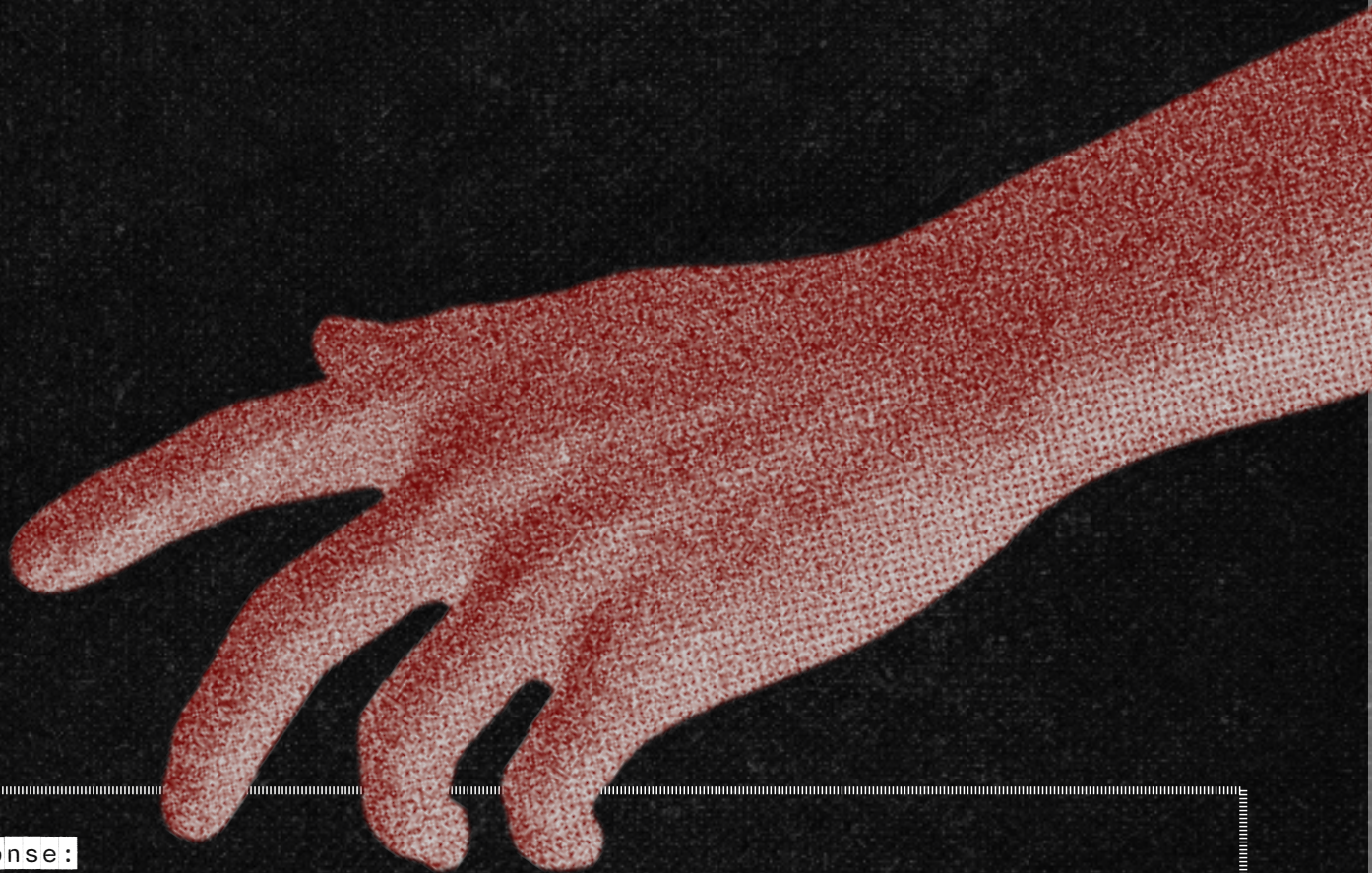




Response:

Roommate issues are hard - especially in this economy. It sounds like your main points are:

1. You need to live somewhere - and it needs to be exactly here (for some reason)
2. Your right to claim the apartment and kick them out is more valid than theirs (even though they aren't trying to kick you out, and you both moved in at the same time)
3. Your right to complete privacy is absolute and it's the end of the world that it's been breached (even though you knew they could hear you having sex, and talk around the apartment, and are aware that your data is constantly being captured, analysed, stored, and utilised everywhere, including from devices you bring into the apartment)

Not only do you have a completely outsized entitlement to your shared apartment, but you're completely undermining all the work your housemate has put into this project.

You've likely left them feeling completely unheard, when they were clearly excited to share their interest with you. Especially when you haven't started out as friends, it takes a lot of courage to open up to people about interests and projects you've invested a lot into - which it sounds like they have. Your response to this is completely invalidating, and the fact that you think you're entitled to get them to move out because of your discomfort is absurd.

THE FETISHISATION OF WOMEN LOVING WOMEN RELATIONSHIPS

By Sophie Longmire

In a world where sapphic intimacy is served with a side of male gaze - be it in slow motion make-out scenes in indie films or TikToks drenched in soft lighting and Kesha vocals - it's hard not to ask: will queer women's relationships with each other ever be seen as more than just foreplay for someone else's sexual fantasy? The fetishisation is everywhere, dressed as inclusivity but dripping with objectification.

After a long day at university, I arrived home and retreated towards the warm embrace of my bed. Settling in, I prepared to indulge in a four-hour minimum TikTok doomscroll.

Opening the app, somewhere between the 'get ready with me' videos and skincare hauls, I stumbled down the glossy vortex of American Prom Culture. There they were: young girls hurling flower bouquets, transitioning from sweatpants and undone hair to ballroom-ready glam in a single jump cut. Four girl groups, three hair flips, and the same dress in five colours later, I dipped into the elusive comment section, curious to gauge what the masses had to say about the gowns. Instead, I was met with praise wrapped in perversion, or criticism dressed as curiosity. Lusting over affection, mocking emotional intimacy: it was all there. None of it felt new.



Somewhere in the algorithm, sapphic love
had become fetish content.

A 15-second montage of two women
grasping hands as they twirl in
satin dresses might be sweet. But
accompanied by the same sultry
soundtrack and repeated comment,
“At the same time?” Cue the
nausea and invalidation.
Between the filters, the thirst
traps, and the voyeurism,
the authenticity of WLW
relationships disappears. It’s
hard to feel actually seen
when your love is constantly
repackaged as someone else’s
pornography. Intimacy gets
flattened. Tenderness becomes
taboo. Real queer joy is edited out
in post-production.

On screen, when two women kiss or touch,
it’s rarely about appreciating their
connection, but instead indulging someone
else’s imagination. It’s not about intimacy being
celebrated or the validity of their relationship being
affirmed. It’s about who’s watching. And, let’s be honest:
it’s usually him. Attention spans don’t strain to capture connection. They
just linger over physical curves, skipping straight past emotion and heading

directly to erotica. What could have been a moment - soft, electric, unforgettable - becomes just another clip in the never-ending reel of content made to be consumed. Not felt, and certainly not questioned.

Yes, I get it. The prom videos were not some covert sapphic soft launch - they were just teenage girls showing off their gowns and friendships. But it's not about what they show, it's what's being seen. It's not about misreading a friendship as romance: it's about how quick the world is to fetishise even the possibility of women loving women. That says more about us than it does about the dresses.

WLW must reclaim the narrative.

From engaging with indie web series made by queer women, to sharing poetry that perfectly balances rage and femininity, we need to rewrite our own scripts. Stories where we're not spectacles, but protagonists. Not fetishes, but fully formed, loving, complicated, messy, beautiful people with real relationships.

So maybe the real question isn't whether WLW love will ever be validated, but why we ever allowed anything less.



FUCK WITH THE INTENT TO HONOUR WHO YOU ARE

By Miss Eddie



Recently, Incision Press, a queer owned and ran publishing business, held a Queer Smut Retreat. I had the pleasure of attending and found the whole process to be so supportive. From the moment I expressed interest to the moment I left, there was a vibe of encouragement, support, and honest desire to hear my work.

Part of what made the experience so wonderful was the mindset of Incision Press and the hosting venue. Both were queer-focused and cared about supporting queer experiences/voices. The diversity of the group and how well everyone and their ideas were received showed Incision Press' aim to 'uplift other queer writers and amplify the voices of the marginalised.' They built community through their choice of venue, as it was a space for individuality, freedom, and connection. During my time there I was free to come and go as I needed, welcome to enjoy the various spaces and amenities open to us: there was no stress or pressure about the choice to just relax in the space. It was also a venue that paid homage to the queer identity, with posters of queer icons and drag dress-up, but most of all the space was welcoming and safe in a way that I have never experienced before.

The event itself was scheduled to run from Thursday through to Sunday, allowing people who were camping on-site the time to come in and get settled before attending the first workshop on Friday. Despite missing that workshop and

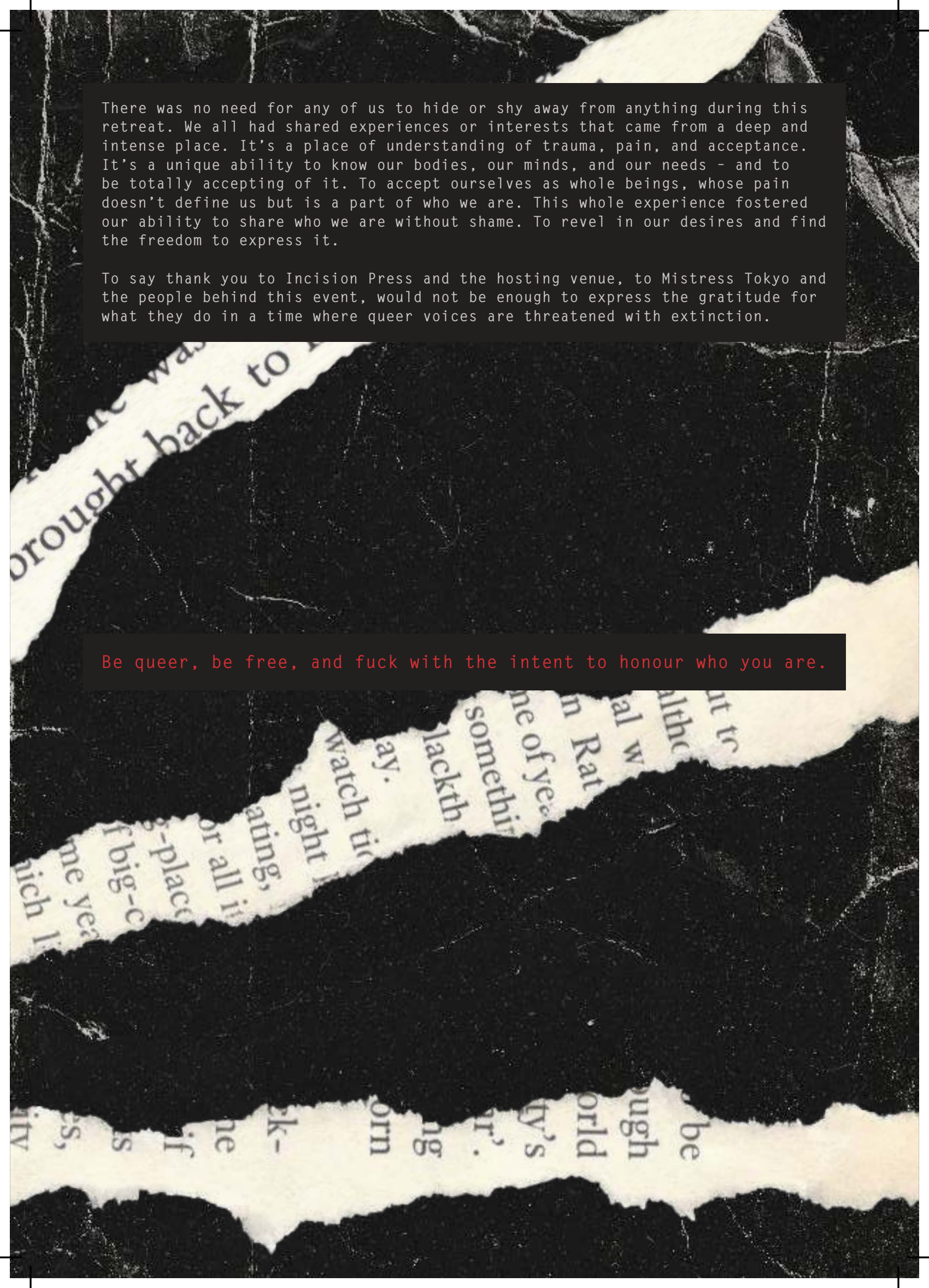
coming later in the day, I still felt as though my presence there was accepted without question. Throughout that afternoon the atmosphere was peaceful as we spent time in the pool, experiencing the peace of nature outside, or writing and sharing our work with each other. I was surprised to find myself discovering a new voice I hadn't written in before, and one that allowed me to go further into a form of writing I'd been too embarrassed to try.

Before being in that smut-centric space, I had been struggling to write filthy words on the page. They felt too mechanical and lacked any sort of passion. As I started to hear more of other's voices and styles, I experimented. It was like the fantasies and ideas I had in my head were finally able to come to life, without feeling like I had to use language that felt coarse and uncomfortable to me. I really feel that this experience helped me to achieve Incision Press' vision, to 'honour the ways in which we write our bodies, tell the truths of our relationships, read about how we f*ck and seek pleasure' (Incision Press, 2024).

It also had the "downside" of coming away feeling incredibly sexually frustrated: the comment of 'being surprised there weren't more orgies' rang true to the experience. It didn't help that we were treated to the beauty of Mistress Tokyo, engaging in a raw and powerful exchange of energy through a kink performance. The writers at the retreat were gifted with the opportunity to see the negotiation process that came before watching two bodies work together in a way that shared energy and expressed a primal playfulness. The beauty that I found in it was how connected two beings could be without the need to remove clothes, fuck, or be remotely grabby with each other. There was a much more intense and spiritual flow between these two creatures as they engaged in a passion and pleasure that wasn't inherently sexual or intended for the purposes of sex.

This came through in the writing that people shared during our performance night on Saturday. There was filth, but there was also passion. It wasn't just about two bodies going about physical business. It was about the connection into a person's being. Even the stories that were not about sex were filled with the beauty of a human being's presence. I wanted to cry and scream support at the top of my lungs at the spoken words of what it means to be trans: it spoke to the core of our injustice and pain. Their words were passionate, true, and a refusal to sugar coat a lived experience.





There was no need for any of us to hide or shy away from anything during this retreat. We all had shared experiences or interests that came from a deep and intense place. It's a place of understanding of trauma, pain, and acceptance. It's a unique ability to know our bodies, our minds, and our needs - and to be totally accepting of it. To accept ourselves as whole beings, whose pain doesn't define us but is a part of who we are. This whole experience fostered our ability to share who we are without shame. To revel in our desires and find the freedom to express it.

To say thank you to Incision Press and the hosting venue, to Mistress Tokyo and the people behind this event, would not be enough to express the gratitude for what they do in a time where queer voices are threatened with extinction.

Be queer, be free, and fuck with the intent to honour who you are.

AROMANTIC IN A ROMANCE-CENTRED WORLD

BY ANNIE

When I was 20, I came out as aromantic. A year before that, I doubt I had even heard the term before. If I had, I think things would have made a lot more sense a lot sooner. Of course, with any kind of queer expression, there is a colourful variety of identities and experiences connected to the term. For those new to it, it generally means 'experiencing little to no romantic attraction.' It's different to asexual, which means 'experiencing little to no *sexual* attraction,' yet, the two are often conflated. But, not everyone experiences both. Some do, many don't. Regardless of whether you feel more aligned with being called straight or queer, you might also feel connected to these terms yourself.

Growing up, deep down I felt a little 'different.' I think a lot of queer people relate to this: the feeling of 'otherness' that unfortunately comes with outdated social expectations and pressures. Most mainstream media we consume growing up focuses heavily on straight, cisgender relationships. They often push the notion that the be-all and end-all of our lives is a romantic partner. The perfect fairytale, the ultimate goal, the thing we should wish up a star for, is our romantic soulmate. It's in our movies, our TV shows, our songs, everything. But, I felt confused, like I was always pretending. Like I was always trying desperately to come up with a new excuse as to why I never engaged with the behaviours I was told to.

"Of course I don't have a crush, I'm only in primary school."

"Why would I date someone? I'm in high school and we'd probably break up anyway."

"I don't have time to date someone, I'm busy with my degree."

At every point in my life, I seemed to come up with a new reason to excuse the fact that I had no desire to be in a romantic relationship. I just didn't realise it yet. When I entered university, I think I started reaching my breaking point. There was more and more pressure to conform: to download Tinder, to accept dates, *to just pick someone at least*. The thing was, I'd never even fantasised about dating someone, never daydreamed about the perfect date, never given an answer on what 'my type' was, and definitely never reciprocated romantic feelings when people confessed to me. I felt broken, like somehow something