin. He agreed, though he didn't really like the idea, perhaps because he quite enjoyed the goat's brooding around the yard like it was in control of some vast dominion of farmland, but he got his satchel and favorite walking stick and set off towards town.

There Jack was, strolling down some forlorn looking mountain path with a bag slung over his shoulder, his trusty staff in one hand, and a self-absorbed goat tied to the other. He had made good progress, and had even managed to navigate successfully one grumpy farmer's yard, which had shortened his path, barely, but was mostly fun because of the danger, if danger were to be defined as being yelled at by an old, tired farmer.

As Jack travelled down the trail, he thought he heard something, like a whistle or a birdcall coming from around the next bend. Curious, as boys of his age were, Jack strode with new spring in his step down the trail tugging a mildly annoyed goat behind him. When he rounded the corner, he came across a most peculiar sight: a wizard, or perhaps just some vagabond dressed in something strikingly similar to a woman's evening gown, brandishing a staff and screaming all manner of curses at a rock in the trail.

Jack watched momentarily, not sure if he should run or simply approach this clearly insane man, but, as he was inquisitive if not fearless, he decided on the latter. He noticed, while walking up to this strange man, that his necklace had a single crystal, a brilliant prism, simply strung with some wire around a light cord. The old man, startled by Jack's approach, whirled around and asked Jack who he was to sneak up behind someone of such power, though his voice wavered briefly during the last part, and Jack wondered just what he had gotten himself into. The man then calmed down, realizing that a partially terrified boy was not a threat, and apologized before proposing a trade with Jack.

The goat for his crystal; the man said he needed a goat, though his reasons were somewhat unclear, and that he would be willing to part with the crystal that Jack had eyed in exchange for the goat. Jack looked at the goat, who was, at this point, apathetically watching the exchange, looked at the crystal and realized there was a most peculiar feeling he got when he looked at it. Something inside him told him to choose the crystal, and Jack's mouth followed his brain's decision.

Strolling home, Jack questioned his decision; he had given up a potentially valuable goat for a crystal that most likely was not worth anything, and that would certainly incur his mother's wrath when she found out. But the crystal had such promise to him, although he wasn't sure what the promise was, so he strolled boldly forward towards home.

When Jack got home, his mother was in the yard, planting some beans from Jack's last visit to the market, and looked up expectantly. She asked Jack how much he had managed to get for the lousy old goat he had taken to the market. Jack, a bit fearfully, pulled out the multi-faceted crystal and held it up for his mother to see.

His mother looked perplexed, briefly, but the confusion gave way to fury. His mother asked him how he could have given such a valuable commodity for some pointless pretty bauble, and immediately sent him to his small room at the top of the house. Jack, holding back tears, ran to his room, bolted the door and stared at his decision.

After Jack had collected himself, he examined the crystal carefully, and realized that it had a most peculiar quality to refract the boring light of day into a scintillating rainbow. He looked through his only, small window, and then decided to see what would happen if he held the crystal up to the sun. His room went momentarily dark, but then burst into a prismatic array of color.

Jack looked at the crystal he had placed in the window pane, and had just begun doubting his decision when a quiet chime sounded. Turning around, he saw a beautiful, colorful staircase had sprung up from the center of his room. Figuring himself to be delusional, as he had missed dinner, he walked over to the hallucinatory staircase and placed his foot on the bottom stair. To his amazement, the stair pushed back up on his foot.

Jack, figuring that he had nothing to lose now that he had irreparably angered his mother, began climbing the crystal staircase. He had just climbed the tenth stair when he realized that, as he was inside, he would be stuck under the roof. He looked up, the roof was gone, or maybe it had turned transparent, revealing a staircase reaching up towards the heavens.

Jack climbed and climbed and climbed and climbed, yet he never seemed to be able to get to the top. After a couple of hours of climbing, he began to reconsider his ascent. He sat down, doubted himself for a while and then had a lengthy mental debate about whether to keep going or to return to his normal life, his average life. Deciding that he had already gone so far, he continued up into the clouds, where he finally reached the top of the stairs and came across a castle of unrivaled glory and regality.

Figuring that such a castle probably would be incredibly dangerous, Jack took great care to approach it quietly and discretely. He entered the castle, and was surprised to find that the interior was splendidly furnished and was incredibly welcoming. Jack, feeling much at home in this strange, strange castle, settled into an armchair near one of the fire places, where the lights danced and scattered and split across the various prisms strewn about the room. Eventually, he fell into a deep, content sleep and there he dozed for several hours.

A door creaked open, and Jack's heart momentarily leapt; he awoke from his sleep and sprang up from the chair and hid behind it. A pair of leather boots walked gracefully across the floor and stopped right beside the chair. Jack peered out, expecting to see some terrifying monstrous giant. Instead, he saw a radiantly beautiful man and let out a brief squeak. The man looked at him and told him to come to him, but Jack simply stared.

Jack finally came to his senses, and asked the man how he had gotten here and why it had happened to him. The man explained to Jack that it was the light from the crystal that had gotten him here, and by forcing himself to continue up the staircase, he had managed to overcome the challenges of ascending. The man told Jack that he could never truly leave, although he was free to come and go as he wished.

Jack returned to his mother with a new found strength. He confronted her about the crystal and said that he was sorry that he had lost the goat, but that he had found himself in the process.



Author's Note:

Perhaps the metaphor is a little heavy handed at times, but I felt that Jack and the Beanstalk leant itself to the coming out experience quite well; in this version, Jack not only makes the decision to trade the goat for the crystal that shows him who he is, which incurs the wrath of some of the people in his life, but he also continues up the staircase, even after doubting himself. When he finally reaches the top and enters the castle, he has managed to overcome his fears and accept who he is, metaphorically speaking.

The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Anderson Reinterpreted by Anna Lynn-Pavlesky

She was the the youngest daughter, yes, but she was a woman, and she should be marrying. Her older sisters had, and look at the grand successes they were. Somehow, in selecting a single person to belong to, they were more desired by society itself, and seemed to belong to it better. Her sisters made no effort to hide their joy at this belonging, no effort to hide how right they were now in the world, and no effort at all to hide their disdain for the sister, Ariel, alone and mistakenly thinking she could remain that way.



Her father scoured the sea. Her father was a man, and a king of a man, strongest among the strong. She trusted his authority; she trusted his confidence, but as he brought merman after merman into the palace to meet her, and told her time and time again that he just knew they were right for her, she realized that she had never heard a true opinion of his to trust before, only repetitions of accepted world views. Every man was wrong, clearly, so wrong. The push she felt to accept them all was maddening, and she soon felt that there was something wrong with her for her insistence that there could be someone more right for her, somewhere. Her desperation grew- desperation for an end to the searching, for an answer to her confusion, and a desperation to be left alone. Soon, the world she knew under the sea was constricting, unbearable to her, and she wanted nothing more than to leave it.

Her days, which she knew should have been spent with her suitors, were soon spent as far away from them as possible. While her people, the people she had admired and felt so close to her whole life, spent their days wallowing on the dark floor of the ocean, she found herself pulled further and further from them, up to the very surface of the water. The simplest things about the world above fascinated her for almost no reason at all; nothing specific drew her to the air, only the fact that it was so different from the water she knew. Wind was amazing because it wasn't quite a current, trees charmed her because they grew taller than kelp, dogs were stunning because they moved on four legs, not one fin. As the undersea world she had grown up in became ever more menacing, the world above grew more enticing, though nothing about either world changed nearly as much as the way she saw it.

Months passed, and Ariel began to vanish from her family. She hid away from them, afraid of the world they believed in, believing that her happiness was dependent upon having the bravery to leave it. Her resentment for the undersea world grew, and to her, it became a world that existed to diminish her and to control her. Her marriage was still paramount to her father and her sisters, to the whole kingdom, it seemed. Such a twisted system was worthy of escape at any cost, she reasoned; nothing would be too much to pay to escape a world that seemed to take her very freedom from her.

So she escaped, and found herself on the surface. She began her life there with little fear, and fear that she was sure would fade. The fear was natural, built around being discovered an outsider, which she was sure that she soon would not be. She felt that she simply needed to learn the rules of this world, which would surely be better rules than the chaining ones of the sea, and she would never be so chained again. She even quickly caught the eye of a man, a prince, an eye she wanted to keep in order to remain above the sea.

But keeping his eye seemed so very hard. It turned out that, above water, there were rules to be followed, too. Hair might float differently in water than in air, but hair was still meant to be brushed, and not with a fork. Here, perhaps, her voice was newer and more intriguing, but there were still conventions to be held, silences to be kept, and wrong things to be said. Soon it felt much easier to just keep quiet. Her beauty still shone through, and her differences were mysterious without being overly prominent. Nothing about her was intimidating or offensive. Mostly she was silence.

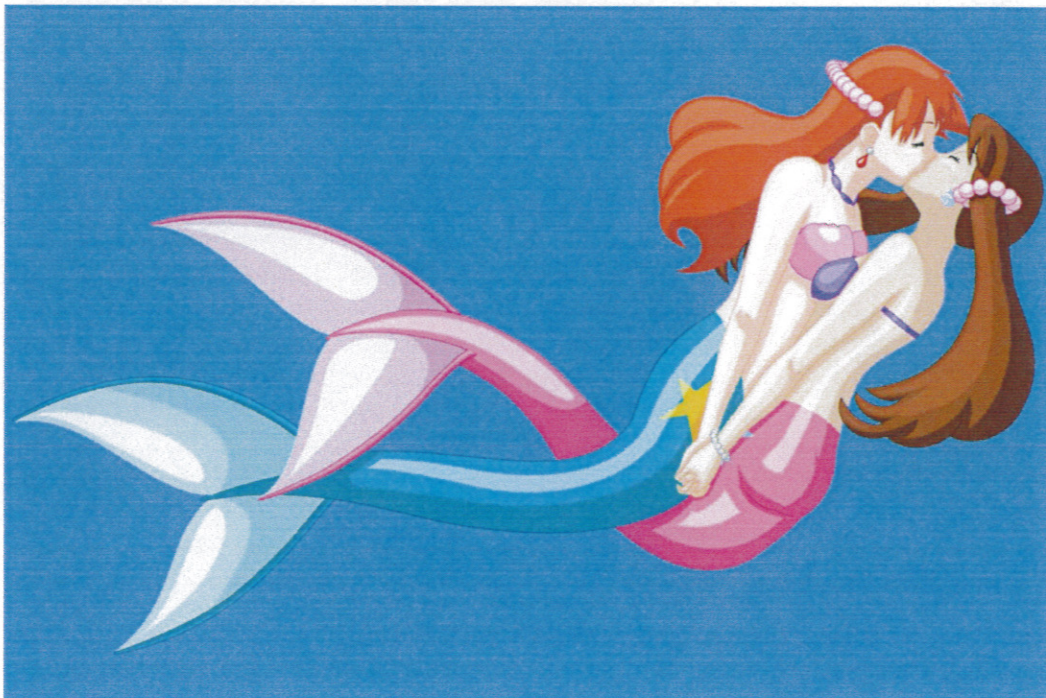
This was better, she tried to tell herself, much better. The rules beneath the sea had been oppressive, and here her father was not forcing her to marry an unfortunately respectable merman. This was her choice, this was better.

And yet, soon the wind started to feel just like currents, and she began to long to get away from the land she had given up so much to find. The prince whom she believed she loved she also loathed, for she still had to give up so much of herself to be lovable. She had known the sea, and she now she knew the land; there was no other part of the world for her to escape to. Both worlds felt oppressive, and yet, both worlds largely ignored her. Since she could not escape to another world, Ariel instead turned to herself.

So discomfited by how wrong she seemed to be in the world, she had never paid much attention to herself, to what she really wanted, only to her desire to escape. The rules of the world had seemed so simple- marry, and follow your man- that she had thought her own wishes must be twisted and terrible to be incompatible with this. Yet, once she retreated again from the rules of the world and simply observed herself, she found that her own desires were not so complicated.

The sister of the prince was beautiful, she realized. It was a simple realization, but a shattering one. It went against almost none of the steadfast rules of the world, except the one about marriage. It still allowed for movement of water or air, for the life of animals, for the growth of plants. But it also allowed for the use of her voice, when she no longer felt the need to silence a thought that might turn a man away from her.

It was funny, looking back, and it was sad, how strongly it had seemed that giving away her voice would have allowed Ariel to fit into the world. But she could never have given up so much of herself and truly been a part of it. Leaving her undersea world had done nearly nothing for her, the world above had its own restrictions and rules that she still could not follow. She would have had to escape herself in order to fit into any established world she knew, no matter how far she traveled. But she was fine, having abandoned the rules of marriage and men, and would be fine in land or sea, now.



THE GREAT GAY MUSIC TRIVIA QUIZ

At this year's GSA Assembly, our own Glinda and Elphaba led contestants the audience in a *Wizard of Oz* themed test of their queer music trivia knowledge.



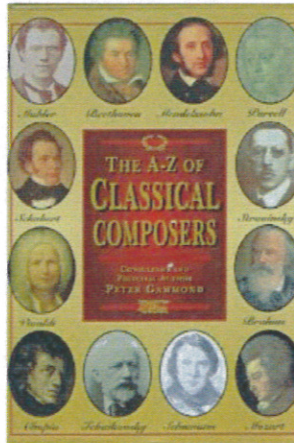
WHAT FAMOUS AMERICAN ANTHEM WAS WRITTEN BY A LESBIAN?



- a) God Bless America
- b) America the Beautiful
- c) This Land is Your Land
- d) My Country 'Tis of Thee



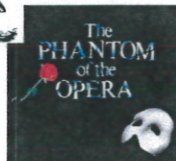
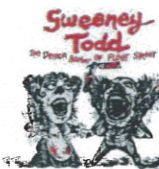
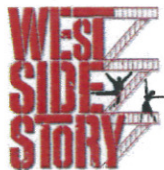
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CLASSICAL COMPOSERS WAS GAY?



- a) Tchaikovsky
- b) Mozart
- c) Beethoven
- d) Liszt



WHICH BROADWAY MUSICALS SONGS WERE NOT COMPOSED BY A GAY MAN:



- a) Hello, Dolly!
- b) West Side Story
- c) Sweeney Todd
- d) Phantom of the Opera



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ROCK BANDS DOES NOT HAVE A GAY MEMBER?



- a) Judas Priest
- b) REM
- c) Journey
- d) Styx



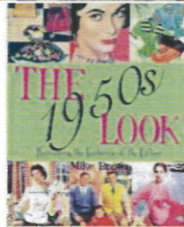
LEGENDARY BEATLE JOHN LENNON ASKED WHAT OUT MUSICIAN TO BE THE GODFATHER TO HIS SON, SEAN?



- a) David Bowie
- b) Freddie Mercury
- c) Elton John
- d) Clay Aiken



IN WHAT YEAR WAS THE FIRST OVERTLY LESBIAN-THEMED SONG SUNG PUBLICALLY?



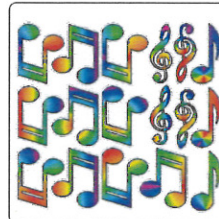
- a) 1928
- b) 1936
- c) 1944
- d) 1957



WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MUSICAL ARTISTS DOES NOT IDENTIFY AS LGBT?



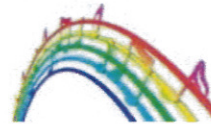
- a) Ani DiFranco
- b) Pink
- c) Sophie B. Hawkins
- d) Katy Perry



**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING
BROADWAY MUSICALS DOES NOT
HAVE A GAY CHARACTER?**



- a) Billy Elliot
- b) The Full Monty
- c) Avenue Q
- d) Hairspray



**WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING OUT
MUSICIANS HAS NOT WON A
GRAMMY?**



- a) Rufus Wainwright
- b) Ricky Martin
- c) Elton John
- d) George Michael



WHICH GAY-THEMED SONG DEBUED AT #1 ON THE CHARTS?



- a) I Kissed A Girl
- b) Born This Way
- c) If I Had You
- d) Raise Your Glass



ANSWER KEY:

- 1) B - America the Beautiful
- 2) A - Tchaikovsky
- 3) D - Phantom of the Opera
- 4) C - Journey
- 5) C - Elton John
- 6) A - 1928, Ma Rainey's "Prove It On Me Blues"
- 7) D - Katy Perry
- 8) D - Hairspray
- 9) A - Rufus Wainwrite
- 10) B - Born This Way





We Want Your Queer Words:
Add your voice to this unique FCS archive!

How to submit:

- ▼ Email submissions to avernacchio@friendscentral.org or to gsa@friendscentral.org
- ▼ Drop submissions into Ms. Ewen's or Mr. Vernacchio's mailbox in the FCC
- ▼ Give submissions to any GSA member

What to submit:

Any kind of writing— poetry, personal essay, fiction, nonfiction, or two-dimensional artwork.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ▼ Something you wrote for a class that speaks to L.G.B.T.Q. issues
- ▼ Your perception of queer issues at FCS. Is it a welcoming and supportive community? Is it both LGBTQ-friendly and LGBTQ-safe? Is it too focused on sexual orientation?
- ▼ Coming out anecdotes (someone coming out to you or you coming out to someone else) or imagine what it would be like if a close friend or relative came out to you.
- ▼ Your role as a straight ally in our community. What's it like to be a straight person at a school that deals with queer issues the way we do?
- ▼ A short story, poem, etc. that speaks to queer issues, experiences, or sensibilities.
- ▼ Your experience or observations of what it's like to be queer at FCS, at home, in the world, etc.
- ▼ Words of advice or comfort for those who are questioning or in the closet.
- ▼ Anything you think would be good for our community to know about queer issues.