



What experience made you realize you were queer?

"Watching Lucy Liu on Kill Bill was my first awakening. But I started working at a school, and there was a female teacher I had a big crush on. I'd get really nervous around her. That's when I knew it was true that I was queer."



"My 7th-grade P.E. teacher. I started to find him attractive, and that's when I realized I was queer. Later that same year, I noticed my attraction towards Anderson Cooper."



"The experience that made me realize I was queer was growing up (my younger years, around 5 years old) and feeling no kind of attraction toward boys and realizing that I did feel something towards girls. My first attraction was my childhood classmate in elementary school. However, I quickly came to the realization that it was not the norm, and I did what I could to hide the fact that I was different in that way, even getting a boyfriend and practically pretending that I liked him."



"I realized I was queer when I was 12, and I realized all the "weird" feelings I had towards girls and boys and towards myself weren't heterosexual. I just felt like the way I engaged with romance was different from what I had seen or been taught. Even towards boys, I was like, "I want to love and feel the way I want to, not the way straight people do it."



Do you remember the first time you identified as queer? How did you feel?

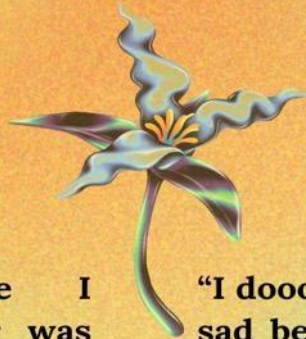


"I was in my second year of college when I first outwardly called myself queer. I remember I felt a bit embarrassed the first time I said it, but also like, woah, yeah, that is me."

"I don't remember when the first time was, but I remember feeling scared and anxious. It's something I still feel till this day when meeting new people and informing them on my sexuality (unless we're in a gay environment, because I feel welcomed and accepted)."



"The first time I identified as queer was my sophomore year of high school. I was in P.E. with 3 of my other friends. They all came out to me at the same time and asked me if I was gay. I was not exactly out openly towards my peers and friends, but it felt safe to tell them, and I felt by them in a way I hadn't felt before."



"I dooo, I remember I felt really sad because it all made sense. And I was scared that I was the only one and that people would treat me differently. People would treat me different already because I was just really hyper and I didn't GAF about acting "right" (ADHD and stuff). It was my 12th birthday I remember. I remember telling my friends the next day and feeling scared about what this might mean in my life."



HETE(GROSS) ILLUSIONS

You pull me in
and I know it's not good for me.
You push me away
and I want you to hold me again.



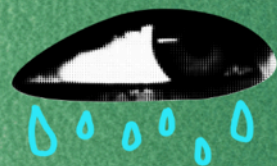
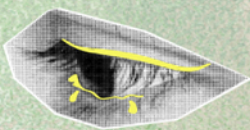
I want to believe you,
but I'm reading between the lines,
sending me down an infinite spiral.

I feel like I'm doing myself an injustice
and regret creating this ruckus

in my head,
the confusion is never-ending.
You feed into the parts of me that are
so bad,



yet it feels so good
that it makes it hard to let you go,
even if I don't want you anymore.



What is your favorite memory in a queer space?



"Castro! Beautiful people, beautiful vibes, tons of fun."



Being at a queer nightclub and dancing with my friends and seeing a smile on their faces."



I think engaging in queer art will always remain my favorite thing. Especially, the idea of camp, drag, and fashion has always meant so much to me. The idea that I can be growing through stuff, knowing I look good. And not just good to straights, but to the gays. I feel like there's an understanding of fashion and aesthetics that I love. Watching drag race and drag in general has always felt so freeing. I love glamour and beauty that goes beyond straight ideas of beauty."

"My favorite memory, honestly, didn't happen until I met many new and queer POC friends at UCSC. It was the first time I had met and became close with so many people that had experienced the same kinds of feelings, issues, struggles, and connectedness as a queer person."





 **What would you say to your younger self about who you are today?** 

 "My younger self would be very surprised and relieved to hear that I now understand that I can be happy."

 "I'd tell my younger self that we're still working towards our dreams and goals, but we've made it this far out and openly gay, which he would never have thought was possible." 

 "I would say to my younger self to look for community and to kiss more people, hehe. It was hard when I was younger, coming out to my parents. That was a moment that really affected me, and I still struggle with my relationship with my parents. I would tell her to stay strong and that there are people who are gonna love her unconditionally and that her parents are doing their best with what they were taught. She's gonna find art that'll make her feel seen and that being catholic means you get to wear religious symbols in an ironic way." 

 "I would talk about how much love I feel towards all the people in my life, and to be patient because the relationships to come will come exactly when they need to. I think my younger self would be surprised at the fact that I no longer identify as lesbian and identify now as queer/ bisexual. I would also say be prepared to feel betrayal, but that it was something I took my time to understand myself and gave myself grace in." 



What are some cultural barriers you've faced in identifying as queer?



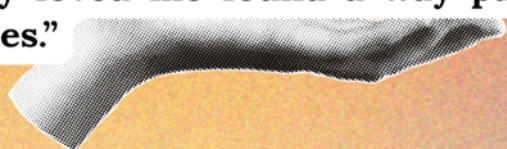
"I would say ethnic culture. Growing up in an environment and culture where being queer isn't really accepted, and if anything, is made fun of."

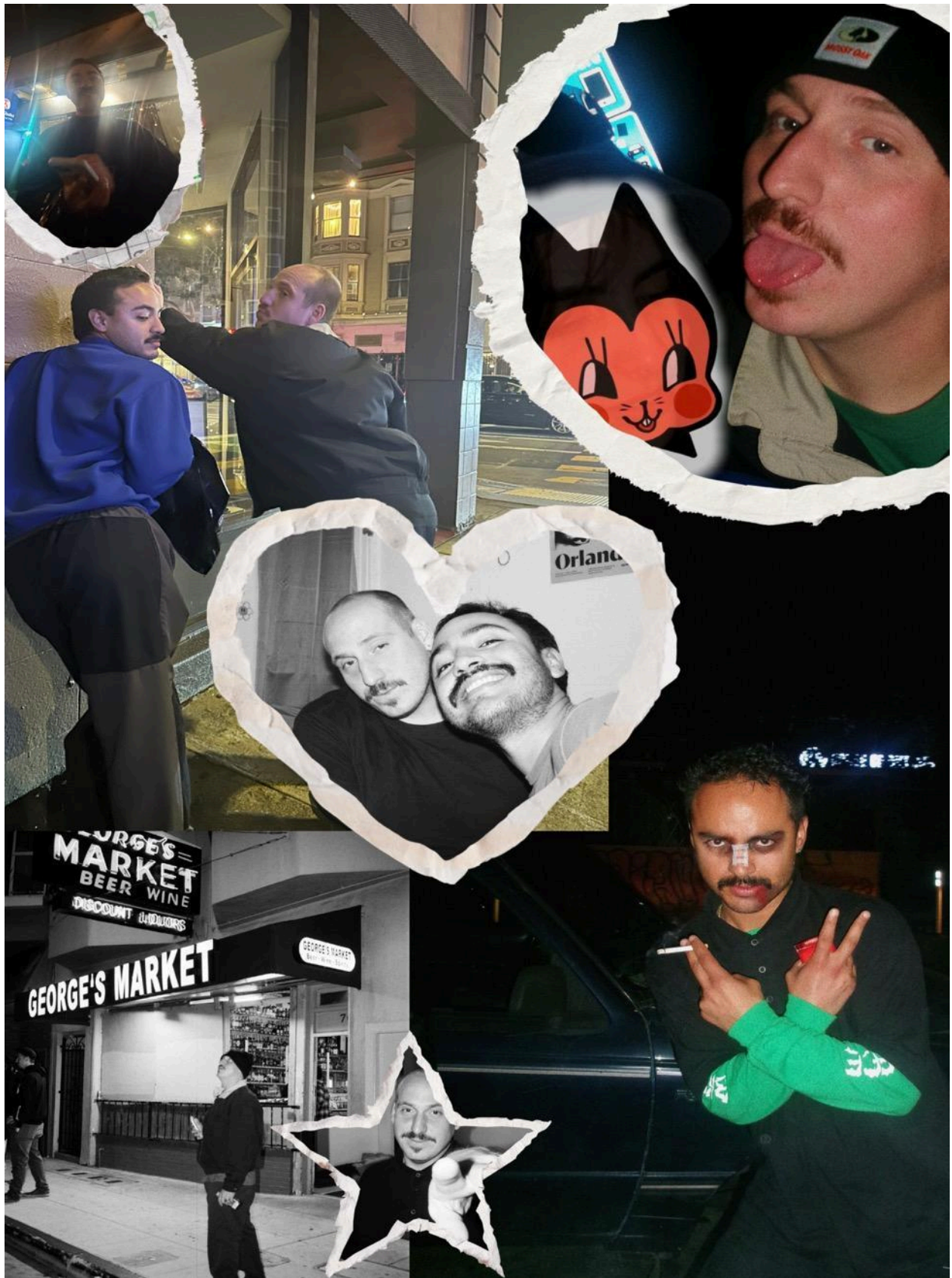


"There's a possibility that I'll never come out to my parents. The only way I'll come out is if I marry a woman. My family has very traditional Catholic beliefs."



"I've faced a lot of cultural barriers as I have opened up about my sexuality to my family. It was extremely surprising and difficult to overcome because I had to make a stance for myself. I decided I would be my truest self to the deepest extent. Dress how I wanted, talk how I wanted, and love who I wanted. I realized that I cannot make anyone love or think of me in any kind of way. I got laughed at and ridiculed, but those who truly loved me found a way past their biases."





How is it being an engaged couple in today's world? Especially with the president's decisions and the LGBTQIA+ community?

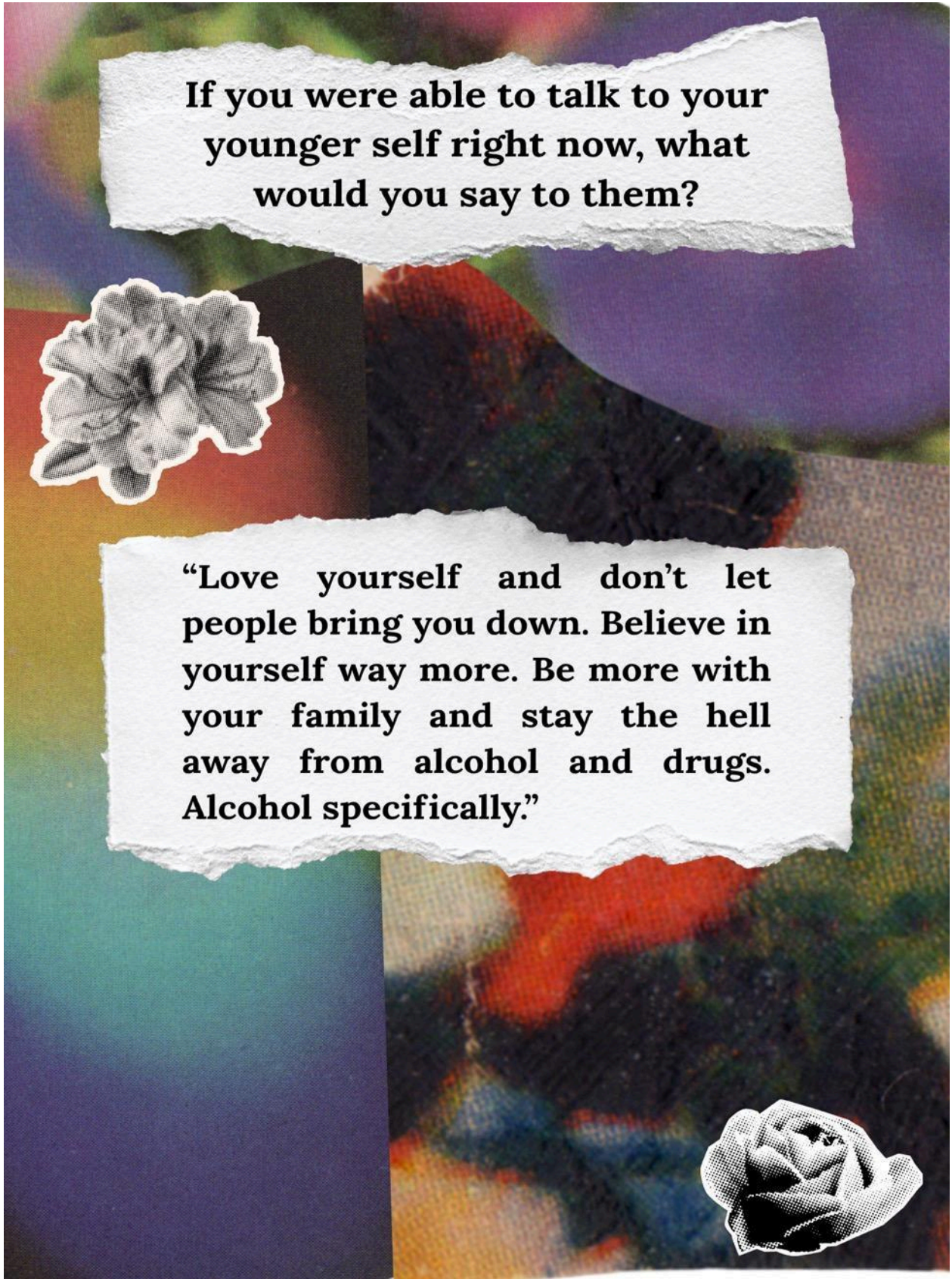
In today's world? damn, honestly, a blessing to be able to truly love someone genuinely who just happens to share the same chromosomes, haha. Given what we've fought so hard for, the simple emotion of love. pure love, that part of the world is afraid of expressing with one another. Sad, but it's the hard truth. Being afraid to love with connection, accountability, responsibility, the list can go on and on, people are afraid of that. But as of right now, fuck the government and especially a huge fuck you to Donald Trump, a pure, sadistic, broken, corrupt human being. Disgustingly disrespectful. We'll continue to fight for our love, which he has clearly never experienced in his life. The fragile masculinity can easily be broken. man to fucking man, honestly."

**What are the happiest memories
you two have created together?**



“Oh wow. There’s so many we have created together, but one that specifically stands out is when we both told each other we love each other. Gay as hell, I know, but realising that emotion towards each other was surreal in the moment. Living in SF together was so much fun, and meeting Vanessa on Halloween night in Castro was the cherry on top of our night, haha. Meeting her friends, and we had just come from a live band show at a bar that a customer was playing at, who we met at Shell.”





**If you were able to talk to your
younger self right now, what
would you say to them?**

**“Love yourself and don’t let
people bring you down. Believe in
yourself way more. Be more with
your family and stay the hell
away from alcohol and drugs.
Alcohol specifically.”**

How is it being both Tauruses and one day a part in the month of May? For the horoscope community.



“Bat shit crazy! We’re literally the yin and yang. We flow with each other so well and help so oppositely but effectively, if that makes sense, haha. My best’ friend's meme had said that we’re polar opposites and that’s why we’re so strongly in love, haha.





Dear Mario,

No amount of words, thank yous, and hugs will express how thankful I am for meeting you in this lifetime. Your class, your teaching style, and your authentic self inspired me in so many ways. It even helped me to finally feel comfortable in saying that i'm queer out loud. I remember saying that I wanted to figure out who I was during the first week of class, and here we are now lol.

Cada vez que veo un colibrí me recuerda a ti <3. Siempre te voy a tener en mi corazón en donde estés en la vida.

Eres una persona súper especial y estoy inmensamente privilegiada de poder conocerte y tomar tu clase. Ya sé que vas a tener el mismo impacto en donde sea que vayas en este mundo. Te deseo lo mejor.



My love letter to you

You find yourself in this liminal space.
Questioning your move in every which way.
You're afraid of the unknown. The unknown inside of you.

You remind yourself that there doesn't need to be a set answer, but you travel to the ends of where your mind can expand and continue to search for one.

Is this a part of colonialism? The need to search for a linear path in a nonlinear headspace?

You find yourself in a liminal space.
where the answers are infinite and the fight against colonialism begins. But you still continue to search for THE answer.

You'll get so tired of searching that you end up giving up.
and you finally realized that the answer has been you the whole time.

Loving yourself enough to learn who you are.
Loving yourself enough to sit in the unknown.
Loving yourself enough to love the community around you.

This is my love letter to you.

A beautiful human being who doesn't need to follow Eurocentric beauty standards and doesn't feel the need to follow Western ideas.

Don't worry, you'll figure it out soon.
When you water the seeds you planted and give them so much love, they begin to bloom.

