

I met someone for the first time who was naked. Of course we're all naked under our clothes. I've met a lot of clothed folks, in my life. Some I've gotten close to and seen naked later, once we knew each other. But this was the first time I ever met someone who was naked.

At the time I thought this person was a woman. I was less practiced in understanding that gender is a construct, and parts don't necessarily have anything to do with gender. I must admit I was overwhelmed by his breasts and apparent jennies— the shapes and curves of his body— and overwhelmed by his intelligence shining out.

Immediately I cared for this naked person who apologized for being naked. Why did he apologize? Maybe I looked taken aback.

But I was at a new place, beginning a new chapter of my life— entering another world. That first day was sacredly liminal.

stim

This new person saw me stimming; I stim a lot when I'm nervous. He is at least as crazy as I am, and some form of neurodivergent.

When he saw me stim, he stimmed back. We looked like we were casting spells, standing there under the trees. He stimmed in ways that matched mine, similar language— arm movements, motions of slow reaching, noticing, shifting, stretching, expanding. We began to communicate through stimming.

We conversed with our vocal language. And we had a separate conversation with the movements of our bodies.

I felt this person learning my stims the way we learn a new friend's accent. Learning my stims was respectful. We were meeting each other for the first time, two beings doing our best in a world that wasn't made for us. Our words had something to say, while our bodies had other things to say—

matching, diverging, then matching.

hands

Can you feel the energy in your hands? Can you direct it? Doing tai chi and chi gung, I was asked to feel and direct it, which I'm happy to do. In ritual I was asked to direct energy for magic also.

I keep a lot of my spirit in my pelvic bowl, in my root, in my jennies, and in my ass. Also my heart, stomach, and shoulders. But my arms and hands have the most ready and dynamic, changing, moving energy of my spirit body.

Stimming is a way I process information. I comfort myself out in the world or while thinking. Stimming is being kind to my body— autistic liberation. Stimming is freedom. Stimming is part of who I am because I'm alive, so I'm in motion.

But mostly stimming is energy work. The movement helps me stay safe because my energy isn't stuck and stagnating. I stay healthy with physical movement-based Honesty. The motion is an expression of my being. Like singing, my names, my fingerprints, my smells.

A long time ago when I was a child, people told me sit still, stay still, and be quiet. That was for their convenience. I was a "good kid" and did what I was told. I got my sense of self-worth by obeying, getting A's at school, and being invisible— no trouble.

So I was motionless as a child, teenager, young adult, and adult— the stimming had been beaten out of me. When I grew up a few years ago, the people who had told me to sit still, stay still, and be quiet all eventually died. I looked up and realized I was free. The spell was broken.

Also I realized that if I want to stay alive, I need to be who I actually am, including movement. So I became a free stimmer

and remain so to this day.

Some of my stims are happy– you’ll find me swaying, vibrating, and making repetitive dance-like motions. My body is committed to certain movements. Vocal stims can come out as well.

My happiest stim is in my legs. They move back and forth. But most of my stims are with my arms. My arms and my hands have so much spirit energy, and when I stim I’m moving the energy, which gets me to the point of this essay.

Jaguar

Recently I saw a new energy worker and learned a lot. The messages came at the beginning: I’m protected, I’m loved, I’m dear to the spirits. Earth spirits, forest spirits, and fairies are protecting me. My gentle energy needs to be balanced with a fierceness.

“Thank you, Jaguar,” the energy worker whispered partway into our session.

The energy worker didn’t know that when I almost died in the hospital six years ago of a stomach ulcer– it had bled a large portion of my blood out of my body in the form of black poop– Jaguar came to save me. I was lying there on the energy worker’s table which was warm with a heating pad. The energy worker had drummed and touched my feet.

When I heard the energy worker whisper, “Thank you, Jaguar,” I was shocked but not shocked, because I’ve been needing to thank Jaguar ever since that happened. I haven’t properly thanked Jaguar and want to.

When I was lying on that table and the energy worker was clearing mistakes from my spirit body, trying to plant seeds of self-worth in my spirit body, in the holes we were leaving by clearing mistakes, telling me how dear I am and protected, I was releasing fear from my lower back, from all the places I

hold grief in my body...

trust

...and I thought about my naked friend. When we were moving our arms to communicate, that was sacred— that was holy. It was also fun. Now I understand that the way I stim is not just pleasure or release. I understand now it's keeping me alive.

When my new friend and I were trying out each other's stims— mostly the new friend was trying out my stims— we were slightly healing each other. It was exciting and made me want to be close to this person. It made me trust him.

Then I learned about his addictions, criminal history, and extreme difficulties functioning in the world. I realized that most people who are as crazy, sensitive, autistic, and different as I am have some shady shit in our pasts.

I'm lucky to have escaped the trauma of my childhood and youth somewhat unscathed. I haven't much been in the hospital; I was homeless for less than five months. I was arrested many times in direct actions, but I've never spent time in jail or in prison.

chaos

My instinct that my new friend was someone not to get involved with was based on fear. I can't invite that much chaos into my life. I need to take care of myself because I'm a giver. I know from past interactions with people I've loved who have similar traits that I would get sucked in.

When I meet takers, especially charming, beautiful, brilliant, deeply gifted and wounded takers, I'm often at a loss. I get so depleted that I almost don't recognize myself, by the time I figure out that I need to drop everything and run.

When I think about how fortunate I am, that I could be this sensitive, crazy, autistic, and different yet have avoided so

much horror of addiction, imprisonment, and near death—although I have been near death but for different reasons, less at my own hand— I don't know how to express how grateful I am.

gratitude

So I would like now to express how grateful I am.

Thank you to Jaguar for leading me out of the jungle when I was dying in the hospital of the gnarliest ulcer bleed my doctors had seen.

Thank you to my spouse Ming for holding me through sickness and health, helping me build a beautiful life to try things out and make mistakes in.

Thank you to my chosen family member Jack for helping me learn that I deserve love and I'm worthy— not based on sexual desirability or performing success in a way that society understands, but for my good heart and differences.

Thank you to my mom who taught me how to love and who every person in the world who benefits from my love might pay respect to.

Thank you to Parent Earth for giving me everything I need, and who will eventually take my body back into yourself.

Thank you to my own body, the sky, the clouds...to Harriet Tubman for showing me ways of liberation. To my ishtadeva Sri Sarada Devi for showing me the meaning of love through service and duty, cooking tons of food for wacked out spiritual seekers.

Thank you to the ocean. Thank you to water. Thank you to movement itself in the form of stirring which is a lot like the movement that is life— the movement of spirit to spirit, of fluids and materials within cells, of blood within circulatory systems, the movement of air in our lungs, which

is the sky going into our lungs.

The movement of bees wiggling their butts to dance maps— the movement of plants toward the sun— the movement of the baby toward the nipple. And the movement of the dying as they stir their limbs in their final moments.

All of this is holy— all of this is sacred, and I give all of this gratitude to you, reader. I'm sharing in case you need to express gratitude as well, for however you've survived. Disabled or abled, imprisoned or free, stimming or still.

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