Inside: The Truth About New Year's Resolutions
Dear reader,
Welcome to the fourth edition of the Queer Youth Assemble monthly zine. Inside, you will find beautiful pieces of art, writing, and poetry created by Queer Youth Assemble members. The content within this zine varies greatly from one piece to the next, highlighting various elements, themes, perspectives, and our creators' lived experiences. We acknowledge the intersecting elements found within the content of this zine, and encourage you to read with both compassion and understanding.

Due to our strong belief in uncensored creativity, we decided not to put content limits on our creators for this publication. However, we understand that some of the content within this zine may be triggering to some readers. In this and future QYA zines, a list of specific triggers can be found at the top of each page, and any potentially triggering themes can be found at the beginning of each zine. Potentially triggering themes in this issue include body image, eating disorders, depression and mental health. If you find yourself struggling after reading, we encourage you to reach out for support.

We hope you enjoy this publication, and are inspired to create whatever your heart desires.

With love and care,

Esmée Silverman (she/her)
Queer Youth Assemble Co-Founder

Alice Mead (they/them)
Queer Youth Assemble Writing Team Lead
WHAT IS QYA?

Queer Youth Assemble is a non-profit youth-led organization dedicated to serving queer youth across the United States and its territories. We are committed to nurturing the joy, interests, and talents of queer youth, and giving queer youth the resources and support to create positive change within their communities. We envision a day where all queer youth are happy, supported, and able to reach their fullest potential.
PRINCE OF RED
by Thomas Ford (he/they)

just beneath my weary head
lay with me, my prince of red
to my hand, a red rose flower
keeping back my feelings sour

torn apart, our love askew
prince of red turned prince of blue
in the jail of failed desire
prince of blue now red with fire

in his place a princess stand
ordered by king Ferdinand
forced into a fake affection
so the kingdom keeps perfection

in my mind the prince will stay
as my eyes bring end to day
fast asleep by half past seven
where i dream of us in heaven
How dare I
by Asher (anything but she/he)

You look at me
You see your daughter. She/her
Quiet, agreeable, obedient little her
Never fights
Never argues
Perfect little girl

How dare I not be her
How dare I be Nonbinary
How dare I be poly
How dare I not be her

How dare I not be the girl you raised
How dare I not listen to everything you say
You are my mother.
What you say goes

I am Asher
I am loud
I am opinionated
I am queer

I am someone who sees
I am someone who knows
Someone who sees that you are not being fair
Someone who knows you are an emotional abuser

I am not your puppet
"How dare you" you say

I dare because I deserve to be known
I dare because I'm not the quiet little girl you raised
But yeah
How dare I
A picture of Earth made on cardstock paper using acrylic paint and paint pens. The background consists of pastel colors that look like a rainbow blending together. The piece has a white border. In all capital white letters, the word “diversity” arches at the top of Earth, the word “includes” is in the center overlapping the Earth, and “disability” arches at the bottom of Earth. On the bottom right is the signature of the artist's initials, HS.
It’s funny isn’t it?
How in such a short time
So much can change
Though so much can be lost
So much more can be gained

Perhaps I lost friends
But in their place, I found a family
A true family
Not a genetic one
One closer than that
People I can say I trust
I care for
And I can finally say they feel the same

Starting a year as one person
And ending it as someone completely different
Starting it as someone else
And ending it as me
Truly me
A person I can say I might just be proud of

And then, there’s them
The one person that made the entire year worth it
And I know is going to do the same for every year to come
I’d say more
But words can only say so much
When feelings are so strong
They leave you unable to really describe them
The look in my eyes should say it all
When your hazel eyes are returning my stare

Thank you all for making this one worth it

ODE TO A YEAR GONE
by Jay Barry (they/she)
The Truth About New Year’s Resolutions

by Alice Mead (they/them)

TW: mention of body image and eating disorders

It’s the beginning of a new year, and that means many people will start coming up with their New Year’s Resolutions. The definition of “resolution” is “a firm decision to do or not to do something.” The concept of New Year’s Resolutions comes from the ancient Babylonians, who would make promises to the gods to pay off their debts and return things they had borrowed. In terms of the activity that many people do around New Year’s Eve or New Year’s day, resolutions are a promise, often to yourself, to do something in the New Year that will improve your life, whether it be regarding health, happiness, wealth, etc. While setting goals for yourself is a great thing to practice, the manner in which it is popularly done for New Year’s resolutions tends to be ineffective and even unhealthy.

The most common New Year’s Resolutions in the U.S. include exercising more, losing weight, saving money, improving your diet, quitting smoking, getting organized, and picking up a new hobby or learning a new skill. According to statisticians, January 12th is the day most people give up on their New Year’s Resolutions. It’s known as “Quitter’s Day.” So why do people give up on their goals less than two weeks in? It’s because they set unrealistic and non-specific goals. For example, instead of just saying you’re going to improve your grades, put a plan in place for you to actually reach that outcome. Ask your teachers to meet to go over material more in depth, set aside time to study for tests and quizzes, and do your assignments when they are assigned instead of procrastinating until the last minute. All of these practices will get you to your long term goal, which in this case is to improve your grades. If you just say, “I want to improve my grades,” and don’t set a plan for yourself, you’re more likely to give up because you aren’t seeing results.

The majority of the most common New Year’s Resolutions involve health or body image. It’s common for people to eat lots of yummy food during the holidays and excuse it by saying something along the lines of “my diet starts on January 1st.” The health goals people set are often unreasonable and unattainable. For example, saying you’re going to “lose 10 pounds by the end of the month” isn’t a realistic goal, and it also isn’t safe. Unless you’re working with a licensed nutritionist or your doctor, this should not be on your list of New Year’s Resolutions.
This is also unsafe for children and young adults, who see their parents and other adults saying that they have to lose weight to be happier. You should not be losing weight when your body is still growing. 42% of girls in first grade, so around age 6, say they want to be thinner. 81% of 10 year-old children are afraid of being fat. These statistics are way too high, and they don’t involve genuine healthiness at all. You can be any weight and be perfectly healthy as long as you’re seeing a doctor regularly. We need to stop teaching children that the most important thing is their body meeting societal beauty standards. Even if you’re not directly saying it, practices like New Year’s Resolutions teach children these ideals because they watch their parents and other adults do it. I want to live in a world where 42% of six year-old girls say they want to practice more self-love or be kinder to others. A world where ten year-olds think the scariest thing you could be is hateful towards yourself and others.

So, this year, let’s try to make New Year’s Resolutions that revolve around loving and caring for ourselves and others. Make a promise to recognize the unrealistic body standards that society holds. Set a goal to take more walks, not to lose weight but to connect with nature or boost your mood. Create a schedule where you try a new food every week. Sign up to volunteer regularly. Set aside time to learn the ways you are subconsciously enforcing society’s beauty standards, and how to stop. There are so many things you can do to better yourself (and the world) that don’t involve losing 10 pounds by the end of the month.

Sources:
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https://anad.org/eating-disorders-statistics/
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

REvolutions

by anonymous

A resolution sounds so firm, final, boring, untrue
And who said society gets to care so much anyways?
I'll revolt against resolutions, start a new year's revolution

So this year,
I'm being myself, I'm being the same
I'm learning what love looks like everyday
I'm being held, even if it's me who does the holding
Because the one thing I'm stopping is believing that's lesser
I'm cupping the world in my hand like a bird
And I'm the bird being held, so gently, so soft
And I resolve to stay exactly the same,
Or change my name to metamorphosis and follow through spectacularly

People like to treat a resolution so cruelly,
A demand to progress with through the year,
That means you've won or lost on New Year's Eve
That erases reality and stamps failure or victory on top.

But what is the year but a circle, around the sun, again, again
I don't think she'd mind that progress is like her,
A circle unending, that rises and falls on a clock all it's own
I think she'd like the kindness I'm growing this year,
In a bright tangerine painted pot, outside my window,
The sun and moon, its caretaker while I do not tend it.

Living and dying and failing and crying do not feel as though they happen so fast,
When they all happen under a constant sun, in constant earth,
Nourished by a constant love.
SUBMIT A QUEERY
by an anonymous white transmasc lesbian

A new queery for a new year! This one asks: “what is a he/him lesbian?”

Excellent question! Let’s jump right in. Most people stumble upon this question on the basis of several assumptions that most people in our society make. These can be outlined as follows: 1. Lesbian means woman attracted to woman and 2. Anyone who uses he/him pronouns is a man. So to understand why he/him lesbians exist, we have to first go through why these two assumptions actually aren’t totally accurate!

To address the first assumption, many people have started to define lesbian as non-man attracted to non-man. Beyond this, it’s important to remember that every person who uses the label lesbian (or any other label for that matter!) has their own definition and understanding of how it applies to them. This is because labels really aren’t prescriptive in the sense that they are rigid categories to be placed into, but descriptive terms that people can use however they feel most effectively encapsulates their experience. Many people also identify with the term lesbian due to its historic usage amongst those who are gender non-conforming.

Now for the second assumption, that he/him pronouns are equivalent to being a man. While most people who are men use he/him pronouns, pronouns actually do not always equal gender! Most perceive he/him pronouns as masculine, but masculinity is not the same as maleness. Someone could use he/him pronouns no matter their gender identity, and as we know from the aforementioned, anyone who is not a man or who connects with the term lesbian can use it!

I think the reason many people become confused (or even upset) by he/him lesbians, is that we have become accustomed to understanding labels as the absolute in terms of a persons identity. Yet in actuality, identity and personhood are far more complex and fluid than can be explained by just one definitive word. So, there you have it: what exactly he/him lesbians are. And as a takeaway for everyone else reading: remember that most times when a person is using seemingly contradictory labels, they are likely using the language that best describes their experience with the complexity of gender and sexuality!

My dear queers, that is all I have for now. I’ll see you in our next edition with Submit a Queery, where queer fears fall on queer ears. DM our Instagram @queeryouthassemble if you have a Queery for our next volume of the zine! And all of us at QYA wish you a very gay day.
When I was in sixth grade
we had to write an essay
about Harriet Tubman.
I wanted to use a
New Big Word
that I had learned in a
New Big Book
that was "just perfect
for your reading level!"
When I got the paper back
that word was marked
because I made a grammar mistake.
I shouldn't be upset about a grade
that other people would kill for.
It's not a bad grade at all.
I shouldn't have tried showing off
using a word like that.
But despite my feeble attempts
at logic and reasoning
that red mark on my paper
was a red mark on my soul.

When I was in sixth grade
the math teacher had a table in the corner.
A small table
with four seats
and four "gifted" students
with their four "advanced" assignments.
I sat at that table all year
too young to know what a god complex was
or that it could develop from academic self worth,
a small table,
and time.

Too young to know that at this table sat students
predestined for advanced math classes
starting in seventh grade.
Now, I am in an honors algebra II class
and all I have learned is that the older you get
the less extraordinary you are.

So who are the gifted students now?
The gifted students are the kids
diagnosed with depression,
social anxiety,
and ADHD.
The kids with the bad grades and the
"But you used to love school!"s and the
"Have you just tried meditating?"s.
The kids who have lost all self worth
because it used to be taped to the fridge
but now lay in a trashcan next to their bed.
The QYA Merchandise Team, lead by atlas (he/they), made some amazing designs that are available as pins and stickers. Designs include the QYA logos along with animals with color schemes of various pride flags. These items are not (yet!) available online, and can only be purchased at in-person events, which due to COVID-19 are currently suspended until February 1st.

Logos and animal collage by Savanah (they/them), hedgehog by atlas, mooses by Michelo (they/them) and atlas, narwhal by Hop Livingstone (they/ fae) and atlas, snails by Noah (they/he) and atlas, and penguins by unnamed member and atlas.
THANK YOU!
Stay tuned for next month's edition & QYA Zine announcements!

Visit us at:
Website: queeryouthassemble.org
Instagram: @queeryouthassemble
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