

# LIBERATE

## 2021 Channel Island LGBTQ+ Writing Awards

### Piece Not Titled by Verena Chao

Robin

I wake up just in time to hear our car starting. Mom has an early shift today, so I'll see her tonight. It's early, but the library opens soon. I get up and change quickly. I want to get in as much reading as possible today. I rush out to the bus stop. The bus ride is long, but it's still pretty early when I get there. There's never anyone here on Sunday morning, so I have it all to myself. I smile brightly at Ms. Porter, the librarian, and run up the three flights of stairs to the quiet room. There's never anyone in there. That's what I like about it. It's peaceful, and homey. That's why I freeze when I see her. A girl about my age, with striking red hair, sitting in my seat and drawing something out the big window.

Rae

We got to our new house on Thursday, and I've pretty much been hiding out in my room ever since. I didn't really want to move to San Francisco, but Mom got a new job, and she says she couldn't turn it down. I'll be fine.

I really want to draw, so I decide to walk to the library near our house. I doubt anyone's up this early on a Sunday morning to go to the library, so it'll be perfect. I change into a shirt and jeans, eat a quick breakfast, and set off to the library. When I finally get there (I took a couple wrong turns), they've just opened. I ask the librarian if there are any quiet spots, and she points to a 'quiet room' sign. It's on the third floor, so I head up the stairs. Just as I settle in and start to sketch a beautiful tree I can see out the big window, I feel someone staring at me. I turn around and see a girl, about my age, with thick dark brown hair and piercing grey eyes. She's staring at me like she's just seen a ghost.

Robin

As if she can feel me staring at her, she turns her head and looks at me. She tilts her head slightly in a silent question. When I don't say anything, she comes forward and asks 'Are you okay?' I'm mortified. 'Sorry' I manage to spit out, 'I just wasn't expecting to see anyone today.' She's looking at me, searching my expression with her bright green eyes. 'I guess we had the same idea.' She smiles and holds out her hand. 'I'm Rae.' I shake her hand and manage a smile back. 'I'm Robin. Do you live around here? I don't think I've seen you before.' She laughs. 'Yeah, my family just moved here from Sacramento last week. I wanted to draw somewhere quiet, so I came here.' 'Okay,' I say. 'I just read for a bit.' She pats the seat next to her and goes back to drawing, and I sit down and start my book. After a while, we start to talk. We become friends really quickly. Turns out, we're going to the same school for our sophomore year. We exchange numbers and agree to meet at school on Tuesday.

Rae

I go home today excited that I have a new friend, but I keep catching myself thinking about Robin. I like her- a lot. But she's straight, isn't she?

Robin

It's been a month, and Rae is my new best friend. We do everything together. Today we were walking to class and talking about an assignment, and this guy stopped us. He looked really nervous and blushed. Finally, he said 'Rae.. will you go out with me?' I was really shocked, and angry, but I don't know why. She looked at him, really surprised. 'That's really nice of you Milo but..' She pointed at her PRIDE! shirt. Milo furrowed his brow. She sighed. 'I'm gay, Milo. I like girls, not guys. Sorry.' His eyes went wide and he walked away without saying goodbye. 'Rae, you never told me that,' I said. She looked at me. 'Really? I thought I did. Well, I guess I thought it was obvious 'cause pride shirts make up half of my wardrobe.' I laugh. 'Yeah, that makes sense.' She sighs. 'Milo's nice, and I don't care if people know, but I hate it when people talk about me behind my back.' I feel bad for her, but all I can remember is how angry I was at Milo when he asked Rae out. Why do I care so much? What's wrong with me?

Rae

It's been 4 months, and I didn't realize how much I really like Robin until now. I want to tell her tonight, which works out since we're going to have a sleepover anyway, but I'm really nervous. I don't want to ruin our friendship.

Robin

I don't know what to do. I think.. I think I might like Rae. Am I gay too? It's true that I've never liked a boy before. I can't keep lying to myself. But how am I going to tell mom? I have no idea how she would react. I don't know what to do, but I have to stop crying. Rae's coming over soon for our sleepover.

Rae

Robin and I are having a really fun sleepover, and it's getting late but she wants to watch one more movie. She catches me looking at her and turns to look at me.

Robin

Rae smiles at me, and I know I have to tell her. 'I like you.' I whisper, 'a lot'. Her green eyes widen. 'I like you too' she whispers back.

Rae

I hug her, but she starts to cry. 'My mom- what if..' 'No. Either way, you have me.' I say, and I look into her misty grey eyes. 'We'll be okay Robin, I promise. Together.' Our lips find each other, but only for a moment, because she breaks away. 'Together' she says firmly, and kisses me again.