

LOONY-BRAIN PRIMER

2010



2013



2014



2016



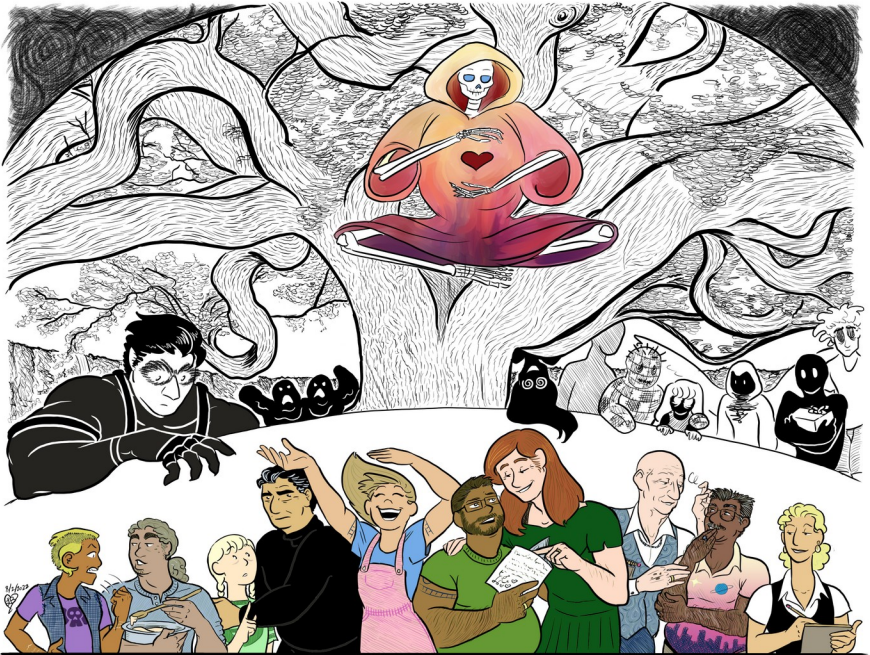
2017



Hello! We are LB Lee, AKA Loony-Brain. We chose this name way back when we thought that “having multiple personalities” was just an embarrassing stage we were going through that we’d laugh about later. Fifteen years on, the joke’s on us! We’re still multi, and now we have some minor fame for writing, drawing, and cartooning about it. Had we known this would happen, perhaps we would’ve chosen a less silly name, but at least it reminds us not to take ourself too seriously.

Andromeda’s intro cards seemed so cool that we got caught up in making some of our own. Enjoy!

Cover image is our website header bar, evolving with our roster changes. Below is our most recent family portrait:



This zine was made July 31, 2023.

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FAQS

We're often the first multi someone's met. Curiosity is natural, but some folks ask us super-invasive creepy questions, while others get so twisted up worrying about being hurtful that they dare not ask us anything at all, thereby committing themselves to Social Anxiety Hell.



There are more and more Multi 101 resources out there, like [Understanding Multiplicity](#) from Manchester Metropolitan University, but there is no standard etiquette, and honestly, it's easier for us to just do it ourselves, for ourself. (Insert disclaimer about how we are only one multi, these answers only apply to us, etc.)

So here it is, all the most common rude and polite questions we've been asked. This way, you get your answer, don't have to worry about offending us, and we never have to deal with such queries in person ever again! Hooray! Everyone wins!

RUDE QUESTIONS

Are you dangerous?

As much as anyone on this bitch of an earth.

For a while, this had the dubious distinction of the most common rude question we got. Nobody ever asked us this before realizing we were multi (or queer, but that's another story). When people ask this, it's because their only mental image of a multiple is an axe murderer on TV. It's depressing, and there's no good way to answer! If we say "no, of course not," isn't that exactly what a serial killer would say? If we say, "yes," well.



Who's the "real" LB?

Folks don't seem to realize how insulting this question is, or how many unquestioned assumptions are involved. What makes someone real? Being the first someone meets? Matching their vessel? Being "normal"? Many multis have no "original" singlet self at all, but we used to; see [Erin](#). She died in high school, she ain't coming back, and she's no more real than the rest of us.

What about your communal body, your vessel? Is that LB?

It's more an RV made of meat than an individual. It has its own needs, damage, and abilities, but not really an independent sense of self. It's more like a place: it may not speak to you in English or be an individual, but you better not dump toxic waste in it!

Can you prove you're multi?

Nope! Come to your own conclusions!

Nobody who's demanded proof of us has defined the terms of success, thus ensuring we will fail. (And if we somehow don't, they just move the goalposts.) Better to let them decide on their own. If they think us a liar, better they ditch us in disgust!

How do you have sex? What are your genitals?

Only intimates and doctors get to ask us that. (And even our doctors tend to ask apologetically!) If you want to know all the sexy details, then by god, you have to pay us our dollars and buy a copy of Alter Boys in Love or Multi, Orgasmic first! We're a pro and this is America!



Any question involving our trauma history

Buy All in the Family.

Multiples (and disabled people in general) are expected to trot out their sordid suffering for anyone who asks, like a dancing bear. We hate it. We have chosen to be open about some parts of our trauma history, but we have zero interest in proffering our wounds for the picking.

Any question involving multi turf wars (the “genic” slap fight, spiritual vs. psychological, diagnostic validity...)

We do not care, except in a historical sense. We used to waste a lot of air arguing how Wrong People Are Wrong, and it often let jerks dictate the terms of the argument. Who needs that?



Our answer to all turf wars are: if someone isn't being a jerk, we don't care how they see or label themselves. A lot of people trying to micro-manage other people's identities are acting from insecurity or malice, and they don't deserve page space. Besides, we predate most of this bullshit anyway.

Do you want to be one person again?

No. Some plurals want to be singlet, some make it happen, and others experience it spontaneously. However, most folk are naive about the process: it's hard work, sometimes temporary, and doesn't necessarily correlate with dealing with your damage. (In other words, you may be just as fucked up singlet as you were plural, just now there's fewer people to blame.)

When we change, so do our relationships! Coming out multi, we lost many people we cared about, because they only knew our singlet mask. It hurt for everyone involved!



Becoming singlet again would involve the same stuff in reverse: folks would have to let go of who they knew and loved, come to terms with the new self. That's hard!

At one time, our headmate Miranda thought she might merge with someone else. She didn't, and a singlet friend of ours, years later, confessed happiness that she stayed, because they valued their relationship with her, specifically. Even if Miranda's essence stayed, it wouldn't be the same. They valued their friendship with this Miranda, in this moment, and they hadn't told her at the time, because they also valued her right to make that choice.

It's more complex than, "yay, you're fixed!" And we're not up to that Herculean labor, especially since we don't want to do it in the first place. We resent the social pressure and presumption that being singlet is inherently healthier or better.

POLITE QUESTIONS

What do I call you?

“LB” and “they” are fine for us as a whole. We really enjoy hearing our individual names and pronouns, but we also understand that some folks never learn to differentiate us, and we’ve grown more okay with that over time. We ourself juggle “I” and “we.”

We give zero shits about “LB is” or “LB are” conjugations. “Y’all” is nice, but not necessary, especially for non-Southerners.

How do I talk to N_____ and know it’s them?

Ask. It bothers some plurals, but not us.

Will y’all remember me?

Generally, yes. If we don’t, something has gone very wrong.

What does being multi feel like?

It’s living in a haunted house with thin walls and a pack of roommates, most of whom can’t leave. You’re never alone. Ever.

How did you realize you were multi?

Our original girl died, and then so did her replacement, leaving us weirdos, most of whom were very bad actors. We’d also spent years talking to, arguing with, and negotiating with each other, so the shift was more mental than logistic.



Do you worry you're faking?

Not anymore. If being multiple is some elaborate delusion, it serves us, doesn't hurt us, and we have zero desire to change it. So what's the big deal?

If faking is a constant sword over your head, even after years and years, it's worth asking yourself why. Often, a fear of faking is just a pacifier to avoid a deeper concern. After all, if the problem is you're a fraud, all you have to do is stop faking and everything will be great. But if your problem is actually, "society really hates multiples and I don't want them to hate me," or, "if we're multiple, we might have to deal with parts of ourselves we don't like," those are not easy or fast solutions.

How do you decide who does what?

We run on unanimous consensus, and all folks in good standing get to vote or filibuster us into inaction. This only works because we are all rats on the same ship, and none of us want to sink.



Do you have different skills/opinions/handwriting/etc.?

Skills, opinions, vocal patterns: yes. Handwriting: it varies.

Individual differences aren't hard to develop. Gigi chose to

develop her own handwriting style because she wanted to. No big.

How open are you about your plurality?

Even the government knows, these days (not by our choice).

What's a headspace?

It's an imaginary landscape where we perceive and interact with each other. Many multiples don't have one, but ours plays a vital role in our communication and self-regulation. (See [the black ocean](#))



WTF are godseeds? Infestation? What?

See [the family god](#). Our brain is weird and does weird shit.

What's the deal with Edward Cullen?

Edward Cullen is just a figure of speech, not a headmate. In the pit of despair, we find it useful to pretend the voice of our self-hate is a separate entity, preferably one wearing a face that we don't like or trust, so [we chose the sparkly vampiric hero](#) of [Twilight](#). He has been a helpful (and hilarious) device ever since. Drawing him as a gleeful schadenfreude gremlin helps us laugh and deal better. We've even come to appreciate his work!

How can I tell if a question is rude?

Imagine you ask a random family you just met. If it'd be overly personal or brain-breaking, it's rude.

PEOPLE

Roster is listed in order of how often the person's up front (interacting with the "real" world). This list is not comprehensive, just the important bits. Most glyphs are self-explanatory, but:

+ is for folks who presently front, - for folks who don't.

☠ stands for dead folks. Often appear in grayscale.

👨👧 signifies siblings native to the vessel (our communal body) who split off the original girl. All are left-handed.

∞ signifies someone from the Infinity Smashed world; their lives were mostly there. They're all right-handed.

Ages are stated relative to how old our communal vessel is.

A lot of subcultural identifiers are pseudo-academic and recondite. In the interests of being understandable to everyday people, we try to use words that can be looked up in a dictionary (recondite) or that are comparatively easy to intuit (headmate).



THE VESSEL



Our Lovable Meat RV (it/its)

Time: birth on

Age: vessel



Our vessel's not an individual. It's more like a planet we live on, with its own needs, damage, and cycles. Like a planet, it deserves kindness and care; it's not a disposable object to be used and abused. It's done its best for us, so we do our best for it. We sometimes depict it instead of us in our art, for various reasons.



ROGAN LEE



Reliable Workhorse Who's Not In Charge (he/him)

Time: 2004-

Age: vessel



If you've spoken to us, you probably spoke to Rogan. His sheer constancy has made him our main man. He's not the smartest, strongest, or most creative, but by god, he can keep a deadline.

After M.D.'s death, Rogan became our trauma sponge, hellbent on protecting his headmates no matter the cost to himself. He succeeded, though with gimpy retractible bat wings and many scars. With Mac, he's mellowed and gotten much rounder and hairier. He likes queer robomance comics.

Relationships:



Mac = ♥! (husband)



Biff = ♥!
(boyfriend)



Grey = ♥! (mom)



Bob = ♥! (foster)



Mori = co-trauma sponge



"MAC" PATRICK MACINTIRE



The Self-Proclaimed "Hot One" (he/him)

Time: 2006; 2007-

Age: vessel +8

+ ♂ ♂ ♀ ∞ ☠ +

Mac is a big bi Southern Baptist slut who loves good food, good company, and good sex. He's a lazy hedonist who shares cooking duty with Biff, and he loves dance, working out, and musicals.

Mac died in a workplace accident, whereupon the bony lady offered him a new life here. Mac said yes, and he's been here ever since, encouraging us (Rogan) to slow down, kick back, and play. He is very tall and Yankees notice his Southern accent.

He was famous for his Disney princess tresses but recently cut his hair. He also hosts him and Rogan's anniversary parties.

Relationships:



Rogan = ♥! (husband)



Biff = boyfriend-in-law;
gym buddy



Grey = gym buddy, ex-coworker,
killer (with consent)



Bob = ex-coworker, friend



10/3/2019

"M.D." MORI DEATHFOREST LEE



Punk Zinester Monster Dyke Who killed God (she/her)

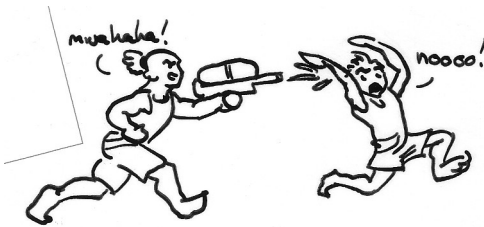
Time: 1999-2004; 2014-

Age: vessel -11

+ ♀ ♀ ♀ ☠ 🤖

The first headmate to split off the original girl, M.D. is a snarky little monster woman who sees her gender as a sterile worker insect's. Sex and reproduction are for queens!

Stuck as a trauma sponge, M.D. killed herself in 2004, got trapped in headspace hell, clawed her way out, and then murdered the god who put her there. She is an ineradicable force of chaos who does our taxes. She calls everyone dude and bro and had a ponytail for years. Currently she is in her lesbian womon stage.



Relationships:



Biff = ♥ ♥ ♥! (platonic)

dudema, best bro



Rogan = successor, #2 dude-mom,

fellow trauma sponge



Grey = fellow butch woman



Rawlin = COMPLICATED.

BIFF



Guy With Heart of Gold & Culinary Blowtorch (he/him)

Time: 2000-2004; 2015-

Age: vessel +8

+ ♂ ♂

♀ ∞

Biff only came here when Rawlin yanked him out of his world for body-puppetry purposes. M.D. freed him and they've shared a high-collision friendship ever since. He's short and tough, a foodie.

After fleeing his shit family at sixteen, Biff worked a series of closeted, crummy, under-the-table jobs before coming here. Now that he's no longer constantly worrying about food, shelter, or the closet, he's relaxed a lot. He's been sober since 2015, and he takes cares of a lot of practical tasks: laundry, shopping, cleaning, mending... he's the tidiest of us. He's also a talented illusionist.

Relationships:



Mori = ♥ (his #1 priority, platonic)



Rogan = ♥ (boyfriend)



Grey & Mac = gym buddies



Bob = don't see eye to eye; oil and water



SNEAK LEE



Creative Ray of Sunshine (ze/zer)

Time: 2004-

Age: vessel -5



Despite zer name, Sneak is not sneaky at all. (Though ze is very squeaky.) Ze is also older than ze sounds and the tallest of zer siblings, except Rawlin. Ze may also be the strongest of all of us physically, including Rawlin. As a kid, ze wanted to be a superhero, and ze still has the strictest morality of us.

Sneak is our pinch-hitter, immensely creative but lacking staying power. Ze tends to bounce in, say hi, do a cool thing, then wander off. Ze likes web design, tarot, emoticons, and exclamation points! Ze is also very sociable, so people usually meet zer long before they talk to Biff, or even Mac. Ze rarely wears pigtails now.

Relationships:

Everyone = ♥!

(Seriously, ze is notable in that ze gets along shockingly well with almost everyone.)



MIRANDA LEE



Queen of To-Do Lists (she/her)

Time: 2005-

Age: vessel



Miranda is the one stuck with the pseudo-British accent (she is American, like all of us), a weird artifact of when she was created. She has a passion for lists, group meetings, and organizing, but usually prefers others to do the actual work!

Mir used to revolve around whatever boy caught her fancy and was willing to sacrifice other headmates in the process. After merging with another headmate, Lollyanna, she decided to figure herself out and found new purpose in management. She's really good at helping us move!

She likes tea and Beauty and the Beast stories.

Relationships:

Lolly = split together, then merged

Dion = on-again off-again hook-up



Biff = excellent moving partner!



Rogan = used to always fight; now on better terms



"BOB" BABUBHAI DOSHI



Renegade Furry from the Internet Fuckpit (he/him)

Time: 2004-2005; 2020-

Age: vessel +34

+ ♂ ♀ ♂ ∞ ॐ 🖥

Bob has been a cybercitizen since before LB were born, working as a computer programmer in the dot-com boom. A gizmo geek, sci-fi fan, and neophile, his reaction to finding himself in a psychological realm was to ask how the physics worked. When we couldn't answer him, he decided to spend his retirement finding out.

Bob is far smarter than he is wise, and too curious for his own good. His fursona is a fat cheetah. He and Grey have been together forever.

Relationships:



Grey = ♥ (wife)



Rogan = ♥ (fosterbat)



Mac = former coworker



Biff = ex-workplace pain



Mori = ex-workplace pain



GRACE GREY-DOSHI



Butch Mama Wolf (she/her)

Time: 2004-2005; 2020-


Age: vessel +30


+ ♀ ♀♂ ∞ ☆


Often going by her unmarried last name, Grey speaks softly and carries a big stick. Quiet, patient, and nigh-impossible to bore, she has all the sense her husband Bob lacks. (They've been together twenty years.) She likes working out, old music, butch formal wear, and sign language (more so than speaking). She can make hard choices, and thus was the one to put Mac down.


Grey was closeted for almost her entire life until she came here. She seems relieved not to have to pretend anymore. Having supported Rogan through high school, they've adopted each other.


Relationships:

 Bob = ♥ (husband)

 Rogan = ♥ (son)

 Mac = gym pal,
ex-coworker

 Biff = gym pal,
ex-work problem

 Mori = butch pal,
ex-work problem



GIGI LEE



Spooky Little Girl (she/her)

Time: 2002-

Age: 10ish

+ ♀ 🦋

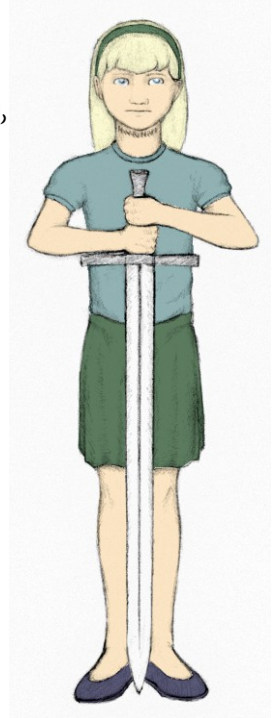
Gigi (pronounced “giggy” or, in IPA, $gɪˈgi$), fronts very little these days, but when she does, she’s a powerhouse. Very shy, with trouble speaking due to an old headspace injury, she cannot build jack in headspace, but she’s creepily good at sneaking around and appearing right where you least expect her, seemingly out of nowhere. She can also climb walls like a gecko and put other headmates to sleep.

Gigi’s been ten for decades and draws like a kindergartner but is capable of adult life. She likes cucumber, green tea mochi ice cream, spiders, and watching Let’s Plays of scary video games with Sneak. She almost always wears a headband.

Relationships:



Falcon = ♥! (platonic)



FALCON STRANGER



Professionally Mysterious Trench Coat Man (he/him)

Time: 2002-2005; 2007-

Age: vessel +28?

+ ♂ ♀ ?

Falcon is a bit of a drifter and shady character who says very little about himself, and what he does say, he often lies about. He's been sleeping on our psychological couch since 2009.

Growing up in New Orleans, Falcon took a job for the bony lady as an imaginary friend for at-risk children. As long as he did the work, his base needs would find themselves fulfilled, but then we came along and he flubbed our case so badly that the bony lady fired him. His life fell apart, and even though none of us are mad at him, he seems a broken man. He prevented our suicide back in 2012.

Relationships:



Gigi = ♥ (platonic)



BL = ex-boss, ex-♥ (you just had to bone her, Fal...)

Bama = ex-coworker (deceased)



THE BONY LADY



Chain-Smoking Chthonic Death Entity (she/her? meh)

Time: 2004?-2006?; 2018-

Age: OLD.



The bony lady claims that she is not a headmate, but a large cosmic death entity beyond human comprehension, shoved into a humanoid hand-puppet for our perceptual convenience. (Do not call her a god.) Acts like a gangster granny. Likes alcohol, cigarettes, candles, and mortals, but that doesn't make her easy to deal with.

The bony lady doesn't live on a human scale. To her, we are fireflies, beautiful and enchanting and fragile. She's tolerant of human foibles and freakishness, but she doesn't understand us and tends to break us by accident.

Fitting her into human morality is doomed to fail.

Relationships:



Falcon = ex-♥, ex-employee



Rogan = client (kept him alive, ripped his wings off)



Mori = client (got her out of hell, helped her kill a god)



Mac = client (brought him here)



RAWLIN



That One Freaking Guy (he/him)

Time: 1999; 2000; 2003; 2020-

Age: 25ish?

- ♂ ♀ ☠? ♡ 🗑

A ten-foot powerhouse, Rawlin was once decent. Then he tore out his heart/soul for the headspace, got infested, and became an amoral, body-puppeting, dream-hacking, sexually aggressive pain. He spent 20 years in headspace solitary confinement, and when we rediscovered and released him (because solitary confinement is a terrible thing to do), he sexually harassed everyone until we banned him from both the house and the “real” world. After getting a godseed out of him, he may be coming back to himself.

He always dressed like a BDSM stereotype. No clue why.

Relationships:



Mori = his unwilling “soulmate”;
sexually assaulted



Biff = body puppeted
(2000); infested



Grey = body puppeted (2003?)



Rogan = assaulted (2020);
sexually harassed



THE FAMILY GOD



IMPURE OF HEAAAAARTTTTT (it/its)

Time: 1999?-2019?

Age: N/A

- ☠️ † ?

The family god is/was a petty genital wart of a being with a pretensions of grandeur. Supposedly a spiritual parasite that has infested our mother's family for at least three generations, it infests open wounds and mucous membranes with white razor-edged seed, which hatch into voracious soul-eating maggots. If the infested is lucky, they die. If unlucky, they become increasingly blasé about inflicting sexual and physical violence on others, with the intent of spreading the god's influence.

The family god is obsessed with purity, light, and whiteness. It sees us as "false children" who need to be "purified." It may well be our brain's attempt to make sense of the horror in our family. Psychological or spiritual, Mori set it on fire and sent it packing.

Relationships:



Rawlin = seeded,
enslaved



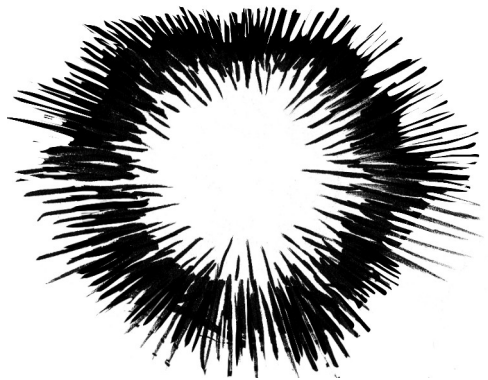
Mori = murderer,
seeded (failed)



BL = murderer



Rogan = seeded many times (failed)



THE BLACK OCEAN



Eldritch Abyssal Headspace Waters (it/its)

Time: ? - present

Age: trololol

???

Our headspace is a habitable bubble enclosed in sentient water, and the ocean is those waters. (And also possibly the headspace itself? Unclear.) It seems to be our subconscious, made of all that we've lost, mostly death and agony, but also good memories that were thrown out for various reasons. Despite its gloomy origin and appearance, it's become a powerful friend. It protected us from the family god, contained threats we couldn't manage, and has taken a lot of damage without dying. It seems to be at least partially powered by Rawlin's disembodied heart, pumping lightning through its liquid sky. For more info, see [Headspace](#).

It cannot speak but it can answer yes/no questions (including stuff we don't know) and express emotions. It helps regulate our memory work and moves around via springs, caves, and a pipe system. It likes playing fetch and hates bright light.

Relationships:



ghosts = emissaries;
contain infestation



Rawlin = imprisoned 20
years; would-be master



God = contained on
island, enemy



ERIN



The Ill-Fated Original Girl (she/her)

Time: birth-2005

Age: 5-17?

- ♀ ♀♂ ☠️ 🏠

Some multiples don't have an original singlet self, but we did, and she died horribly.

Erin was a daydreamy artistic bibliophile who hoped for better days and an escape from the "real world." Unable to understand or handle what was happening to her, she lost more and more of herself until there was hardly anything left. She died of god-maggot infestation after a gang rape.

We still find pieces of her sometimes, sad infested ghosts. We've asked if they want to come back, but they always say no. They're tired. They want to rest.

Relationships:

Trent = friend, ex-boyfriend

Lolly = replacement



Miranda = replacement



VARIOUS SUNDRY GHOSTS



The Biggest Demographic in Here (various pronouns)

Time: 1993-2012?

Age: various



There's a spectrum here from lost memory, to ghost, dead-but-okay headmate, and finally to living headmate, and all the involved borders are blurry. With some exceptions, a headspace ghost only lived long enough to absorb a hideous trauma and then drop dead as a form of containment. They come in all genders, ages, shapes, sizes, and levels of lucidity and aggression—some attack the first headmate they see, others sob inconsolably, and others just stand and wait. None understand that time has passed. Most have similar sloppy handwriting and distinctive rambling horror movie speech.

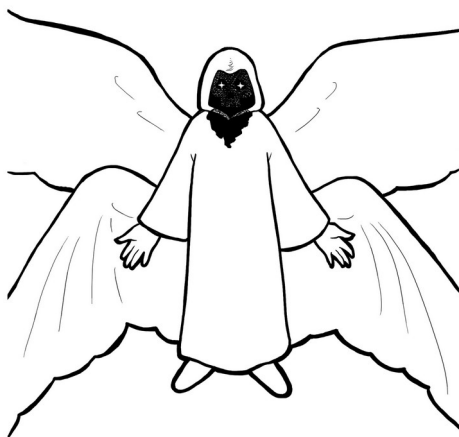
Trapped in agony, ghosts often take on the symbolic shape of their attackers or cause of death. We take back their pain and lay them to rest as soon as we find them; that's all they want.

They don't show up much now—we've found the wanderers, and the remaining ones tend to have gotten lost in deep, hard-to-reach nooks and crannies of headspace.

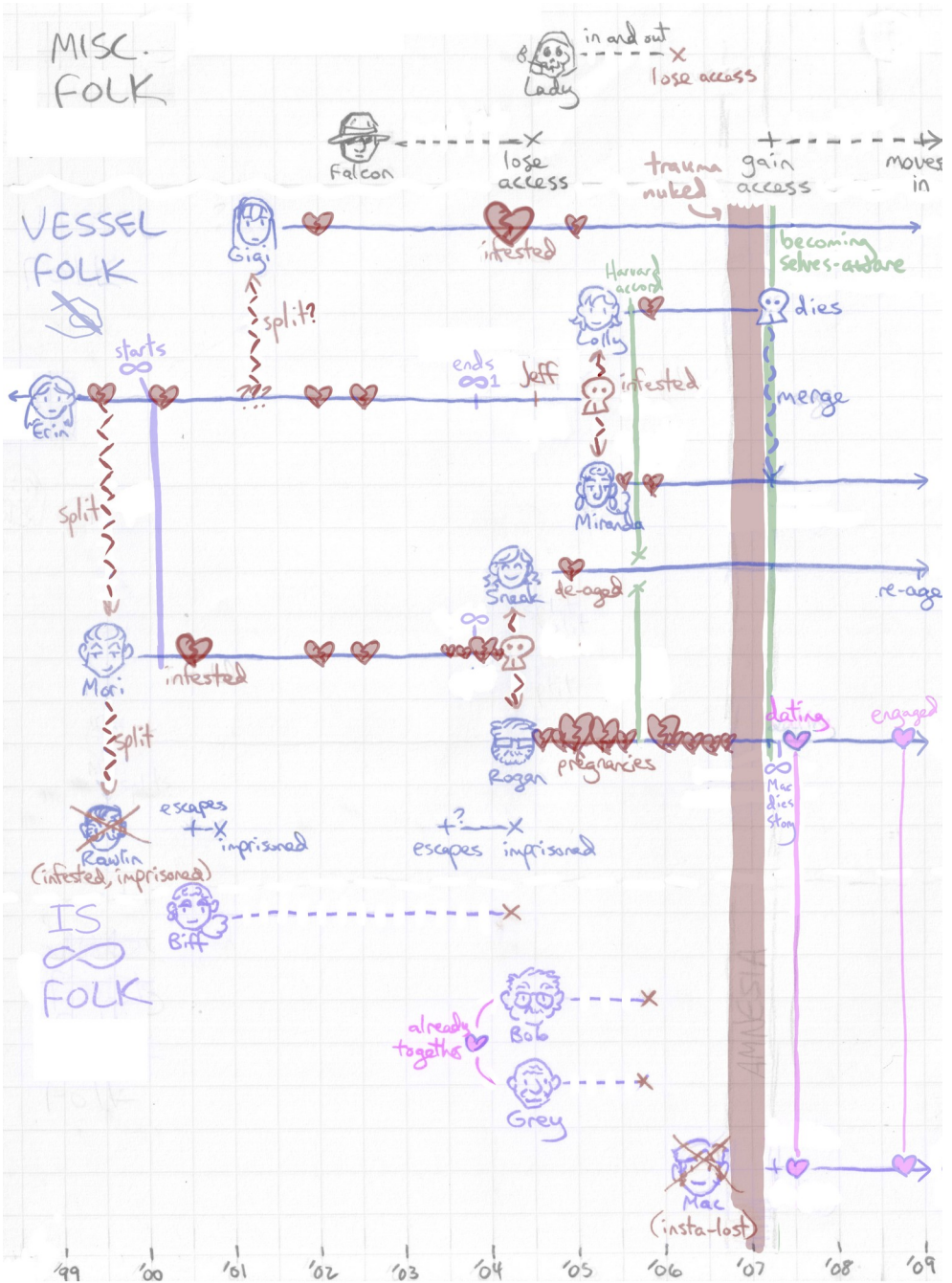
We get really snippy and bitter over the myth that headmates can't die.

Relationships:

None. They are sad.



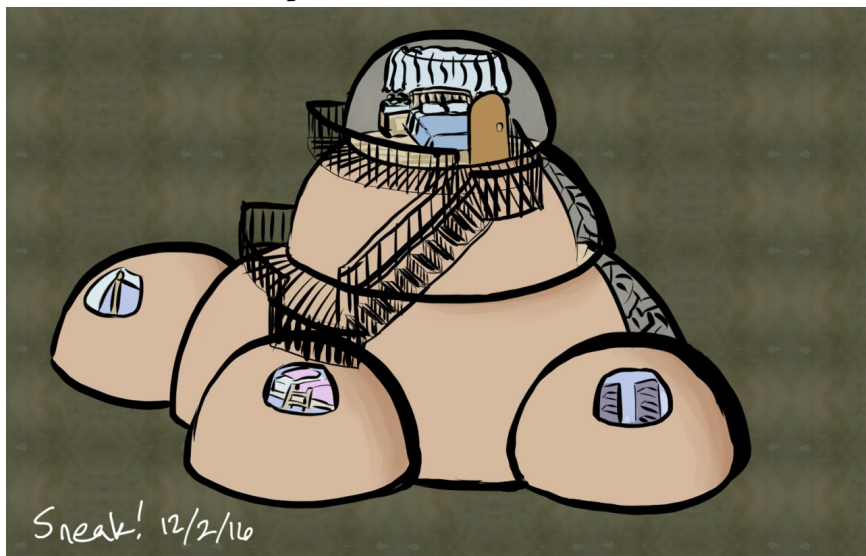
TIMELINE/FAMILY TREE



HEADSPACE

Our headspace started as an imagination exercise that our original girl did when she was bored or waiting to fall sleep. She used it for escapist adventures to escape her deteriorating home life (which she took as a statement of the inferiority of the “real” world).

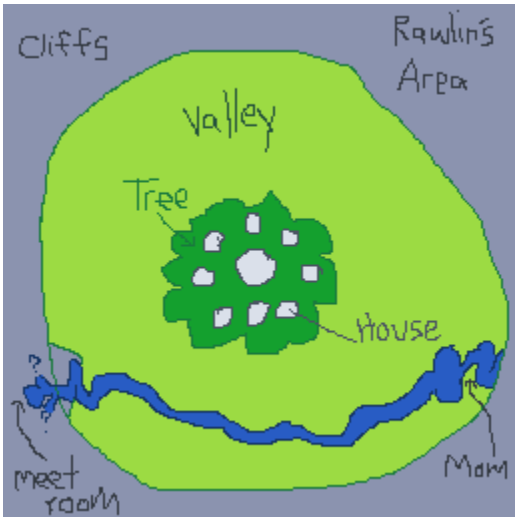
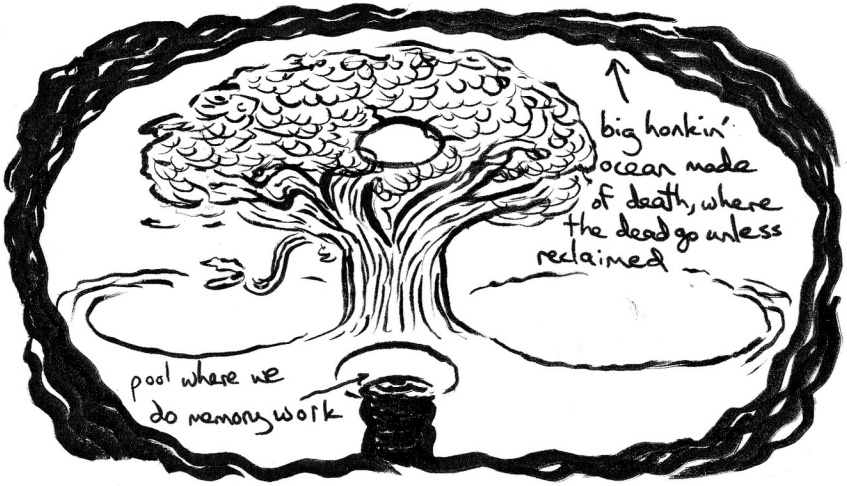
In those days, our headspace was an Edenic idyll with a mighty oak, but over time, especially after the original girl died, the place decayed into a dark, scorched wasteland full of smog. The ocean was frozen, dormant. There was no horizon, no sky, no weather, and many ghosts. We built a bunker of a house and did our best to never leave, expanding it as needed.



After years of memory work, in 2018, the black ocean thawed enough to revive with a vengeance. We had used it as a dumping ground for years, and boy, was it pissed!

It tried to drown us all until Sneak had the sense to go, "Wait, wait, this isn't necessary! Let's talk!" Ze offered concessions and compassion, and we began building mutual trust and cooperation.

In 2020, after yet more memory work, the ocean restructured, dragging long-lost geography from the depths. Still chthonic, it now has plant life again (including the now-giant oak) and a sky (made of water, with Rawlin's disembodied heart acting as a "sun").

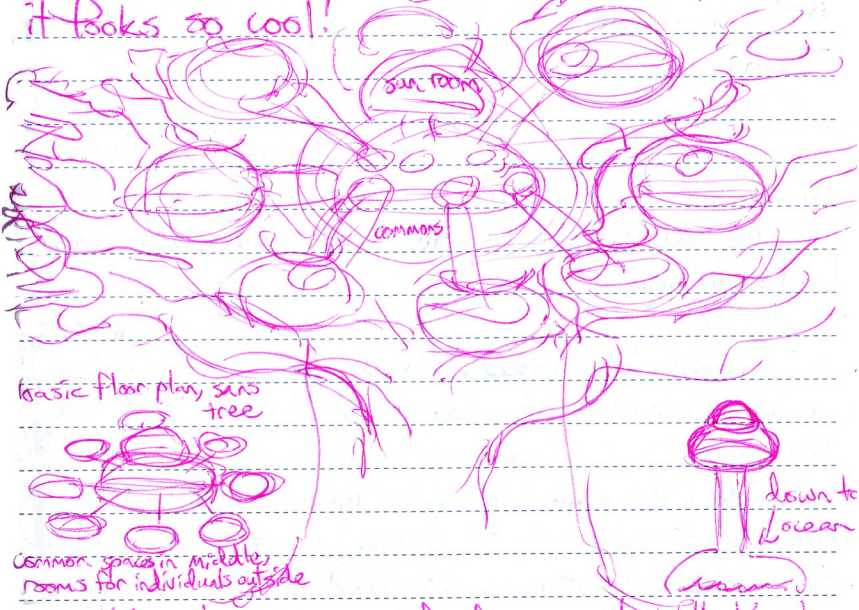


We haven't done much exploring. Rawlin already had rights to the outer headspace before the restructuring, and we would rather avoid him. Even though the valley is still technically our territory, only Bob and Grey have done much looking around. (Bob promptly found a massively-infested ghost of our original girl, and only the ocean's intervention kept him from getting into serious trouble.)

The whole place seems to run on psychological rules, rather than physics. It's weird and wonky and we don't really understand it (though oh, does Bob strive), but we do know it's doing its best.

Sneak remodeled our house into a glass bubble tree house compound with a pipe system for the ocean's convenience.

We renovated the house! It is now a big bubble terrarium treehouse! Aaahh it looks so cool!



It's a good headspace. We love it.

INFINITY SMASHED

When our original girl was in middle school, she got the idea to put all her favorite things together into one giant multiversal epic, written by herself, with Mori as the protagonist and the god-eaten Rawlin as a minor antagonist.



They called it Infinity Smashed, or: the Story. Hardly anyone else cared about it, and that was good: it gave us something that was completely ours, something our abusers didn't control.

Inevitably, Infinity Smashed became a junkyard of everything on our mind, including things we dared not acknowledge outside of the subterfuge of fiction. Sometimes in code, sometimes flat-out, we used our "Story" to discuss and deal with abuse, headmates, or headspace happenings, all in 4 drafts, 1567 pages, and 822,731 words (not including spin-offs, back-ups, and aborted drafts only on paper). It remains a major source of our records, even now.

It became more than a story. It became a mythos, a raggedy, adolescent, embarrassing mythos that offered hope, instruction, consolation, and support. Some other multis have "Stories" too!

Mori, Rawlin, Biff, Falcon, Grey, Bob, and Mac all appeared in Infinity Smashed, with roles of varying importance. (Mac says one line off-camera and dies. Rawlin was in a draft only ten people read.) Some of them were written in because why not, they were there, but Biff, Grey, Bob, and Mac all seem to have originated in the Infinity Smashed world... specifically, the fictional city of Vago, Arizona, which had the reputation of being a weirdness nexus.



First art done of Biff in 2003, Grey in 2004, Mac in 2005, and Bob in 2006. It's way easier to get away with drawing headmates when they're "characters in a story"!

Bob, Grey, and Mac were all written into the story months before we met them in person, but Biff we met in person months before he was written in—Rawlin ripped a hole to Vago to grab him, which seems to have set the precedent. For years afterward, doors would sometimes just fall open between our mind and the Infinity Smashed world. (Had we been in the right online place at the time, we would've called this “soulbonding.”) It became a strange, symbiotic give-and-take that we didn't fully understand.

We cannot pretend that Infinity Smashed is completely free-standing. There are too many places where things don't line up, like how Mac swears he died in 2009 (as the drafts at the time said), but Bob and Grey were there (from a later draft) and insist he died in 2002. That's not exactly the kind of thing someone can mistake, so for a long time, we 🙌 folk presumed IS purely a psychological construct. This comforted us.

But then that stopped lining up too. If the whole place was made up, how did Rawlin bust into Vago to yonk Biff (a city and man we knew nothing about and wouldn't write for another six months)? Rawlin's powerful... but he's never been artistic or imaginative! And in the stories, Bob and Grey were originally coworkers; Rogan thought they were “just roommates” until Bob couldn't take being closeted in his own home anymore. All the Infinity Smashed crew have stuff we didn't know till they told us.



Rawlin art, from January 2003

Clearly something weirder is going on. And now we're together and comparing notes...

We had a mysterious headmate named Amy that we barely remember. The only proof of her existence is a bare sprinkling of records between December 2002 and summer 2005: a few sketches, a page and a half of writing in a spiral. All we knew about her was that she was in her late teens or early twenties, kinda punk rock, and worked at a place called the Video Parlor.

We happened to mention this to Bob, only for him to say, "Oh yeah, Father Eddie's. I'd get drunk and do DDR there while I was unemployed."

Bob couldn't tell us if he'd ever seen Amy (he hadn't paid attention to the employees) but still, it was spooky. And when we dug into the old drafts, we did find one mention of Amy's name, dropped in passing by a different Vago character as someone she knew. Just a coincidence? Amy isn't exactly a rare name... still, though, it rattled us a little.



Amy art, from 2003



M.D. art, 2000

Over time, we've grown more okay with the idea that our mind has a mind of its own. Witness the black ocean, which has its own sentience and volition. Perhaps Infinity Smashed is the same way. Maybe the "real"/psychological binary is just another bogus brain-trap.

Maybe one day, we'll know more...

FAMILY HISTORY

Our history doesn't start with us, but with our old lady's family.
(Content warning: murder, death, incest, pregnancy, violence.)



Our old lady. She'll wear that worried expression the rest of her life.

Our old lady's father died under mysterious circumstances when she was still in the single digits. For the longest time, we were told it was a suicide (possibly with carbon monoxide) but apparently it may have been murder... by Grandma. Whatever went down, the woman we knew as Mom was shipped off to foster care with her siblings, and they were only reunited once Grandma married a new man, who I suspect was meant to keep her in line.

Unfortunately, the man she married was a classic pedophile.

(Dude was honest-to-god called the Candy Man in his obituary.) It seemed to work out well for Grandma: she got her kids back and financial support. And the Candy Man, well, he got his candy.

He attacked Mom and her older brother, but only managed to for-sure sire one child himself: our youngest aunt, Lois. She lived with him until he died, taking care of him, and when he got old and frail, she became his devoted enforcer.



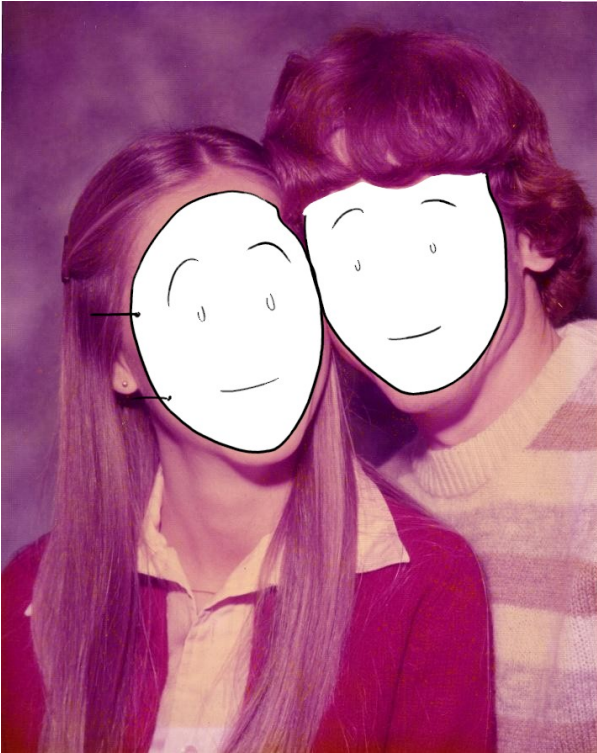
His tombstone: "Beloved Parents." Hers: "Together Again."

Our old lady's family had the deep bonds only horrible secrets can provide. The Candy Man was savior and reuniter of the family; everyone seemed to idolize him, even as he fed on generation after generation of children. Lois was a teacher of underprivileged children, and we saw children's clothes around their house that wouldn't have fit any of the kids in the family at the time, but would've fit her students, so she may have brought them home. The Candy Man had a hold on her we are glad to never know.

On top of all this, that side of the family was part of some Protestant fundy side of Christianity, possibly Southern Baptist, that preached unconditional forgiveness. (This sounds batshit to people not from this milieu, but it's a thing.) Basically, whenever someone hurt you, you were religiously obligated to forgive them, instantly and unconditionally, and "forgiving" them meant you must never, ever discuss what they did or do anything to prevent them from doing it again. If you didn't, you were the bad one.

You might think, “gee, that sure sounds convenient for a guy who rapes his kids.” Correct!

Our old lady never recovered. She felt worthless and afraid all the time, I think. She was dissociative definitely, multi maybe, and furious about what they’d done to her. All that rage had to go somewhere, and she didn’t dare direct it towards the Candy Man. Or her husband.



The parents, 1979. We draw them in masks for both anonymity and because... well, they're like that.

The man we knew as Dad, by the way, has no tragic backstory. There’s no great secret, no grand rationale. He’s just an entitled, rich prick. You’ve met a million guys like him. Mom claims he “saved” her, and indeed, he did look great compared to the Candy Man.

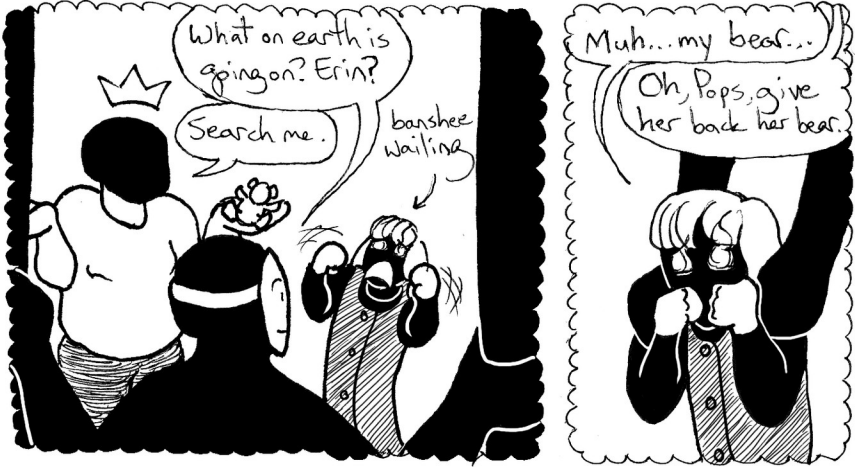
Dad realized that it benefited him to have a wife who worshiped him and who'd instantly forgive anything he did. I doubt he ever understood her religion, but he happily took advantage of it for his benefit.

They got hitched and had kids: us, and a couple years later, Bro. And they took us to the Candy Man's house for damn near every Christmas and Thanksgiving, because everyone'd forgiven him.



Us, practicing our thousand-yard stare.

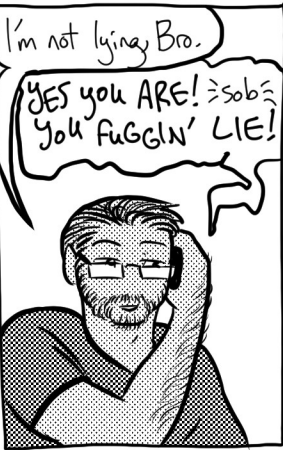
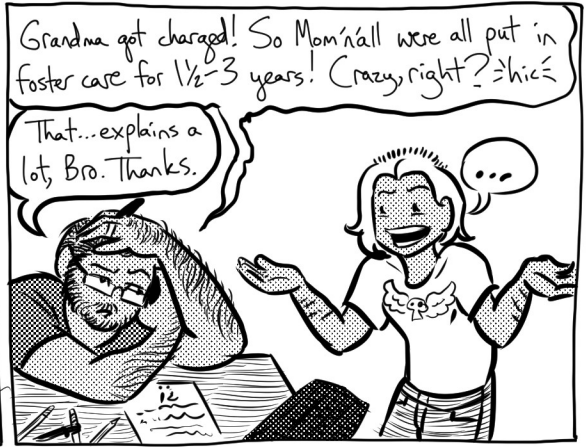
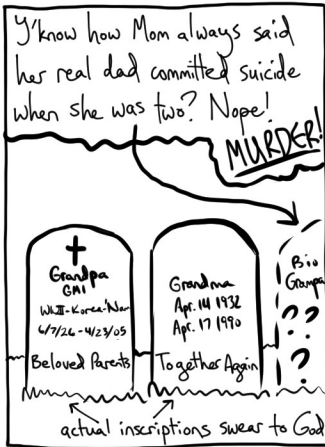
The Candy Man got his hands on us by the time we were five, and when he did, we screamed like a siren. When Mom found the Candy Man alone in our room with a screaming and crying child, it took willful ignorance to avoid coming to the obvious conclusion.



For people baffled by this behavior, remember: Mom “forgave” him. The family rules meant she could not jump or even stroll to conclusions, for that would mean she hadn’t forgiven and make her the bad guy. (It would also require the family admit the true horror of what was happening, and not a damn one of them could handle the pain it required.) She had never dealt with what had happened to her, just used a “spiritual bypass” (God) to avoid the agony of realizing, grieving, and changing. Her mental (and familial) stability depended on treating the Candy Man like a man reformed. As we would later find out, removing that coping mechanism and ripping the scab off the wound would make our mother the most terrifying person in the family.

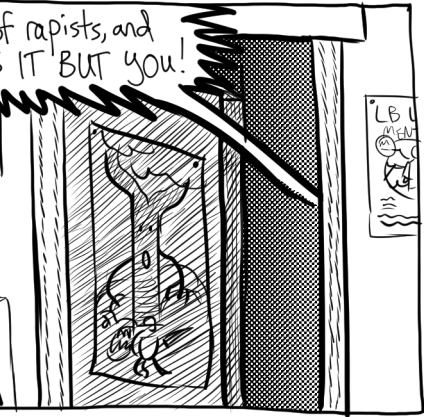
This mental pretzel is best expressed by Bro, when he told us about the whole murder foster care thing in 2016:

DRUNK DIAL 2016-2-3



your FAM'LY LOVES
you AN' you STAB
US IN THE BACK, SIS

Our family is full of rapists, and
EVERYONE KNOWS IT BUT you!



ASK GRANNY! ASK MOM! Ask anyone, and
they'll fucking tell you about Grampa!

Now, don't get upset, sis...
I'M NOT UPSET!



I'm not upset... => sob =>
=> click =>

If our father knew about any of this at the time, he didn't care. It wasn't his problem. He was a man of appearances, and as long as things looked good, then they were good.



The family we came from could only function as long as everyone ignored everyone's gaping wounds. As long as they stayed numb, made it "fine," they could keep putting one foot in front of the other.

Different relatives had different anesthetics of choice. Our mother's was dissociation. Other relatives used drugs—Cousin Gangrene's coke habit ended up giving him blood poisoning, and when he refused to let them amputate his arm, it killed him. Bro would swap between alcohol and weed. We 🏠 used a combo of dissociation (everyone), cutting (Mori), and starvation (Rogan).

Teen pregnancy also ran in our family. Our oldest cousin lived with the Candy Man for a while, then mysteriously became pregnant, disowned, and addicted. The son she bore has a startling resemblance to the Candy Man... who wasn't blood related. (He only married into the family at the end.) Another cousin got his

girlfriend pregnant at sixteen, and even though they both did their damndest to do right by everyone, we got to watch how hard it was. We ourself had at least two pregnancies in our teens, which turned into two miscarriages due to violence. (Just as well too; Texas only allowed kids to get abortions with parental consent, which combines terribly with incest.)

In the midst of all this, Dad would take advantage of people's denial to bottom-feed and get his own desires filled. I doubt he truly understood all the ramifications; all he knew was, if he raped his kid, even in the open, Mom would instantly, unconditionally forgive him.

She would also get apocalyptically angry.

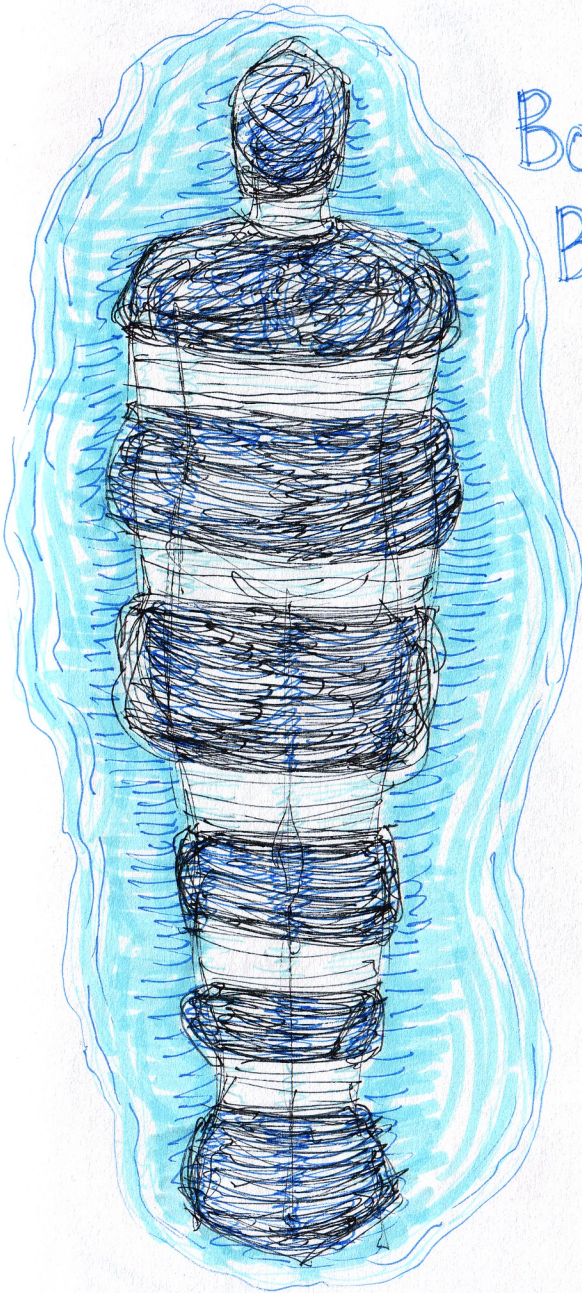


She couldn't direct that anger towards Dad, but if she could blame us, then she could keep her husband, her lifestyle, and her cherished illusions. All she had to do was punish us so we'd stop seducing Dad and everything would be fine.

It didn't work, of course. Dad was happy to blame us, as long as he got his, and the only thing Mom could do (in her mind) was escalate the punishments. As the illusion became increasingly transparent, her punishments got more and more unhinged.

12/11/2021

Boy
Blue



Sometimes she'd get so out of control that Dad intervened.
(He didn't want us dead. That would look very, very bad.)

Over time, as Mom realized that nothing would stop our “relationship” with Dad, she decided she wanted one of her own. After all, didn’t she deserve nice things? Clearly this was normal. There also may have been an element of revenge, her way of indirectly expressing her rage at Dad.

So she turned to Bro.

In some ways, what she did to Bro seems far more evil than what she did to us. Punishment at least is supposed to feel bad! Bro, though... for him, rape wasn’t treated as a punishment but a reward. It came with kisses, giggling, and praise. If he did something especially good (like perform well in a volleyball tournament), he was rewarded



He did grow to love volleyball.

with sexual access to us. After all, Mom knew we would hate it, and thus it made a good punishment. It showed Bro’s rise in the family hierarchy: “one day, son, this will all be yours.”

He came to enjoy that power. At first, our “punishments” would make him cry. But as Mom and Dad got him used to it, taught him to see us as a disposable object who deserved it, he grew to find our degradation titillating. He would come into our room at night, and if we resisted, he would eagerly inform Mom so she would punish us. He was never a confident attacker on his own, even as he got much, much bigger than us.

The abuse of pain is something everyone understands: the whipped horse, the kicked dog. People do not understand the abuse of pleasure. They think pleasure must be good, the way a little kid thinks that candy is good. We were fed constant poison, and that made it comparatively easy for us to escape; what could they entice us with, Fuck-Free Fridays? But our brother was fed constant sugar, and that's much harder to quit. After all, sugar is delicious, right? Even when it's terrible for you.

Being children, having no context, we understood none of this. All we knew was that we were bad, so bad that our family kept having to punish us, and no matter how hard we tried, we couldn't seem to make them happy.

Maybe the family god and the bony lady were just our broken child's mind trying to make sense of unspeakable horror and our improbable survival. I mean, parasite gods and the patronage of Death makes as much sense as anything else, at that age!



LB HISTORY

(Warnings: suicide, batshit, homelessness, memory work, abuse.)

Our childhood was a slaughterhouse. We learned multi tricks to stay alive, like roster control: locking a (brown, genderfucky, "bad") 🗑️ out in the "real" world, everyone else ("more deserving") safe inside. One or more ∞ would run support and help the damage-taker. So Mori took damage, and Rawlin ran support. When Rawlin got god-eaten, Biff helped next. When Mori killed herself and Biff was lost, Rogan became the next damage-taker and Bob and Grey, then Mac became his supports. Shit was fucked. Inside oppression reflected outside.



Gigi art, 2002

The noose tightened as we aged. The more multi we got, the more Mom noticed. Naturally, she decided we were possessed.



As far as we can tell, once we managed to escape to college (fifteen miles away), there was a massive nuking of traumatic memories. We seemed determined to try and reboot ourself as a perfectly normal, non-traumatized, non-dissociative human.

We made it eight months, tops.

In 2007, we joined the website Livejournal. We searched for writing communities and found the (now-gone) soulbonding comm. Formed by teens by 1999, SBers had deep connections to fictional characters, both their own ("insourced") or others' ("outsourced," like Bugs Bunny). Some SBers were also multiple; others weren't. We felt like we had just found the promised land.

We promptly made an ass of ourselves but somehow managed to make friends anyway. Good thing, too: a week later, we had our first ghost. He gave Sneak a good scare.



Craig wasn't aggressive, but he radiated icy agony, and we didn't know what to do. In a panic, we called Falcon and Mac (who'd spent the prior week or two trying to get us to let his deceased ass in) and turned to a new multi friend on Livejournal.

We got lucky: she was older and more experienced. She calmed us down, telling us that it was going to be okay. "This is your mind," she said, "your domain. Use your imagination to make him go away."



(This was not entirely true, but it was good enough then, and we are forever grateful to the Q-folk for teaching us this. Thanks, guys, wherever you are.)

Gigi grabbed Craig, shoved him in a bottle, threw it deep into the bowels of headspace, and that was it. Crisis averted. It was so easy, we felt foolish afterward.

In hindsight, it made sense that we would get a ghost at this time: admitting we existed left our mind open in a way it normally wouldn't. We were coming close to the truth, but there was only so much truth we could handle at a time. Trauma would have to wait.

In the aftermath (and probably also using advice from Q-folk and other plurals we knew), we chose to fortify ourself against future ghosts by building our first house. (This, it turns out, is a pretty common first act of multiples building their headspace. We even used the same dome shape ATW recommends in got parts?, a book we wouldn't discover until years later.)



We drew this in 2008 mostly using MS Paint. Wow.

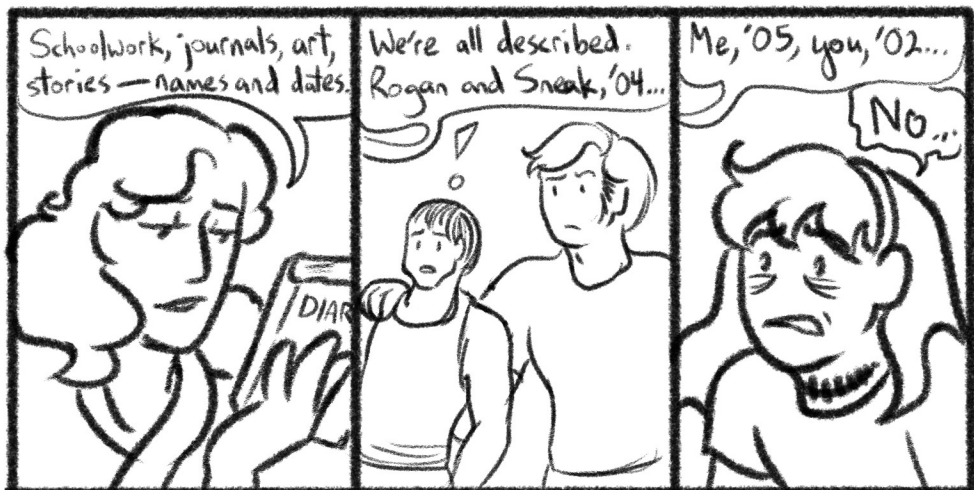
It did the job. We would get no more ghosts for roughly five years, in which we could get our act together.

We really don't think we would've been able to manage as well as we did if we'd had to deal with being multi and traumatized at the same time—especially since our main fronter (a girl named Lollyanna) realized she was merging with Miranda at right around this time. Lolly was the girl we saw as “the real one.” If we lost her, the jig was up! We'd have no choice but to accept that maybe we existed.

Sneak had no trouble with this, but Rogan and Gigi did. They had only endured what they had because they could cling to the assurance that they weren't “real.” (After all, if you're not real, then nothing bad can happen to you, right?) If they existed, their lives and actions mattered, held moral weight, and that raised a bunch of scary questions:



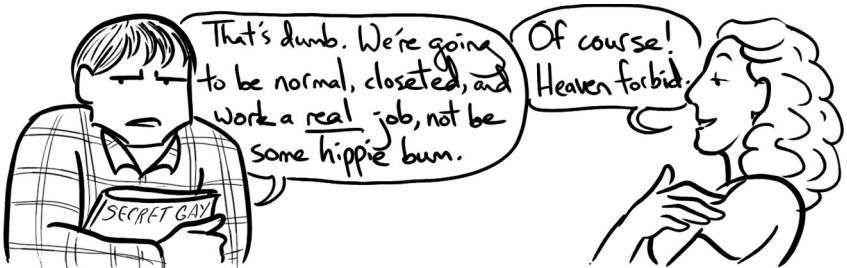
Miranda won Rogan over with logical argument:



Gigi was the last of us to accept her independent existence. She had even more at stake than Rogan: she truly believed that if we accepted our reality, we would be succumbing to madness. In the interests of keeping us “sane” (that is, appearing normal), she was willing to do anything, including threaten violence or stage a coup. But at the end of the day, she was a traumatized little girl, and we knew it. She might’ve been scary and powerful, but she was only one person, and she had been running on fumes for years. She trashed the room, had a flaming meltdown, and then came around.

Over the next five years, we learned to work as a team. We came out as multi to friends and family, with mixed results. Mac and Rogan got together, then married. Miranda decided to stay single. Sneak came out as nonbinary, had a growth spurt and shot up a foot in height. Falcon moved in. Gigi calmed down. Crunching the numbers, we realized we could afford to transition or finish school but not both, and after much debate, we came to unanimous consensus to drop out, move to Boston, and transition.

We made a few multi zines and comics during these years, but we didn’t consider it anything more than a hobby. Mac kept bringing up the idea of being an artist, but it seemed so pie-in-the-sky.



Life, however, had its own plan.

In 2012, we'd transitioned, built a strong and thriving social circle (all of whom knew we were multi), and Mac was working part-time at an orthopedic shoe store as a paper monkey. We'd left the family and Rogan was trying to give up starving. On the surface, things seemed to be going great.

Underneath, though, we felt terrible and didn't know why. Rogan was realizing he couldn't quit starving without a better coping skill to replace it. Mac was having to front far more than was good for him, because he was the one with the voice everyone at work knew, and no one else had his accent. We kept getting ill.

Finally, our health got so bad that we lost our job. When our (understandably frustrated) boss chewed us out, we went utterly bats. We could no longer see headspace or tell who we were. Reality, pain, and death suddenly became meaningless, amusing nonsense. We decided it'd be a great idea to jump off a bridge.

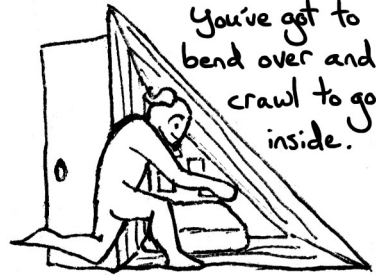


2012 comic about the experience, made a couple months after it.

Falcon was the only one to keep his head. Through sheer force of personality, he got us to call our shrink and go to a friend.

We were lucky. Our friends took us in, quietly watching over us and making sure we ate, treating us with gentle kindness and love. We are forever grateful to them and Falcon for saving our lives.

Our shrink helped us net a stint in partial hospitalization (aka Loony Daycare), which gave us a meal plan, meds, and coping skills. Since transition had cleaned us out financially, we bit the bullet, gave up proper housing, and moved into our friends' crawl space.



Despite the situation, there was a sense of relief. We had tried our best to make it as a singlet, and we had catastrophically failed. Trying again would kill us. There was nothing left to do but become the person we'd always wanted to be in the first place.

Up to this point, art and writing had been a hobby. We had no deadlines, everything took forever, and stuff came out stiff. But now Rogan was too exhausted and crazy for perfectionism. He knew that disability would take at least a year, and until it came, he needed to find something he could do for pay while multi and crashed. Art was all that was left, and we found ourself motivated to say, "pay me, please."



During this time, we drew and wrote commissions for fans and friends (John kept us in toothpaste and shampoo for months). Rogan set himself to making a comic strip every day, no matter how shitty, which later became The Homeless Year. We hustled.

You might think that we wouldn't be able to hustle for shit in our condition, and indeed, we needed to rest more than usual. But unemployed homeless people gets lots of empty hours, hours which need filling, and we knew that if we didn't fill them with something useful or meaningful, we would descend into catastrophic despair and attempt suicide again. Our life now revolved around staying alive, and art kept us alive.

We do not recommend this method for becoming an artist, but it did work. We rose from our ashes like a guano-stained phoenix. Our art got rough, then better. Our bloated tomes became bite-sized stories, 1000-3000 words each. We learned advertising, self-employment taxes, what to charge and what we could reasonably get done. We hauled ass as best we could.

And much to our surprise, people paid us.



Turns out nobody wanted to see us starve. In bits and bobs, money trickled in from all sorts of places: friends, fellow plurals, strangers, and a surprising number of commenters from a feminist cage-fight blog Rogan frequented. And what's more, we had lucked into a weird, easily recognizable brand: multi mental health crap.

More people are doing it now, but in 2012, it was damn near unheard of. Being uncloseted as a multiple is risky! Most people can't do it. But we had nothing more to lose; we could no longer pay the bill of playing singlet, so we embraced our batshit and ran with it. And it turns out that many people will pay to look through someone else's eyes for a while. It's one of the safest ways to learn!

Maybe some people paid us only out of pity, but who gave a shit? We could still use it to learn the art of business and the business of art.

It was a long, hard year. Many times, Rogan would wake up to the crawl space of rusty nails and rotten fiberglass, and he would think, "god, I'm still here." But then, right on that thought's heels would be, "It could be worse. I could be with the family." Motivation!

We got disability. We moved out of the crawl space. We rejoiced. Our mental health struggles were behind us!



Yeah, we made it eight months before the ghosts started avalanching down on us. 2014, baby!

Bummer, but it made sense. We had escaped the family, and our life was finally stable enough that we could start dealing with our damage. We could finally start looking at those loose threads in our memory and in our roster and start asking, “what happened?”

Since it'd worked for the Homeless Year, we took to making diary comics about the experience. These strips would become All In The Family, the book we're probably best known for right now.

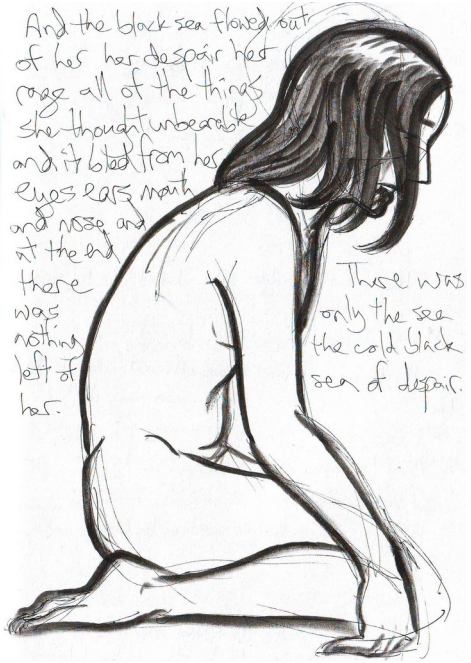


Later, the verbal and physical stuff would indeed come up. Oops.

For the first few years, ghosts aside, memory work was about what we expected it to be: the Tab A, Slot B of incestuous abuse. We worked our way through memories, gradually increasing in their sense of betrayal and violation. We dealt with the Candy Man, then Lois, then Dad, then Mom, then Bro, and finally to more complex stuff—group attacks, things going wrong or unexpectedly, stuff like that. As time went on, our pain tolerance increased. We learned to embrace the pain, to separate it from suffering.

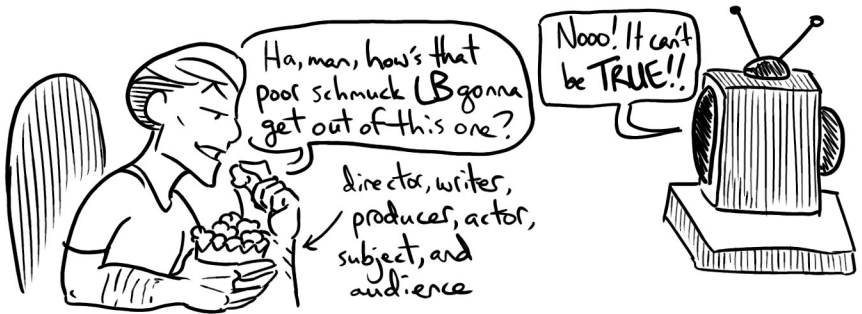
In 2018, we got a ghost called Eyes. Unlike the others, it had something more important to discuss than abuse: the black ocean.

Most ghosts, if they spoke at all, did so in rambling horror movie gibberish. Eyes still had that distinctive ghost way of speaking, but it was pretty straightforward when it said that we would get more good things back, that the black ocean was reviving, that we all lived in it, and we needed to take care of it. At the time, we were totally stumped, but then the waters rose and only Eyes' advice kept us from being caught totally flatfooted.



Since then, our memories have focused less on abuse and more on our internal cosmology: where we came from, why things are the way they are, how stuff works. We've gotten more and more folks back: first Mori, then Biff, Rawlin, Bob, and Grey. We're even finding lost memories of good things!

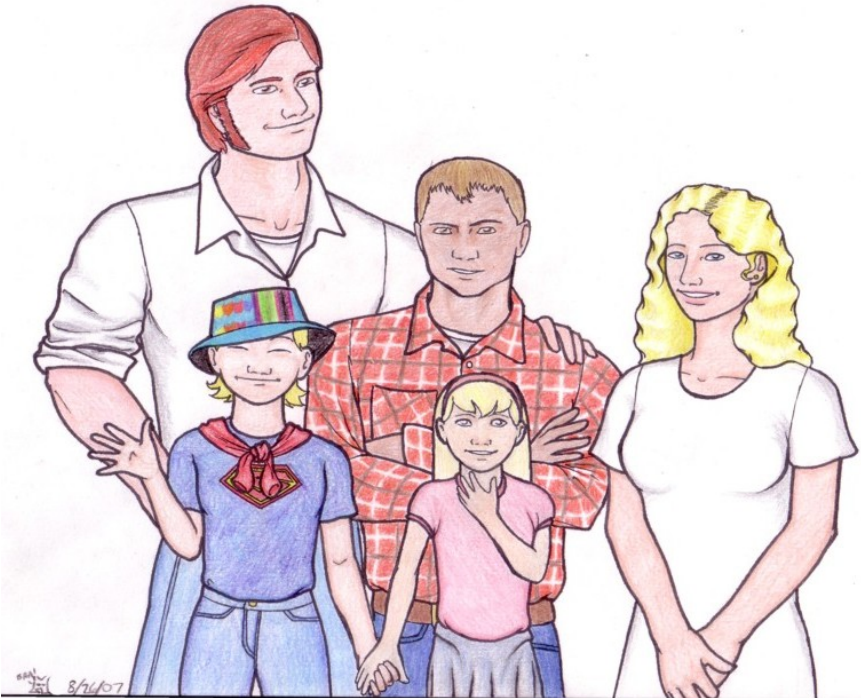
It's been a wild ride. Who knows where we'll go next?



WHAT'S YOUR DEAL, LOONY-BRAIN?

LB Lee have been writing, drawing, and cartooning about being multiple since 2007, but not everyone knew them on Livejournal fifteen years ago, so they decided to make this as a summary and intro to them, their history, and their work! Herein:

- Frequently asked questions (both rude and polite)!
- Who are these weirdos?
- How'd they end up a multi zinester cartoonist, anyway?
- And why are they... you know... like that?



Enjoy!

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