



& **Hard OFF.** friendzone & other delights: asexy times, romance, time out, stuff & poetry

by atiah z

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- I Crush... :: romantic/sexual attraction, obsessive crushes, overwhelming feelings
- II & Burn! :: envy, misery, destructive urges, self-understanding & reflection
- III I lift myself UP. :: self-affirmation & self empowerment
- IV Squish! :: let's be friends, ambigusweeties, romantic friendships & other time outs
- V Living the questions :: genderfluidity + fluid identities, exploration & expressions

atiah z:

Queer, black, introvert, vegan, intersectional feminist, writer, web geek, creative, genderqueer / fluid / androgynous, artist, and a bit mental.

# Intro

Asexual is an accurate description of the kinds of relationships I've been having and desiring lately, but not of me. Queer is the only word that accurately describes my sexuality, I think. The specifics, the expressions, the dreams... all these change, but that word remains.

*"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to **love the questions themselves**. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. **Live the questions.**"*

– Rainer Maria Rilke (via ojo-de-venado)

# Asexual Relationships,

including Romantic Friendships (n)

- Sharing emotional & physical intimacy
- Love, and feelings of excitement associated with love
- Romantic experiences, like nature walks and undates

*Undates* are like dates, but they're not dates.

Like the *undead*, are like the dead but they're not the dead.

Like *unbirthdays*, are like birthdays but not birthdays.

...there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents... And only ONE for birthday presents, you know. There's glory for you!

- Humpty Dumpty, in *Through the Looking Glass*

“Un[things]” invoke associations of [things], but then offer no indication of whether these apply or not, which ones might apply, how many might apply, under what circumstances... it's specifically undefined. Good.

Reminds me of Maimonides' negative attributes for God...

-z-

## Process

*Autumn/Winter 2012... Summer 2013... Spring/Summer 2014...*

It's 2014, I'm writing. Regular. Sexually, my obsessive/compulsive stuff is rare. So there.

I have started, stopped, restarted writing this zine so many times. I decided to publish it now. I can always edit it further and publish it again later.

I came through the part of the cycle that was obsessively crushing on straight white males, thankfully. Now it's within a framework that fits the kind of behaviour I want to encourage within myself. Yay - decolonise, now!

## Performance

I read out “**we try each other on**” and “**autosub**” at the Queer Zine Festival London's open mic in 2012, shortly after I'd started work on this zine. Here it is and here am I.

Creatively,  
atiah

I'm polyamorous.

I've found many people, including non-monogamous people, get hung up on the "poly" bit and forget about the "amorous" bit; reflecting on some past relationships, where *multiple* was emphasised and *love* was absent.

Ah, incompatibility...

Basically, I love. The simplest and most me-relevant way to think about it, I reckon, is that just as I have capacity for more than one friend, so I have capacity for more than one lover.

Actually, recently, since Some Stuff in 2011/2012, my capacity for lovers is nil; and my capacity for friends fluctuates wildly. But the theory remains the same. I guess another way to look at it is that the desirable number of people in my life (friends, lovers, etc) is never equal to one. It may be more, it may be fewer, but never the same.

# Crush &...

## skin sensation

Just from one sexy experience, I learn so much.

It feeds my creativity & poems pour out of me again. Do squishy friendships inspire me like this? Do baking achievements, which do fill me with such enthusiasm & pride?

What is it about skin sensation that makes me pick up my pen, exclaiming 'must. write. now.'

Reflections for a lifetime.

The space between.

# amazing skin, how sweet the touch

'Skin is amazing', you say.

I curve into the warmth of you,  
Stretch out along the leanness of your  
body,  
Relax into the quiet,  
Soft, enclosing comfort.  
I murmuring as you stroke the skin of your  
fingertips  
Against the skin of my arms.

Tiny moans escape,  
Clawing for satisfaction.  
Can't keep it in -  
It builds.  
Can't stand it longer -  
Crying out sated.  
I'm out.

Until I breathe.

I gaze into the grey night -  
Amazed.

Overcome.

# autosub

Stroke me and I fold; I rise;  
I stare at you with lustful eyes.

Electric pulses  
Trip beneath the skin  
Of my limbs  
And I wriggle beside you  
Enclosed within your  
Embrace  
When you let me in  
I snuggle against you  
Nestling my face into the  
Vast smooth of your warm back,  
Between shoulder blades  
That rise like hills  
I'd like to roll down,  
I brush my lips over them;  
Delighting in your bones.  
Running my fingers over the surface of you,  
Stroking,  
Grinning broadly at the deliciousness of  
your sub sighs -

My thighs between your thighs -

-z-

It started with a

# spoon

# who can say?

We try each other on like new shoes  
You whilst on a date with your lover  
Me, alone, doodling.  
Are we playing games?

I set out to be sincere  
But the gamut of emotion that runs through my brain  
Is too crazy to share, and  
I've already talked myself down from my rages, that spiralling envy,  
So, what's to tell?  
And why bother?

Am I managing my paranoia, myself?  
Or just prolonging the inevitable outpouring unleashing of -

## lust mist

lust mist  
descends  
& I welcome  
the steamy  
clouds of  
desire,  
dazing in the  
haze of  
heat &  
celebrating  
what it is  
to have a body,  
nerves tingling  
sated,  
I rise.  
Slowly  
exhaling.

## soft touch BREATHE HARD

I can't see you.

I sense you smirking  
at my deep sigh.

I breathe out:  
Wow.

I am bobbing  
On a gentle sea.

In the moment;  
Glad of it.

Blessed  
To be touched  
over and over  
For what feels like forever -  
And yet is over too soon -  
In exactly the way I most  
desire  
In the ways I have longed  
for...  
forever

# Burn!

## Beware the charm

I need a talisman to protect me -  
Shielding propensity to fall -  
I feel myself weakening...  
I don't know what to do.

My brain says,  
Run.

My hard says,  
Fold,  
Just fold into arms  
Fall into caresses  
Forget the cares of the world  
And slip away, fading.  
Dream of kisses, forbidden,  
Do as you wilt.

It takes everything I had, to resist.  
So now there's nothing left -  
If you should come to me -  
Arms open -  
Hands warm -

Ready -

## I'm on fire.

Again.  
Year of abstinence in smoke.  
Fire alarm broke  
And I didn't get out.  
But there was smoke without fire -  
False alarm -

## it's not all about you

I invited you in, but you ruined it,  
Trampling on the fragile underbelly of my  
pride  
Scattering the fragmented wishes of my  
dream  
Careless with the hope I held so dear, so  
long,  
And you fit me in when you can.  
If you can -  
Be bothered -

And I am besotted,  
So foolish  
To fall.  
10 months, abstained,  
Didn't break the cycle.

## stuck heart

My head is caught in a heartlock.  
Like a vice, squeezed tight,  
I'm stuck.

Inspired by Imogen Heap's *Headlock*: "You  
say too late to start, got your heart in a  
headlock"



incredible  
fantastic

I don't know if this happened, but  
I remember it.

Sometimes I remember it as a gentle,  
half-tease - smirking smiles -

But right now it's vivid as a vicious twist of  
your mouth -  
Hastily scratched on your face -

Or drawn out - tormenting - a scrawled  
drawl of grimace -

As you watch me, mocking,  
Oblivious in the moment,  
Only seeing in hindsight,,  
Your heavy laden intent - it's not okay -

You gaze unmoved and indifferent  
With uncertain eyes.

Now, I recoil.

Memories.  
What?

Oblivion.  
Stroking me into it.  
I wriggle into you  
Floating, falling.

I sigh,  
My breath perfect contentment.  
Moments of joy.  
Uneclipsed.

My memories jangle  
Like windchimes.

You remind me of gentleness  
before we drifted,  
And I could be so into you..

But.  
I calm myself. Slowly.

-z-

it's okay to say that  
**I WANT**

# I lift myself, UP.

## Uplifted & restored

Overjoyed -  
I realised -  
I am not  
Broken.

## Uplifted & roused

Delighted that we can lie here together, beside one another, stroking skin for hours, moaning, sighing, breathing, snuggling, spooning, loving, holding hands, touching, hugging like this. As friends, not lovers, sharing a sexy times. And I am not suffocated or drowning. Beholden to no one; I am free.

## Uplifted & elevated

Delighting in the hills of your back  
I smooth my hands and face over you  
And secretly loving the hair on your limbs

## Uplifted & awakened

From one sexy experience  
I learn so much.  
Reflections for a lifetime.  
The space between.

# II. Squish!

experiences of an abstinent queer; romantic friendship, ambigusweeties & a bunch of feels

-z-

I has all the feels.

-z-

## heart ache

I didn't take heed of the warning sounds,  
And now my heart done broke.

I feel like a fool and I'm sad to my core  
I wanted romance but I needed much more.

Now I know abstaining is the way for me.  
Prudes unite, hang loose, feel free.

We have our own fun,  
Leaving our clothes on.

Exploring asexy intimacies.

-z-

We talk often, maybe sorta daily.  
We use affectionate words with each other, such as love, lovely, I love you, sweetie.  
Physical intimacy, sometimes, e.g. hugs, stroking cuddling

-z-

*Why can't you just hold me?*

HOW can you say THEY give awesome hugs whilst you are hugging ME?

**I am giving you awesome hugs RIGHT NOW!**

# “Just?” friends

“just friends” - I hate; friendship isn't “just” anything

-z-

I'm an emotionally intense person, but I know how to mask my feelings too.

I think a lot of deepening connections and developing intimacy, for me, is unlearning hiding my feelings.

-z-

Sensual, friendly intimacies,  
Our fingers intertwined like trees kissing

# light bumfrot

Bum frot, I repeat, delicately,  
Shyly hiding behind my du-rag,  
Memories surfacing that make me smile,  
What is the nature of this relationship anyway?  
Who knows.

One kiss, aborted -

Needing names, I pick romantic friendship,  
It seems to work, kinda,  
When I explain what we do, what I want, with who -  
No matter

I'm happy -

But, ever since, I'm visited by these visions,  
Feelings of sexy times to come from somewhere,  
Else -  
Someone,  
Else -  
Distracting -

-Z-

I think a lot of deepening connections and developing intimacy, for me, is unlearning hiding my feelings.

Because that's my default reaction, generally, when I'm under stress or afraid or feeling threatened - to wait out attacks until i can can escape to lick my wounds and heal alone slowly.

-Z-

And I am thankful to be so lucky. One of the lucky ones.

## I hear sometimes lovers do too.

We held hands,  
Like lovers do,  
And I felt many feet high.

Or, I could say...

We held hands,  
Like friends do,

No. I shall say:

Like we do.

Swinging my arms,  
Strutting,  
I sang out, at the top of my voice,  
We don't have to take our clothes off to  
have a good time. Yeah, yeah.  
Give me another lovesong but this time  
with a little dedication.

## The Ecstasy of Settling Debts

Relaxed and happy I nuzzle my journal  
Sleepily  
Content  
Drunk on cocoa, achievement, relief

I fill the night with silly, joyful texts to  
short-lost friends  
And the buzz of replies makes me smile

I feel like I'm in a dream  
But this is reality.

And I am thankful for the besties who  
inspire me.

*Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice*

- from *Tell out, my soul* a hymn written by Timothy Dudley-Smith, 1962

# III. Living the Questions\*

\*title from Rainer Maria Rilke

The grey(a)sexuality of atiah: My gender & sexuality too fluid for any word but queer.

## don't take it personally

**My no evaporates in the steamy haze**  
Of the bathroom.  
Escapes. Erased.  
I want to cut myself open.  
I remain closed.

But I dig my nails in.

Because I need some connection.

I feel I will never be ready.  
I think romance will never come.  
And yet, I wait. Still.

Even tears do not come -  
It's for the best..

And I am desperate for some release -  
But all my catharsis valves stick.

I don't know which way to turn,  
Turn them loose.

So I remain,  
Stuck.

**I withdraw**  
**Crawling inside the dusty cave of myself.**  
**Drafts blow in leaves and fog.**

I am alone.

And no one comforts me.

Gently hugging myself turns to cursing  
And I cannot see a way out.

Creatively,  
atiah

[freely.noblogs.org](http://freely.noblogs.org)

queer  
romantic friendships  
assertive attention-seeking  
hugs  
besties  
asexy romance  
a/sociability  
autosub  
romantic moments  
a/sexual?  
prude/slut pride  
desire  
london/birmingham  
active listening  
resistance  
fear  
solitary walks  
paranoia  
needs  
snuggles, huggles, cuddles  
defining sex  
stroking  
rejection  
a/sexuality  
d/S  
developing intimacy  
love  
boundaries  
introvert time  
finding words  
asexy times  
singleness/being single  
loneliness  
NRE  
dancing  
holding hands  
moments of intimacy  
ambigusweeties  
exploring jealousy  
bed sharing  
listening to music  
being assertive  
laughing  
physical intimacy  
exchanging emotional energy  
sexual vocabulary  
spooning  
openness  
vulnerability  
crying  
deepening connections  
polyamory  
undates  
walking with trees  
queer abstinence