

A group of seven stylized human figures, each a different color (pink, purple, orange, dark blue, yellow, light blue, and green), are holding hands in a circle. The figures are made of a textured, fuzzy material, possibly felt or wool. They are arranged in a line, with their arms extended to hold the hands of the adjacent figures. The background is a solid light pink color. The entire scene is framed by a thin dark border.

*Visions of  
Community Care*

# *Table of Contents*

Introduction HANNAH JUNE ALTHEA ..... 6

Bodies & Relationship: a conversation with friends

HANNAH RAYE..... 10

Animist World, Anarchist Mysticism a conversation with Sophie Macklin...22

My Whale Body HANNAH JUNE ALTHEA.. 36

Brother SARAH LAMARCHE..... 40

Romancing Aliveness & Folkways: on the cultivation of care with Liz Migliorelli 42

earth family quilt QUINCEE LARK..... 52

Contributor Bios 56

***Pain creates its own knowledge.***

*- Sonya Huber*

*Capitalism isolates and estranges us, not only from each other, but from our own selves, from our own bodies, and from honoring the limitation of each other's bodies.*

You may already understand this as an ablebodied person if you've ever had a cold, been bed-ridden from back pain or food poisoning, or temporarily incapacitated due to a broken limb, you may find yourself in a precarious and stressful position due to the disjointed and uncaring nature of structures built for particularly abled bodies when you couldn't operate as you're used to:

The building with no elevator when you have a broken leg, lacking sick pay during a global pandemic, a temporary inability to drive and unreliable transit. Difficulty accessing medical care when you need it due to cost or insurance. Having doubt cast on your own bodily experiences by a doctor who is supposed to be helping you. Uncertainty about how you'll pay your bills, medical or otherwise. Opting for the less nourishing way to take care of yourself, because it costs less.

If you're disabled or chronically ill, the dimensions of our deficient cultural conceptions of care become pervasive and unavoidable, and often perpetuate more harm.

I was formally welcomed into "the kingdom of the sick"<sup>1</sup> over 2 years ago. However, doctors' diagnoses only formalized what was already present and felt: pain, an inability to keep up the pace, shame and isolation over my body's inability to cooperate. I'm not the first to point out how ablebodied folks often don't know how to interact, instead they they will either divert their eyes from people with disabilities' or illnesses' experiences because it reminds them of their own mortal bodies, or of how they don't know how to care for others who are not ablebodied, unless it is to romanticize the resilience necessat-

*ed for survival.*

*For me, there is a spiritual, emotional, and physical labor demanded to keep myself alive within this “kingdom of the sick” amongst a backdrop of capitalism and ableism. I’m proud of how I’ve survived the darkest health days, but I also know that this resilience was not a choice. It was just necessary. I have also found one way towards liberation is in the shared community experience of the Chronic Ailment.*

*This community of Ailed operates embodied: There are no apologies for the bad body day, the bad mental health day. There is compassion and sympathy and accommodation by and for those who also hold the a key to this kingdom. There is safety in not having to mask your symptoms, not having to explain explain explain (again). Pain or disability or a version of suffering - seen or unseen.*

*Let us antagonize the insidious nature of our contemporary culture’s prerequisites for*

*survival:*

*Competition...*

*Needing money to fulfill basic needs...*

*Labor that doesn’t benefit a collective but instead someone’s profits...*

*Power belongs to the White, the able-bodied, the straight, the male, the powerful, the aggressive, the **individual**....*

*There is a different way, we propose. The instinct to work within community and within our bodily limitations and strengths is more intuitive and necessary than we were conditioned to believe.*

*My small hope is that **Visions of Community Care** can serve as a small thread of a hope towards a web of disability activism that seeks to widen our capacity to be ill (chronically or not) and disabled (permanently or not)...and that this possibility is inherently woven into to our cultural norms, how we manage health care, labor practices, infrastructure, and relationships with one another. ♡*

# *Bodies & Relationship*

*A Conversation Between Friends Facilitated & Transcribed by  
Hannah Raye*

*W*hen I think about community care, I think about relationship building and how we can cultivate loving and generative connections through play, pleasure and ritual. I also consider how those practices build trust and make space for navigating conflict in ways that feel gentle and generous.

I think about how our interpersonal connections impact us and then ripple out into how we show up for our larger community. I think about the role of the body in relationships and how we relate to other bodies. Though the thing most often on my mind when I think about care and community is my friendships and how deeply transformative and liberating they have been; how never have I felt so seen or held.

Relationships are often a big topic of conversation in my connections and so I reached out to two of my nearest and dearest friends and invited them to share some of their thoughts for this project. I learn

so much from them and feel so very grateful they said yes.

I am also indebted to adrienne maree brown, bell hooks, Mia Birdsong, Tahni Holt, Suniti Dervovsek, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Prentis Hemphill, and many others for their work around relationships, care, bodies, and community; they continue to inform my thoughts and practices around these topics.

**Hannah Raye:** Using 3-5 words how would you describe your current connections? What are the qualities or themes that weave them together?

**Ash:** Expansive. Somatic. Collaborative. Juicy. There's a balance between space and connection. There's also something about (the connections) fanning each other's flames and tending to each other's fires

**Elizabeth:** Creativity. Desire for social change. Deep and vulnerable conversations. Food. Generous. Inspiring. Expansive. Collaborative

**Hannah:** One of the things I really love about our connection(s) is how much we value play and plea-



sure and integrate that into our time together. What are some of your favorite play/pleasure activities to do and how has having that practice deepened our friendship?

**Ash:** Dance! It's the initiator that deepened our friendship, it's especially special because we both had dance backgrounds and it's something we've returned to as adults. Being in nature together. Nature helps people tap into their younger selves and is a place where we can slow down and allow the playful sides of us to come out.

Something I appreciate about our friendship is that it invites slower moments and gives more opportunity to rest from the capitalist grind and rest from getting stuff done; although I do appreciate that we are able to find a regulating balance between play and doing what needs to get done. There's so much joy to be found in doing the mundane to do's of life together, like running errands and chores around the house. We often limit those things to traditional romantic relationships. I think it's such a simply radical thing to be able to feel supported in the small everyday things.

**Elizabeth:** A lot of my connections are centered around play and pleasure and delighting in food and having new experiences. Art nights. Dance parties. I like how you and I plan out trips and also have mo-

ments where we're both home and like, "Let's watch Queer Ultimatum for 5 hours and eat snacks." haha I appreciate having a balance between making plans and being spontaneous. Having those shared experiences makes space for reflection, interesting conversations and just feeling good! The play and pleasure also allows us to hold space for the hard conversations and makes those feel a little less scary.

**Hannah:** I think that community care is something that lies at the intersection of friendships and social change. I'm curious to hear your thoughts about that intersection and would also love to hear about how you currently practice community care in your friendships/life? How would you like to?

**Ash:** I think about the village concept. We were never meant to stay solitary, just living in our homes with our children and spouse. Community doesn't exist unless there's care; there can be groups and shared interests, but it doesn't feel like community unless there's a care piece. Most of the social change I see happening is bringing us back to practices of mutual aid and shared resources; so many of these movements are providing direct care and really focusing on that relationship building piece.

We're also seeing this movement of women, who have traditionally been primary caretakers in our society, reclaiming caring of self and setting boundaries

which I think is cool but then sometimes that dips into this hyper-independence and not reaching out for help.

As I'm shifting from being a caretaker in my work and relationships, I've been giving less care and receiving more care. One of the things I'm leaning into in both (giving and receiving) is just being present. Letting go of the shame of being cared for and letting go of the need to try and fix others. I've learned a lot about that from Pema Chödrön who talks about this concept in Buddhism of being present with suffering and extending compassion to ourselves and others.

**Elizabeth:** “Small is all “ as adrienne maree brown says. It always starts with the smallest relationships and how you show up in the day to day. Those relationships are heightened in larger community and society. I'm thinking about how we practice mutual aid in our friendship in regards to money and sharing resources, like when we get food one of us will pay and not really tracking who spends what, it's inspired me to think about mutual aid and how to spread out resources and how to not have a stressed out relationship to money, I mean money is stressful but I think we can find some ease with it.

I have been thinking a lot about how we don't know our neighbors and how that's a type of connection

I've been craving. I think that kind of friendship is probably very vital if anything were to happen. But also even just on the day to day having that connection and being able to borrow something simple like a bike pump. Buy Nothing touches on this and I think people who are more active in that community probably feel more tapped into that connection. It seems like our culture has moved towards needing a lot more alone time and isolation.

There's this feeling of I don't wanna be available all the time. Maybe it has something to do with being online all the time and the virtual burnout that comes with that. It's like self care vs community care but those things are just so intertwined together. The neighborhood connections remind me of being a kid and just knocking on someone's door to see if they can play; I want that as an adult. I'm also thinking about the houseless folks in our community and want to get more involved in cultivating those relationships too.

**Hannah:** Let's talk about bodies in relationships! How do you feel about friendships and touch? What feelings/sensations do you notice when you're in a connection with someone that feels really good and aligned with your values? What do you notice when it's not a great fit? Where do you hold tension? What does ease feel like?



**Ash:** The body holds so much wisdom and trauma and it can be tricky to differentiate between intuition and trauma responses sometimes. I've learned a lot about attunement and awareness through somatic meditation and movement.

These practices can offer awareness around what triggers you and help you tune into if you are projecting old trauma patterns into new relationships or if the response is relevant to new relationships; sometimes it's a little bit of both. Holding space for the feeling and seeing if it sticks around or keeps coming up in the relationship can be helpful for tracking if a connection is a good fit or if it needs to shift or be let go. I think you can listen to a really simple concept in your body of tuning into a desire of leaning in or leaning away. Imagine water sloshing around in your body; where does the water tend to go? it's very subtle and takes some slowing down to notice. The sloshing comes from places other than my thinking brain; it comes from places like my heart, intuition and creative center. When I lean into the intuitive slosh it informs not just do I want to be in a relationship with this person, but how. The people we are closest to are the people we have a lot of sloshing forward with haha

**Elizabeth:** I can feel a lot of holding or tension if

something isn't feeling good, especially in my neck and shoulders. One of the things I thought of is comfortability with farting around people, there's not a lot of people I feel comfortable doing that in front of and hold a lot of tension around it haha There's such a culture of ick and shame around bodily functions, so I think it says a lot about the kind of trust has to be there. It's very somatic- like I can't control it with my mind. It makes me think about the "Poop Friends" episode of Invisibilia.

Physical intimacy in friendships is something I'm wanting to be more comfortable around. Touching and being touched. I think I hold a lot there; like I can fart in front of someone before I cuddle with them lol I've also been thinking about comfortability around being naked around friends and trust that needs to be there. It makes me think about the line between platonic and romantic that our culture makes such a distinction around those two. I've been curious about having more fluidity and bringing more romantic aspects to my friendships.

**Hannah:** Making and maintaining friendships as an adult can feel tricky! What are some tips and tricks you have for folks who are wanting to deepen and expand their connections?

**Ash:** Honesty about capacity with updates as it fluctuates, accompanied by reminders of care. Saying things like, "I really love you and want to spend time with you and I'm feeling so stressed out about xyz and I don't have capacity to spend time together tonight, let's check in about hang-

ing out this weekend.” or “I don’t have time to go out dancing but I would love to go grocery shopping together so we can check things off our to-do list and get some quality time together. And being collaborative, asking questions like, “Where are you at and what do you need?”

For making new friendships I’d say find a community that’s interested in the things you’re interested in, try new things, take risks and go to things alone.

Often if you’re alone someone will make conversation with you. Sometimes it’s just a dude who wants to hit on you and sometimes it’s someone of substance and sometimes it’s a dude who’s hitting on you and is also of substance (laughs) You could also bring a buffer friend and try to separate at least for small periods of time. Similarly if you’re in a romantic relationship and wanna make new friends, go to places alone or at least spend some time wandering by yourself before finding your go to person.

**Elizabeth:** This last year I’ve been leaning into just making the move; asking people, “Can we hang out or exchange numbers?” Just do it! Most people are looking for more friends.

Plan trips together. Throw a dinner party and invite people you want to get to know better. Ask for help, there’s a deep vulnerability that needs to be in place

for deepening friendship. There’s also an intimacy in knowing what will light the other person up and finding a specific activity that is the meeting of your interests- it’s like a gift.

Prioritize friendships even in romantic relationships. I’ve also been thinking about availability and how only scheduling out connection time with people keeps you from having more fluid and organic connections. Put yourself in places where you can easily meet people and make friendships. At the end of hanging out with someone make a plan of when you’re going to see each other again. Skill sharing also feels like a sweet way to deepen or expand connections. 🍷

**Hannah Raye** is a care worker and human who's remembering how good it feels to make things. They live in PDX and love laying on the floor, dancing, eating snacks and making up songs on the ukulele. You can find them on insta [@hannah\\_raye95](#).

**Ash** is an educator and creative collaborator living in Portland who loves dancing, poetry and being in nature with her pup Joplin, and can often be found toting a bottle of bubbles in her pocket or bag.

**Elizabeth** is a ceramic artist living in Portland, Oregon who loves conversations around the beauty and complexities of being human, flowers and hot dogs.





*Animist World,  
Anarchist Mysticism:  
a conversation with  
Sophie Macklin*



*Sophie Macklin* is a folkloric force, allow me to introduce her with a snippet of her own writing, the avenue in which I was first introduced to her. It was an Instagram post about a new class she was offering, dated December 7, 2022. It was accompanied with the following picture:



*“Everything is alive and in relationship and always has been - what happens when we take this seriously? When we see the past not as a fixed place to look back to and discover, but as a dynamic, living place that we are still intimately interwoven with? The past is teeming with life (and death), and the future is too. What becomes possible when we disrupt cohesive narratives of history and bring fragments to life alongside us and inside us, in the intimacies of our day to day life?”*

Sophie Macklin is at once a self-proclaimed crip time traveler, an anarchist visionary future-maker, and a scholar of folklore and life itself. The following interview makes me grateful to be in this spiral of a time web together.

**Hannah Althea:** A lot of the work you do weaves so many other dynamic elements together that encourage us all to challenge the ways in which we move through the world. These topics range from religion, spirituality, ancestral connections, contemporary embodiments of colonialism, disability justice, and animism..to name a few! What was your spiritual upbringing like? How does it take shape now?

*Sophie Macklin:* My spiritual upbringing was pretty standard for a kid in England in the 80's and 90's I think - my family wasn't religious, and at school we would sing the required hymns and say prayers, but we didn't really get into the meaning of spirituality or religion much.

*I rebelled against the enforced school religion when I was about 9 or 10 because it felt too hierarchical and dogmatic, but I still loved the songs, and felt a sense of being connected to something much bigger than myself. I felt like I couldn't find the answers to that feeling in the dry school assemblies, but I had feelings and questions about God. I also felt constantly enchanted by the natural world and feel spiritually raised by some of the non-human beings I was in relationship with as a kid, particularly the river stour, the elder tree in my garden, the salty brownish north sea, the weeping willows in the school field, the hedgehog that ate the strap on my school shoes when I left them outside one night, and the ghosts of Canterbury Cathedral. Oh and my cats. I learned so much from cats.*

*I seemed to have a lot of experiences that didn't fit in the secular, rationalist culture I was being raised in, whether that was a depth of feeling for animals and plants, or more mystical experiences that*




*defied rational explanations. I think since then I've always been seeking to understand it all, and that has led me through a lot of spiritual and life exploration. The spiritual and the political have always felt deeply intertwined, as in not really even separate. Anarchism has felt like the physical expression of feeling a sense of the sacredness of life.*

*I think spirituality to me now mainly looks like showing up with care and attention, whether that's to plants, rivers, the sky, animals, people in my life, god, or even to ideas or flights of fancy I have. Trusting them, staying with it, seeing what happens. I guess devotion feels like the heart of it.*

**Part of community-building for me is cultivating respect through recognizing and honoring the people in my life who serve as wise mentors - whether in relationship or otherwise. Who have you learned from or are inspired by?**

*I'm going to answer in terms of humans, but probably my biggest source of inspiration is animals, plants and rivers. In terms of humans, I guess firstly my friends over the years, especially people in the anarchist and pagan communities - people dedicated to learning, experimenting, practicing and living beautiful ideas. People I can have long conversations with.*

*The list of authors and teachers that have influenced me feels like it could go on forever, but I think perhaps some of the ones with the biggest direct influence on my work are Simone Weil, David Graeber, Silvia Federici, Fred Moten, Donna Haraway, Starhawk, and honestly so many others! I feel like if I wrote a hundred names it wouldn't be enough. And then one of my biggest sources of inspiration is studying people in history who have lived in courageous and beautiful ways, especially collectively. Some of the ones I'm deep in with at the moment are the diggers and other uprisings of the 1640's, the swing rioters and groups opposing the new poor laws in England in the 1830's, and the Communards of the Paris Commune. I also learn a lot from contemplating our further back ancestors, thinking about people in the Paleolithic or Neolithic or Bronze Age. Some of the early Christian saints really inspire me too, like St Francis, St Mellengel, St Wendreda, St Domneva, Christina the Astonishing.*



Photos provided by Sophie Macklin herself, thank you!



*And then one of my biggest sources of inspiration is studying people in history who have lived in courageous and beautiful ways, especially collectively.*

**I appreciate that you mention people living in courageous in beautiful ways, and how that can happen on the collective level as well. We know that care is inextricable from community care, yet so much emphasis is placed on the importance of self care and so many people lack support systems to even access community care. How do you cultivate care for yourself?**

*Firstly, it's tricky! I feel like it's important to acknowledge that. In a system that creates the illusion of such separateness in how we meet our needs, it's actually hard to create sturdy webs of community care, and it's taking all of us using a lot of experimentation and creativity to work it out. I really think the way capitalism has made us feel solely responsible for accessing what we need as individuals is one of its greatest violences and tragedies - we're meant to meet them in community. So, within that pretty brutal framework, one of the main ways I cultivate care for myself and people in my life includes trying to have the kind of relationships, and communication in relationships, where it's easy, or at least possible for us to ask each other for things. To be able to make our needs visible to each other and to help each other meet them.*

**Your capacity for weaving story is profound, and through classes you offer, but also the regular writing you share. What motivates you to write? Is it a means of self edification or processing, a means for survival, education, or something entirely different?**

*I guess it's wanting to communicate with others. To be able to put something out there and find each other - I love dialogue. Writing isn't actually something I'm passionate about - I love talking and listening! Thinking out loud together.*

*I love the way a narrative can be collectively created in conversation that is different to what can happen with writing. It's one thing*



*I quite like social media for - I love how meaning can be created by people coming at something from different directions. But yeah, really I want to be having conversations all the time, where we can change and adapt our ideas as they are engaged with in real time, where we create meaning together. I often think about what it would be like to be alive in an oral culture, where words are living, and never separate from breath, intonation, body posture, the relationship between the speaker and the listener. I often long for that. I find writing hard.*

**What feels really nourishing to you lately, and easy to move towards (either literally or metaphorically)?**

*Recently I've been feeling really nourished by research I've been doing into local revolts, particularly in the 1830's, but also just over the whole period of enclosure and the development of capitalism (like I often am I suppose). People have done so many cool things!*

*And I'm particularly enlivened at the moment by the local historians and archivists who document this stuff. It's such beautiful work and so often goes so unnoticed. Incredible pamphlets tucked away in local libraries or second hand book shops, full of passion, detail and attention. I've also been knee deep in histories of land use in my area and that's fascinating to me. The way the soil types affect cultures etc.*

*I've also been loving diving into more stuff around the early church in the county where I live, in like the 6th and 7th centuries - some of the stories of early female saints in particular read like biographies of healers through time, showing they have a deep connection to the land and animals, and deep knowledge of the healing herbs and waters. Tracing those threads of magic and interspecies relationship through time really brings it*

*even more alive for me here and now. That feeling of watching the weather, harvesting the berries, visiting the wells and knowing so many have done it before me. I love that.*

*Speaking of harvesting berries, one of the things that nourishes me most is watching the seasons change day by day, visiting the same plants and places over and over again through a month and through the year. I love that constant change and the thread of deep, deep continuity underneath it.*

**I think rooting into what's going in seasonally creates relationship to place. And in relationship we get the gift of knowing someone really well, we get to see the aliveness of land throughout time, and then when something goes awry, they can feel a little more fluent in the language of the plant, the weather, the stone. Also, it's fall now, I miss the berries! What is your wish for what people come away with after engaging in your teachings & writings?**

*Some of the nicest things I've heard from people who come to my classes is that they feel more of a sense of ease with themselves, and more of a sense of possibility. I think the systems of oppression we live in leave nearly everyone feeling bad, both about themselves, and also in the sense of a hopelessness about the world. I think of that Ursula K. Le Guin quote "We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings".*

*And it reminds me of my work. I feel like a lot of what I do is try to illustrate and demonstrate this truth. If I can help people see that these systems that haunt us are weird, historically created, and not*





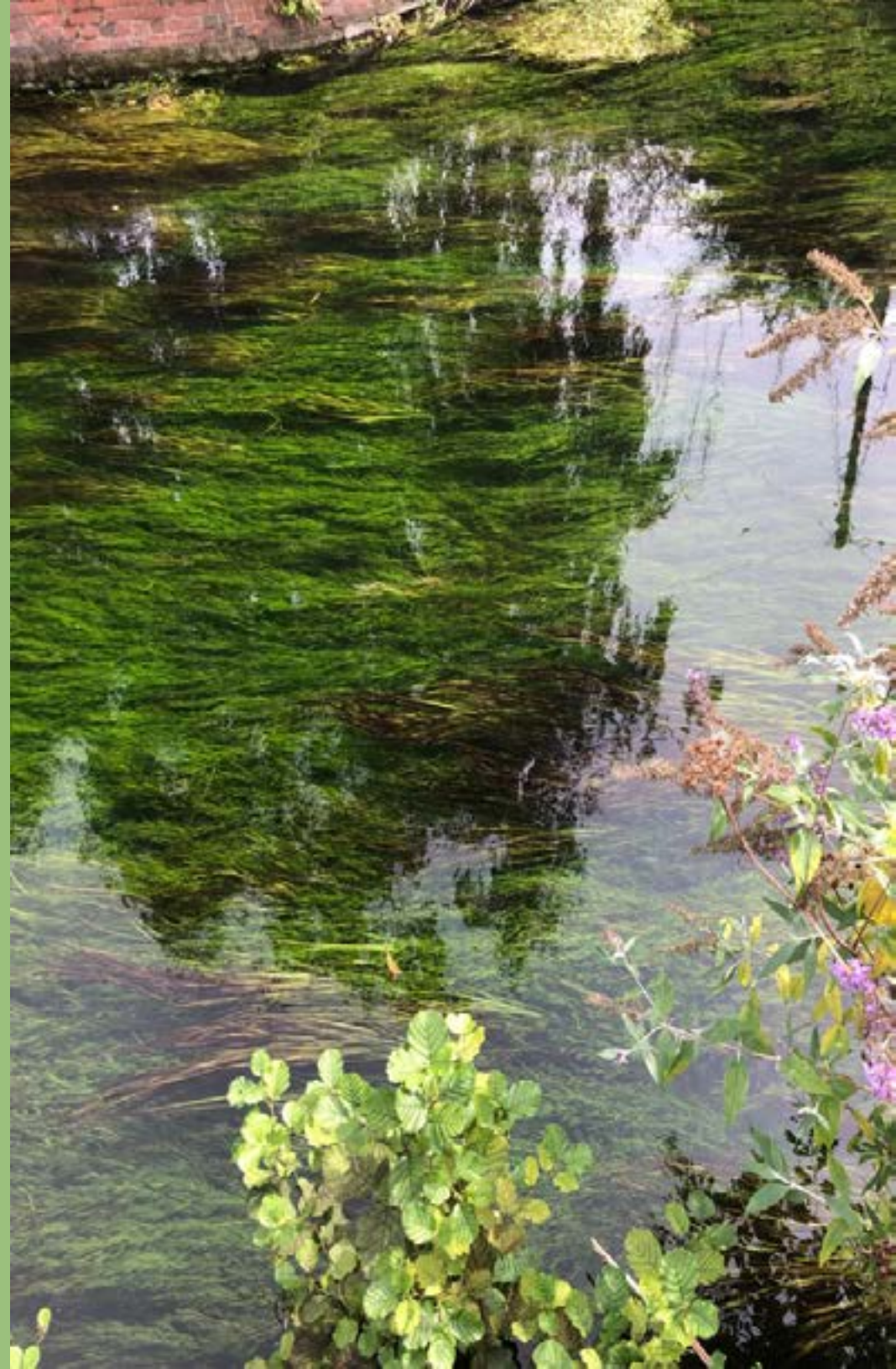
*the natural default state of humans, I'm happy. I think there's something really liberating about understanding that in our bodies. The realization that of course it's hard to live in this alienating hellscape, it's not our fault, and it's not just the way humans are.*

*I think of that Ursula K. Le Guin quote "We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings". And it reminds me of my work. I feel like a lot of what I do is try to illustrate and demonstrate this truth. Capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy, patriarchy, transphobia, ableism etc etc had a beginning and will have an end. Knowing this reminds us that we can do something different together. That so much is possible and we know how to do it in our bones. The world doesn't have to be the way it is now.*

**Rebecca Solnit wrote that "Hope is an Embrace of the Unknown", from an essay of the same name which was a pretty transformational piece for me in terms of finding utility in hope:**

*It's funny, I used to be against the idea of hope, thinking of it as kind of disempowering. I wanted to emphasize the way we create the future together, and to have faith and trust in what we are doing in the present to do that. But I think I've become more ok with hope now, kind of in the sense of remaining open to, and desirous of, beautiful possibilities that I don't have control over. Recognising that there are things I want to happen that I can't really affect, and I think that's hope.*

*Perhaps faith is still the word that moves me more. Faith in the god in all things, faith that feels like loving this world so much and wanting to lean into it. Faith that is slowing down and staying with the trouble - trusting something with my body that I can't explain in words. Wanting to see what happens next. ♡*







*My dear reader,*

Perhaps *now* might be a good time tend to your body: take a break, stretch, drink water, put the kettle on, unclench, to loosen or just to feel your breath.

# My Whale Body

by Hannah June Althea

When I was navigating the perilous first days of a body untethered from balance, I found comfort in imagining my body as a gray whale. I also started dreaming regularly about whales of all species. I wrote a play about whales, and thought a lot about how aware they are of their own blubber bodies. I would ask:

Are whales exempt from the plight of chronic pain? What would happen if they experienced vestibular issues, or scar tissue clinging to the uterus, resulting in unexplainable pain. A twisting ovary?

What is pain in whale language? What would body grief in Whale Song sound like?

I would stare at videos and photos of whales and then close my eyes, imagining what it would be like to embody such floating mass untethered by a need for stillness or land. Due to my disability, I can no longer swim with my

head underwater, and walks along many of the the rocky riparian corridors common amongst the many riverbeds here in Oregon pose difficulty. I

don't know if that'll ever change. In that way, I'm as removed as ever from a whale body, except for the need for breath.

Necessity means letting go of knowing a life underwater. I won't pretend like I don't miss jumping into cold rivers, or warm pools. As a small and fearful child, I avoided jumping into water bodies. It was only in early adulthood that I finally conquered that fear, only a handful years ago. I went surfing, pummeled by waves, leaving my mouth briney for a week.





What becomes of a fear conquered, yet now barriered instead by disability?

I'm still drawn to water, even with some degree of grief. I feel held by it, the familiar challenger spirit in my life. It is ancestor to me, and I respect the enormous responsibility an ocean or river holds.

So now, I tend to this relationship differently, pointer finger charts watersheds on maps, following the maze of mountain to streams to rivers to sea, that ebb and flow with rainfall.

I'm particularly enamored with water affected creatures that exist in liminal spaces: the salmon traversing brackish water each spring and fall, the frogs moving from forest to wetland, and our dear friend, the whale, bound by both sea and air.

When I hear their songs in my dreams, I sing back to them. I close my eyes and imagine my whale body, buoyant and softening. ♡





# Brother *by Sarah LaMarche*

In the backseat of our mother's car,  
which arcs toward the ocean,  
he sleeps—his hot breath misting the glass.  
Dreams drift over him in fathomless  
currents. My mother says,  
he can count every leaf on every tree  
I want it to be true.



I watch sunset rise  
from his honey-cruled hair, his t-shirt  
sticking sweaty to his rising and falling belly,  
and realize, I cannot pretend he is anything  
but a shining stone carried away,  
being perpetually swallowed by waves.  
Still, when he awakens, I try to find him  
I dip my head down and he holds it, listening to the  
sound  
of whispered nonsense  
as if it were something beautiful.  
He closes his eyes, and I close mine.





*Sister Spinster*

*Romancing Aliveness & Folkways: on the cultivation of care with Liz Migliorelli*

*Liz Migliorelli* might be best known for her cultivation of kinship with plant folk. As an herbalist educator, she facilitates the bridge towards plant knowing through her various class offerings: Tending the Hearth, Sap Rising, and Herbal Mystery School, to name a few.

However, it would be an oversimplification to call Liz an herbalist, because there is much more to...she possesses a magnetic intuition towards boundless little (and big) magics...you can't help but be inspired by how she embodies what she teaches.

Liz invites us to reignite our enchantment with life. It's nourishing without requiring complexity - ways to honor the aliveness in ourselves and all who are around us, from dawn to rest. Whether it's romancing apples, decocting the Nettles, or dropping off soup for a friend, Liz teaches us that community care isn't a nebulous goal to reach, but rather in how we choose to

*Romancing Aliveness*

show up for the sparkly everyday.

**Hannah Althea:** What was your upbringing, spiritually - if that language feels relevant to your practice - or within folk medicine? At what point in your life did your current engagement to plants and folk traditions start to take the form they do now?

**Liz Migliorelli:** *I didn't grow up with any particular religious framework or tradition. However, the most potent spiritual anchor in my childhood was storytelling. I loved reading and I loved hearing folktales and myths.*

*This is where I learned that magic was very real, that animals could speak to us, that trees could be guides, etc. Through story, I had an early understanding of animism. The stories that I loved as a kid are now a big part of my work today, weaving plant folklore and myth together. I was 18 when I started actively learning about medicinal plants and it really just felt like a continuity of animism in my life.*

*Besides story, I did have a strong sense of ancestral community as a kid growing up in an Italian-American family. The cultural traditions that I grew up with have absolutely been the rich soil that I continue to plant my own learnings in; I am so grateful for having some context of cultural folk practice as a child.*

There's a phrase used in some social activism organizing when talking about the future "the arc of the universe inherently bends towards justice, and you can come along or not, but we're going there".

**In that sentiment, from the sparkly center of your folk traditions, where does the arc of your magical practice bend towards?**

*I feel the shape-making and shape-shifting of my magical practice to be less of an arc and more of a web. Or a ripple. A great wellspring. It feels omni-directional. Some of the central points of connection on this web are: Mystery, Re-Enchantment, Embodiment, Belonging, Eros, Liberation, Devotion and Kinship. These are the themes I tend to, that I make offerings to, the way finders that I hold as my personal compass.*

**How do you cultivate community care in your life?**

*I do a lot of community care cultivation through my work with plants; teaching folks how to make medicine, helping folks build relationships with plants, offering my time and medicines in community clinic work, etc.*

*But when I was really thinking about this question, I felt how a big part of being able to provide community care comes from being engaged with community connection; so I try to make sure I am checking in on my friends, my family, my neighbors and then moving from that place. I love being able to care for folks through cooking; dropping a meal off to a friend who needs some support one week feels so nourishing to me! On a day to day basis, I like to make offerings to my retinue of deities, land spirits and ancestors – the concept of community care certainly expands into the more-than-human realm. Such as making sure I have done what I am able to do to make sure the milkweed patch at my house is flourishing each*



*A barred owl flies through  
the woods*



11 10 7



summer.

What plants do you hold strong relationships to, and how do these plant-relationships inform your human-to-human relationships at an interpersonal level?

*Right now we are in Rosemary month of Herbal Mystery School, so this plant is particularly present for me right now. Rosemary is a strong circulatory tonic; I really feel in my body when I work with this plant. It's not just a theoretical embodiment, I can literally feel blood moving throughout my fingers and toes. An incredible anchor of my aliveness. Rosemary is my beloved friend that shows me how I can reinvigorate my connection to earth energy and direct my will into magical possibility. Rosemary allows me to show up in fullest capacity for my clients, for my community, for my life, being rooted to this earth, resisting estrangement. The truth is that the plants really do influence almost every relational aspect of my life- even if I'm not working with them directly at one particular moment I might be thinking about Nettle, or be reminded of Angelica.*

*I approach my relationships to plants the same as I would with friends. I don't assume that they are going to be able to show up for me in the same way day after day. Especially with new friends, we might have to make some offerings first. Cook them a meal. Share a song or two before we get to the deep care part of the friendship. Sometimes we might need some time apart. Sometimes it's just nice to spend time together without asking anything of them.*

What are some of the small routines in your life that feel



## nourishing? Big ones too?

*I like to walk up and down my road. I try to do this most days. I live on a big, big hill in the woods and I will walk down to a point in the road that I lovingly call The Shining Path. This is where two streams meet and I visit one side of the road first, to greet that water, and then the other side of the road to watch the streams come together.*

*I always say hello to one side before the other – I'm not exactly sure why, but this is how the routine developed. Then I walk back up the hill. It feels like a way of keeping time. I marvel at what plants are popping up. It's a daily opportunity to tune into the place where I am planted. For example, there is a patch of Sweet Fern that grows on the road that feels like a special secret. I like being surprised by where the chanterelles emerge each year. A large black rat snake crosses the road. The other day I saw a deer laying down next to the stream, just resting by the water. A barred owl flies through the woods, branch to branch, landing on a tall hemlock. My neighbor drives by and stops to tell me how the meadow down the road is in full bloom, but there are a lot of mosquitoes this year, so watch out. I work alone a lot in the apothecary so it feels nourishing to just get out my door and feel how my life touches all the other life around.*


*Other routines: reading poetry most mornings, drinking black tea, lighting a beeswax candle for all meals.*

**What feels sparkly or full of respite and nourishment to you right now? What's feeding your capacity for softness?**

*Lately it's been really hot here. I usually head to the river mid-day to just to cool off between clients. This past week my partner and I have driven down the road every night to the river to jump in and cool down our bodies before bed. I like swimming at twilight. Watching the fireflies come out from the dark of the trees. I like getting home, putting the towels to dry on the porch and then heading to bed with my hair wet from the river. I've been having way more dreams about water since doing that. I sleep soundly.*

*I feel like keeping things simple at a time of year that feels so robust with things to do is an important focus for me in deep summer. Like I've been playing a lot of card games this past month which feels really good. But really, being able to be in water as much as possible definitely feels like it cultivates my capacity for softness as well.💕*





LUCKY STAR

LUCKY ME

LUCKY SICK COMPANY



# *earth family quilt*

Quincee Lark 2023

Oil on canvas

20x30

Weaving together the energetics of 24 community members, earth family quilt explores answers to the questions of: what is flowering within your heart? and conversely: what is passing away? the answer of each participant was visually recorded on the canvas, using color and form to represent the emotions and ideas contained within the response.







# Contributor Bios

*Artthatopens, earth family quilt* is an ongoing project by Oregon-Based Artist Quincee Lark (@artthatopens) exploring the healing potential of creation, the process of transcendental painting, and the portal between waking life and the formless unconscious.

*Ash, conversation with friends* is an educator and creative collaborator living in Portland who loves dancing, poetry and being in nature with her pup Joplin, and can often be found toting a bottle of bubbles in her pocket or bag.

*Elizabeth, conversation with friends* is a ceramic artist living in Portland, Oregon who loves conversations around the beauty and complexities of being human, flowers and hot dogs.

*Hannah June Althea, Introduction, editing, and The Whale Body:* is a writer based in the temperate rainforest climate of the Pacific Northwest. She's interested in folkways, anthropocene logic defiance, material, plant medicine, magic, wetlands, and how spaces shape culture. Say hello at [hannahjunealthea.com](http://hannahjunealthea.com)

*Hannah Raye, conversation with friends* is a care worker and human who's remembering how good it feels to make things. They live in PDX and love laying on the floor,

dancing, eating snacks and making up songs on the ukulele. You can find them on insta @hannah\_raye95.

*Sarah La Marche, Brother* is a Portland-based writer with a degree in creative writing from the University of Oregon. She's a graduate of the Walter and Nancy Kidd tutorial program, was a finalist in Portland's 2023 Sloppy Poetry slam competition, and has poems published in unbound literary journal and minto press. You can read more of her work @aroomofonerose

*Sage, Lucky Star, Lucky Me*  
@oxsolace

Learn more about the interviewees:

*Sophie Macklin* [www.sophiemacklin.com/](http://www.sophiemacklin.com/)

*Liz Migliorelli* <https://sisterspinster.net/>

Thank you, thank you, thank you all!



This zine was a long slow project over a period of months in the summer and early fall of 2023.

Contributors to this zine responded with these prompts in mind. Tell us - with art or writing - about your wildest dreams for disability justice, mutual aid efforts you've been a part of! Consider, how we can cultivate community care for each other and the earth? What does it feel like to be a part of a community of care? Where do you see this in your own life - or where is it lacking? What are the levels of care, and how do we ask for it? What is the "medicine you carry"?

This zine is free, and encouraged to distribute, if you are so called! All I ask is that you respect the creative and intellectual property of the artists and writers.

Deep gratitude to you, reader!  
For more information, visit  
[hannahjunealthea.com](http://hannahjunealthea.com)