

Artist Statement

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Two years into a seemingly heterosexual marriage, I came out as queer. I was married to my best friend, but I had been feeling trapped for a long time. An unspoken thing was lodged in my throat; a stone, a peach pit, growing and growing for years, watered by many unhealthy formative experiences with sex and intimacy. In the bleakness of the first pandemic winter, I finally stopped ignoring my desires. My then-husband and I began exploring polyamory. I felt suddenly expansive, suddenly awake. All these parts of me I had been avoiding my whole life refused to return to sleep. The discoveries kept unfolding – around my gender, how I occupy my body, how I move through the world, how I want to speak up for myself and how I historically have not. Two years into polyamory, I did something I had been terrified to admit even to myself I had wanted for some time: I told my (straight, cis, pretty-monogamous-despite-giving-polyamory-the-ol'-college-try) husband that I wanted a divorce. It was the hardest and most impossible thing I've ever done. I broke his heart. And at the same time, we kept talking through the messiness of it, because we love each other; marriage and romantic partnership just wasn't the right container for how our love evolved. We're still dear friends and housemates. Even in the most painful moments of this evolution, we have listened to each other, trying to look past our assumptions of what is possible. I have never before felt such freedom and fullness and gratitude.

A few years ago, I could never have imagined any of this. I could never have imagined knowing myself deeply enough to articulate my needs without shame; I could never have imagined my then-husband being gracious enough to see my authenticity not as a rejection of him, but as a gift to us both. But as I've become more awake to myself, I've also become more awake to how deeply my imagination of what is possible has been limited by the narratives I've consumed. And now I truly believe that we are all capable of profound growth, if we can know ourselves more deeply, and speak to each other with more honesty and compassion.

I write stories of healing and self-discovery, processes which – like theater – never occur in a vacuum. Other people are always involved: we are hurt and learn how not to hurt in return; we struggle to find and express our authentic selves so we can be loved and known, and so others can look to us as they navigate their own journeys. There is no healing without collaboration; there is no theater without collaboration.

My plays are full of people crying and laughing and fucking up as they stumble messily towards healing themselves, each other, and their communities. We need more stories in which characters can help us look discomfort and pain head-on, and help us believe in the transformations that are possible when we are not afraid to be uncomfortable. It's in the hands of storytellers to show us all what could be possible, and in theater the real-time collaboration between artists and audience activates this within our imagination and our bodies in a way that only theater can. It is a sacred space for holding us, our pain and our joy, in which we can imagine new futures and experiment with how we might get there together.