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# ADULT FICTION

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#### **LGBTQ2S+ FICTION**

## PAINTED

#### **BY: ANTON PROSSER**

RIGHTS AVAILABLE: ALL

Complete at 92K words, PAINTED by #OwnVoices author Anton Prosser is a pulpy LGBTQ2S+ suspense novel that gives readers a glimpse behind the curtain into two concealed worlds: the insular culture of fine art, and the elusive coterie of trans and queer communities. Featuring a trans feminine protagonist and diverse representation throughout, PAINTED allows readers a unique opportunity to see themselves in a tense, punchy, and compulsively readable story, swimming in nostalgia.

It's New York City in 1986. Despite having an amazing sidekick in her best friend and employer Kim, up and coming indie art gallery manager Christine Williams is 29 years old and feeling adrift. She is attending the opening party for one of the city's biggest stars, a reclusive modern artist named Alex Smith, when she first encounters Kenneth Gordon. He is the powerful and wealthy owner of one of the most successful galleries in New York, and despite lingering insecurities, Christine accepts his dinner invitation.

Their relationship starts like a fairy tale, with fancy dinners and glamorous dates, but Christine soon discovers that lurking underneath Ken's extravagant gestures is a nagging desire for control. In a pre-#MeToo era, Christine struggles to reconcile Ken's occasional cruelty with his exorbitant apologies, charisma, and lavish promises for the future. Meanwhile, Christine seems unable to extricate herself from the rumours surrounding Ken's most intriguing client, Smith, who has disappeared from public view. When the warehouse where he was living burns down, a frenzy of tabloid speculation begins to take hold. Where is Alex Smith, and who is this blonde bombshell who's always on Ken's arm these days?

Fears are raised about unearthing her bestforgotten past when Christine is approached by a private investigator looking for information about the missing artist, and her anxiety is heightened as she begins to receive creepy phone calls at her apartment and reporters start harassing her at work. She tries to downplay her worries and focus on enjoying her new life as a high-flying art world socialite, but when she discovers Smith's diary at Ken's country home, Christine realizes that there may be more to the connection between her boyfriend and his client's disappearance than she initially wanted to see.

PAINTED is perfect for everyone who re-watched Sex and the City in quarantine or got swept away by the world of Pose. Readers enthralled by the art world intrigue of FAKE LIKE ME by Barbara Bourland or by the allure of THE HOUSE OF IMPOSSIBLE BEAUTIES by Joseph Cassara will love sinking into this highly commercial escapist page-turner that author Anton Prosser describes as his love letter to the 80's.



### MEET THE AUTHOR: **ANTON PROSSER**

Anton Prosser is a queer writer born in the Panhandle Plains of Texas. Despite coming from six generations of Texans, he does not own a horse. A child of the 1980s, Anton had unsupervised childhood with unsupervised access to books and MTV. He started writing largely to recreate things he loved with queer characters and experiences that were missing from page and screen.

Anton studied Czech and Russian at the University of Texas. He resides in Austin with his husband. and a cat. two Roombas. He enjoys movies, traveling to see friends, and creating meals to match his projects. When writing not writing, Anton maintains a small rose garden through the unforgiving Texas summers.



#### **LGBTQ2S+ FICTION**

### LOVE ALWAYS, DUSTY by: chelsea bartlett

RIGHTS AVAILABLE:

Complete at 87K words, LOVE ALWAYS, DUSTY by debut author Chelsea Bartlett is a tender #OwnVoices literary novel. This story plumbs the unique and often messy depths of emotional intimacy experienced by isolated queer people who, too often, lack the language and tools to make sense of their blossoming lives.

The ever-captivating Dusty was the keystone in the intense friendship that began in childhood for her, Jason, and Steve. The lives of the three best friends diverged in adulthood but come crashing back together following Dusty's death. When Jason returns to his hometown in Maine for her funeral, he encounters Steve for the first time in a decade. Despite the time that has passed, Steve remains the reserved and stoic man that Jason remembers, seeming still to be the child for whom his friendships were a refuge.

Jason and Steve discover a series of cryptic messages that Dusty left behind, the chapters alternate between their idyllic past and their heartrending present. In their past, the bonds between Jason, Steve, and Dusty develop from childhood friendship to adolescent stirrings, and ultimately to youthful sexuality, which all culminates in Jason's birthday weekend spent exploring an abandoned house in the woods. Just as Jason begins to believe it might be possible to imagine a future where all three of them can be together, he faces the inciting betrayal which rends them apart. In the present, Dusty's letters lead Jason and Steve back to that same house in the woods—a place where their recollections are still held within the walls. There, Dusty reveals that she purchased the house before her death, and now she has left it to Jason and Steve. As they work to renovate the house, they consider what to do next, and begin to unpack their tense history in the process. When they discover an extra letter from Dusty hidden in the fireplace of the house, it reveals a secret that threatens not only their precious memories, but also their futures.

LOVE ALWAYS, DUSTY is perfect for the readers of NORMAL PEOPLE by Sally Rooney who may have missed the opportunity to see themselves reflected in its pages, or those who teared up watching the 2007 film, P.S. I LOVE YOU. It is a book that captures the complexity of our present, full of longing, uncertainty, love, and hope.



### MEET THE AUTHOR: CHELSEA D.G. BARTLETT

Chelsea D.G. Bartlett was born and raised in beautiful coastal Maine, which is where she earned her MFA at the Stonecoast Writers' Program. Chelsea's short fiction has previously appeared in such places as Oyster River Pages and The Stonecoast Review. Their story "A Different Kind of Sea" is forthcoming from After Happy Hour Review. When not writing, Chelsea can be found studying art history or playing spooky video games with their partner.

#### **AUTOFICTION**

## **MERCY GENE**

#### **BY: JD DERBYSHIRE**

RIGHTS AVAILABLE: ALL

Currently drafted at 35K words, MERCY GENE: the man-made making of a madwoman is the debut auto-fiction by comedian, voice-hearer, gender queer weirdo, dyslexic, and certified insane person, JD Derbyshire. Written with the financial support of the Canada Council for the Arts, MERCY GENE is inspired by Derbyshire's critically acclaimed and award-winning solo play Certified, during which the audience becomes a mental health review board that determines her current state of sanity by the end of the show. The main narrative circles around being incarcerated in mental health facilities and certified insane six times, firing up memories and imaginings in her life decades preceding, and years following, the incarcerations: memories of sexual assault, gender confusion, a Catholic childhood, and familial dysfunction.

MERCY GENE was professionally edited by acclaimed author Zsuzsi Gartner, who calls the project "exceptional, original, arresting, unconventional, at-times hilarious, and necessary". The narrative concedes to the tragedy and humour of unreliable memory and the need to let a story land the way it needs to land. The themes are of the moment: #MeToo, gender identity, and mental health. To mirror JD's own thought process, the narrative is related through three different POVs: the present is in first person, the past in third person, while the voices in her head speak in the firstperson plural directly addressing the reader. Think Maggie Nelson meets Fran Liebowitz – MERCY GENE is a literary case study in the terror and wonder that comes with walking through life with your own brain and letting your definition of self continually evolve. It teases out methods of prescribed radical self-care by leaving behind the lectures of experts and the treatments by doctors and becoming your own mental-health specialist, with a little help along the way from a lesbian road-hockey league, and tour-de-force (fictional) appearances by Miriam Toews, and the late, great Margot Kidder.

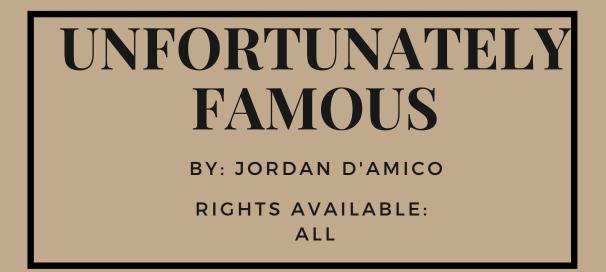


### MEET THE AUTHOR: JD DERBYSHIRE

JD is a comedian. theatre maker. writer, and mad activist. Their play Certified, during which the audience becomes a mental health review board to determine her sanity by the end of the show, won two 2020 Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards on Vancouver for Outstanding Original Script and The Critic's Innovation Award. Select plays include Certified, A Modern Woman's Guide to Female Impersonation, Bearded Circus Ladies, The Opposite of Everything is True, Me on the Map (with Adrienne Wong), Dog of my Understanding, Auditions for an Embarrassed Woman. and Ingenious Speculations (with Rita Bozi and Kim Selody).



#### ROMCOM



UNFORTUNATELY FAMOUS, by debut novelist Jordan D'Amico, is a standalone upmarket romcom, complete at 97K words. An earlier version was a Pitch Wars 2019 selection.

24-year-old publicist-in-training Levi Harlow is free at last. After living the first two decades of his life in secrecy, under the thumb of his rich, famous, and controlling parents, he's desperate to reclaim his identity and independence. He's finally living his best life: building his career, finding friends, and embarking on a real romantic relationship. It's a perfect life on the fringes of celebrity spotlight, just the way that he likes it.

Then, out of nowhere, Levi's Hollywood darling mother, actress Lydia Ainsley, goes on television to dish the dirt, and in the process, she blows Levi's life apart. Unbeknownst to those in his new life, Levi is the illegitimate child that Lydia had in secret with a billionaire English duke: the #HainsleyBaby. Suddenly, Levi's toxic past is everywhere he turns, and he finds himself dodging paparazzi, his controlling father, and ghosts from his past, when all he really wants is to build a life with the man he loves. Nearly 3 million millennials call New York City home. Fresh, ambitious, coffee cup in hand, they are flocking to neighbourhoods like the financial and garment districts and shaping the city. They are globally adored and reviled, and readers everywhere want a window into their lives. UNFORTUNATELY FAMOUS offers the perfect view.

Fans of Casey McQuiston's 2019 breakout novel RED, WHITE & ROYAL BLUE will relate to the lighthearted voice and heartwarming LGBTQ2S+ romance, and anyone who's ever comfortwatched THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA, based on Lauren Weisberger's NYT bestselling novel, will find themselves instantly endeared to celebrity wrangler Levi Harlow and his quest for a happy ending.

### MEET THE AUTHOR: JORDAN D'AMICO

Jordan D'Amico is a Torontobased writer who is definitely still in his twenties and not almost thirty like his birth certificate would have you believe. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Rights (which is most certainly not human resources like a lot of people think) and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Public Relations (sure, that's like marketing).

He doesn't have a pen name, but if he did it would probably be Stockard Channing Tatum O'Neal. The novel he's currently working on would be a great Netflix series produced by Mindy Kaling.





# NON-FICTION

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#### **TRUE CRIME**

VANISHED IN VERMILION

**BY: LOU RAGUSE** 

RIGHTS AVAILABLE: ALL

VANISHED IN VERMILLION is a 90K word true crime book that flips the script on a typical cold case investigation. When police departments across the country began creating cold case units in the 1990s and 2000s, the cases these detectives started solving spawned a cottage industry of crime shows, books, and most recently, podcasts. The stories are universally fascinating, because the longer a case sits cold, the more imaginative we tend to be in pondering potential outcomes, and we take comfort in knowing the advances in technology that spawned the cold case review - usually DNA and other forensic testing - mean that the mystery will usually be resolved with the perpetrator held accountable.

VANISHED IN VERMILLION examines what happens when a cold case unit follows none of these technological advances, when detectives instead fall back on controversial investigative trappings such as jailhouse snitches, hypnotizing witnesses, and relying on intuition over evidence. In the small town of Vermillion, South Dakota, you're left with the biggest law enforcement embarrassment in state history, a family's lives destroyed and an inmate charged with a murder that never even happened.

In 1971, Pam Jackson and Sherri Miller disappeared while driving a clunky Studebaker Lark, trying to find a party in the small town of Vermillion, South Dakota. The local police did little more than insist to the girls' families that the 17-year-olds must have run away. The state formed a cold case unit 33 years later, determined to do better. Their investigation resulted in incredible accusations that one of the girls' teenage classmates kidnapped, murdered, ground up and fed Pam and Sherri to pigs - with the killer's farm family covering up the entire crime. While the 40-year ordeal eventually ended with the victims' families getting answers, each step of the law enforcement process was more maddeningly incompetent than the one that preceded it. Perhaps most frustrating of all, South Dakota authorities have gotten away with it.



### MEET THE AUTHOR: LOU RAGUSE

Lou Raguse is a journalist based in Minnesota specializing in crime and courts. He's currently a reporter for KARE-TV, the NBC affiliate in Minneapolis.

Raguse has won dozens of regional and national journalism awards including Regional Edward Emmy, R. Murrow, Associated Press. William Randolph Hearst and Society of Professional Journalist awards. He notably led the coverage of the death of George Floyd and trial of former police officer Derek Chauvin.

In 2019, Raguse produced a podcast, 88 Days: The Jayme Closs Story, about a 13-year-old girl who was kidnapped in the middle of the night after her parents were murdered.

Outside of work, Raguse loves backyard barbeques with his family, playing fantasy football and hunting down vintage Star Wars toys for his two kids.



#### **INDIGENOUS MEMOIR**



A Two-Spirit Journey is Ma-Nee Chacaby's extraordinary account of her life as an Ojibwa-Cree lesbian. From her early, often harrowing memories of life and abuse in a remote Ojibwa community riven by poverty and alcoholism, Chacaby's story is one of enduring and ultimately overcoming the social, economic, and health legacies of colonialism.

As a child, Chacaby learned spiritual and cultural traditions from her Cree grandmother and trapping, hunting, and bush survival skills from her Ojibwa stepfather. She also suffered physical and sexual abuse by different adults, and in her teen years became alcoholic herself. At twenty, Chacaby moved to Thunder Bay with her children to escape an abusive marriage. Abuse, compounded by racism, continued, but Chacaby found supports to help herself and others. Over the following decades, she achieved sobriety; trained and worked as an alcoholism counsellor; raised her children and fostered many others; learned to live with visual impairment; and came out as a lesbian. In 2013, Chacaby led the first gay pride parade in Thunder Bay.

Ma-Nee Chacaby has emerged from hardship grounded in faith, compassion, humour, and resilience. Her memoir provides unprecedented insights into the challenges still faced by many Indigenous people.

### MEET THE AUTHOR: MA-NEE CHACABY

Ma-Nee Chacaby is an Ojibwe-Cree writer, artist and activist from Canada. You may have met her at a rally in Thunder Bay or Toronto, seen her on the evening news or on the dance floor at Glad Day, or maybe she taught you how to make a drum.

She lives in Thunder Bay, one of the most dangerous places in Canada for Indigenous people. Here, she mentors many individuals and groups, including Wiindo Debwe Mosewin and Not One More Death, who work to make safety for all people in Thunder Bay.

She is dedicated to mentoring young people, sharing Anishinaabe teachings and stories, and supporting access to ceremony for 2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous peoples.



#### **LGBTQ2S+ MEMOIR**



A queer minister, politician and staunch activist for LGBTQ rights, Cheri DiNovo went from living on the streets as a teenager to performing the first legalized same-sex marriage registered in Canada in 2001. From rights for queer parents to banning conversion therapy, her story will inspire people (queer or ally) to not only resist the system—but change it.

In The Queer Evangelist, Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo (CM) shares her origins as a young socialist activist in the 1960s, and her rise to ordained minister in the '90s and New Democratic member of provincial parliament. During her tenure representing Parkdale-High Park in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from 2006 to 2017, DiNovo passed more LGBTQ bills than anyone in Canadian history.

She describes the behind-the-scenes details of major changes to Canadian law, including Toby's Law: the first Transgender Rights legislation in North America. She also passed bills banning conversion therapy, proclaiming parent equality for LGBTQ parents, and for enshrining Trans Day of Remembrance into Ontario law. Every year on November 20th in the legislature, the provincial government is mandated to observe a minute of silence while Trans murders and suicides are detailed. Interspersed with her political work, DiNovo describes her conversion to religious life with radical intimacy, including her theological work and her ongoing struggle with the Christian Right. Cheri DiNovo's story shows how queer people can be both people of faith and critics of religion, illustrating how one can resist and change repressive systems from within.

"Living on the street, using drugs, abandoned by the adults in her life, all while identifying as 'queer' in a hostile world—any one of these things could have unravelled many of us. Cheri hauled herself up and not only survived but thrived. I love that this strong, brilliant, competent woman has told her story so honestly. "—Kathleen Wynne, former premier of Ontario

### MEET THE AUTHOR: REV. DR. CHERI DINOVO, C.M.

Reverend Dr. Cheri DiNovo, C.M. is ordained United Church an who performed minister Canada's first legalized same sex marriage. She is currently the minister at Trinity-St. Paul's Centre for Faith, Justice, and the Arts. Cheri is a Member of the Order of Canada, recognized for her contributions to provincial politics and for her lifelong advocacy of social justice. As the former Member of Provincial Parliament for Parkdale-High Park in Ontario, Cheri passed into law more pro-LGBTQ2+ legislation than anyone in Canadian history.





# GRAPHIC

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#### LITERARY GRAPHIC

## TEENAGE FEELINGS

#### **BY: AMBIVALENTLY YOURS**

RIGHTS AVAILABLE:

Envisioned as a 200-page, full-colour graphic novel, TEENAGE FEELINGS: The Fictional Autobiography of an Ambivalent Artist is the debut literary work by Canadian artist and writer, Ambivalently Yours.

TEENAGE FEELINGS is part autobiography and part fiction. It follows the life of Rosie, a young woman who feels everything. As she enters puberty, she begins to realize that all the intense emotions that are expressed by people in her presence, or that others attempt to hide, reveal themselves to her as manifestations of pink light. This strange power comes into full force when she reaches her teen years in the mid 90's. The narrative follows Rosie as she enters an abusive relationship in early adulthood, only to find that in the aftermath, her special power has been diminished and even disappears as an effect of trauma.

Readers are along for a surreal ride as Rosie relatably tries to put herself back together through a series of bad career choices, the false promise of grad school, feminist failures, complicated friendships, and a little light murder – fictional, of course. TEENAGE FEELINGS explores feminist themes, the burdens of heteronormativity, the messy process of healing, and our general inability as people to truly understand our emotions as they happen in real time, especially in the aftermath of loss and abuse. TEENAGE FEELINGS is built upon the fiction that Ambivalently Yours has created around her anonymous and vulnerable public persona over the last 10 years since completing her MFA, divulging more clues into the facets of her personal life that the media have been inquiring about for years. The book is also intended as a manifestation of retroactive compassion for the author's former teenage self – and through this intention, readers will be invited into an uncertain, sometimes fabulist, and always rosy, space of compassion for the ambivalent teenager within us all.



### MEET THE AUTHOR: AMBIVALENTLY YOURS

Ambivalently Yours is a semianonymous, aggressively sensitive, perpetually ambivalent, Canadian illustrator, animator, and writer. Her work aims to highlight the transformative potential that exists within conflicting emotions.

Ambivalently Yours' work has exhibited been locally and internationally, featured in media prominently publications, teenage blogs and zines worldwide, shared virally on the Internet (her latest viral drawing had a reach of over 4M accounts), and reposted by several celebrities such as Florence Welch. Stephanie Beatriz, Brie Larson and Millie Bobby Brown. Her meticulous engagement online as Ambivalently Yours has resulted in a large social media following and her interactions with her online community directly influence in her practice.



# FOR YOUNG READERS



#### **PICTURE BOOK**

## THE FAMILY TREE

#### **BY: ALISON MCGAULEY**

### RIGHTS AVAILABLE:

One summer Saturday, Kenzie and her family plant a beautiful, young tree. Kenzie is delighted, and promises to provide it with care – but when fall blows in and brings challenges to her family, Kenzie isn't so sure that she'll be able to keep her promise! As the seasons turn, Kenzie has to adjust to the changes in her world and rethink her promise so that she can enjoy the tree with her family again when spring returns.

THE FAMILY TREE is an identity-inspired picture book that aims to resonate with children who are impacted by chronic illness, like the author's family – and peripherally, also my own! Kenzie's story deals with themes of change and acceptance, in a similar vein to Julie Flett's BIRDSONG (2019), and Loretta Garbutt's A STOPWATCH FROM GRAMPA (2020), as well as family fun and adventure, as in Oge Mora's SATURDAY (2019).



### MEET THE AUTHOR: ALISON MCGAULEY

Alison McGauley is a part-time special education teacher, parttime picture book author, and full-time mom. She resides in the region of Waterloo, Ontario with her partner, two daughters, and ragdoll cat.

As a person living with multiple chronic illnesses, Alison is passionate about writing stories that speak to children who are impacted by illness or disability. She aims to create books with big heart for little readers.

Alison works on her craft through memberships with SCBWI, CANSCAIP, and the 12x12 Picture Book Challenge. She has also participated in the Children's Book Academy.

When not teaching, writing, or reading, Alison enjoys adventuring in nature and watching movies with her family.



#### **PICTURE BOOK**

### CJ'S MAGIC SOCKS

#### BY: C. J. WATSON

### RIGHTS AVAILABLE:

The author is former NBA basketball player, CJ Watson, who has a great social media platform (280K+ followers on Twitter), and the support of his network, including NBA Legend Baron Davis, who said that what CJ doing is inspirational to him, and that's he's excited to read CJ's stories to his kids.

The MS is based on CJ's real-life experiences of growing up in a low-income neighborhood and getting the opportunity to travel to Italy to do his favourite thing - play basketball. It's a fun, dynamic, and empowering story that young readers will easily relate to. CJ hopes that his writing will inspire kids to dream big and work hard.



### MEET THE AUTHOR: CJ WATSON

Charles (C.J.) Watson is an author, philanthropist, and father with a ten-year career in NBA and European basketball in his back pocket. His basketball career allowed him to play for some of the best teams in NBA history, including the Chicago Bulls and Orlando Magic. While his professional basketball experience is impressive, his skills go far beyond the basketball court.

He brings with him an incredible public platform, including his non-profit organization, the Quiet Storm Foundation, based in his hometown of Las Vegas. He writes empowering, identitydriven picture books based on his real-life experiences in sports that encourage kids to dream big and work hard.



#### **CHAPTER BOOK SERIES**

### SALEM SLEEPWALKS

#### **BY: MARISSA ELLER**

#### RIGHTS AVAILABLE: ALL

Salem Prescott is a sleepwalking eight-yearold from Cooper Springs, North Carolina. Cooper Springs isn't where she stays, though, not at night. There's no telling where she'll end up, because she doesn't just sleepwalk! Her mind moves as fast as her feet. Wherever she goes on her nighttime walks, she always meets someone in need of her help, and someone who just might be able to help her answer some of life's biggest questions, too. Salem Sleepwalks is a series of chapter books for early readers, in the escapist vein of the Magic Tree House books, but with themes of anxiety as depicted in the Alvin Ho series.

Within each book, there is a problem to solve within the sleepwalking landscape, and there is a larger scale, not as easily solvable problem that Salem is dealing with in her real life. As readers are learning about Salem, they're also learning about the rich settings and locales that Salem is experiencing. At the end of each book, the problem within the sleepwalking landscape is solved, and the bigger problem is somehow easier to manage. It's all about acceptance and adaptation. Salem won't try to conquer her sleepwalking; she'll just learn to form her life around it in a positive way. As a very serious and analytical kid, her journey is about progressing toward accepting problems she can't solve and adapting to her own intense thoughts and feelings.



### MEET THE AUTHOR: MARISSA ELLER

Marissa Eller is a novelist and a college writing tutor. She holds a BA in English from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and an MFA in Writing from Lindenwood University. She resides in Hickory, North Carolina with her family and two rescue cats, all of whom she couldn't love more if she tried.

An avid reader of YA and a devoted supporter of the #OwnVoices movement, threads of her own life are woven into her fiction. Her writing focuses on the depth of human emotion, and the power words have to change a life.

When not writing or helping students, she can be found thinking entirely too much about her favorite TV shows, obsessing over a band she's loved since she was fifteen, or enjoying an afternoon nap.

#### **YA CONTEMPORARY**

### WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR BODY BY: ALEX O'CONNELL RIGHTS AVAILABLE: ALL

WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR BODY is a fictional translation of YOUR BODY KEEPS THE SCORE for a young audience. In voicey, lyrical prose, it explores the physical impact of trauma in a raw, relatable, and immediate story of toxic friendship.

Life feels stagnant for June: she has a chaotic home life, Senior year and the future are both looming menacingly overhead, her mental health is shaky, and she can't quite connect to anyone around her. That is, until she meets Eva, a new transfer student at St. Sebastian Academy. When Eva finds June crying in the bathroom one day, the girls are drawn together. They have the same favorite bands, the same rocky relationships with their mothers, and the same feelings of discontent with their school and the lives being offered to.

Soon, June and Eva are spending all their spare time together, sharing lunches, wandering aimlessly through Target, and talking on the phone late into the night. Everything seems perfect in the little world they've created together. One day, however, June cancels plans with Eva, and something feels strange about Eva's response—first the cold shoulder, then strings of insulting texts, followed by a return to normal the next day—but June brushes off her misgivings. Without realizing how it's happening, June finds herself answering to Eva and only Eva, walking on eggshells to avoid setting off any further angry outbursts. She stops talking to any of her other friends, answers every call and text of Eva's right away, and starts doubting her words and actions based on what Eva tells her about herself. As her relationship dynamic with Eva sharpens, the other areas of June's life that she's been avoiding start to feel overwhelming. Her mother's turbulent mood swings, the sister who's always off with her boyfriend, the weird looks her other friends are giving her—all of it contributes to an intense loneliness that Eva doesn't even seem to notice.

Told in a suspenseful then/now alternating timeline structure, WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR BODY is internal but pacey; a quiet story with a tense, reverberating plot that explores the mundane and shocking dynamic of an unhealthy friendship – and how to move on. This book is perfect for readers of other identitydriven explorations of complicated and formative relationships, like BEFORE WE WERE BLUE by E. J. Schwartz, SQUAD by Mariah MacCarthy, and LAST GIRL LIED TO by L. E. Flynn.



### MEET THE AUTHOR: ALEXANDRA O'CONNELL

Alex O'Connell was born on June 12, 1995, in Illinois, where they grew up. Alex has a BA in English from Fordham University and is currently pursuing a PhD in English at Syracuse University. They are a reader, teacher, and researcher. and both their creative and critical work explores the ways in which people harm and help each bisexual other. As а and nonbinary author, Alex is interested in writing nuanced narratives for young people about mental health, embodiment, and the connections people forge with one another. While not reading or writing, they enjoy cooking, walking, watching reality TV, and hanging out with friends. They currently live in Syracuse, NY, with far too many plants. more about Alex Learn at alexkoconnell.com.



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## CONTACT INFORMATION EMMY NORDSTROM HIGDON LITERARY AGENT WESTWOOD CREATIVE ARTISTS EMMY@WCALTD.COM #SPINESQUAD

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