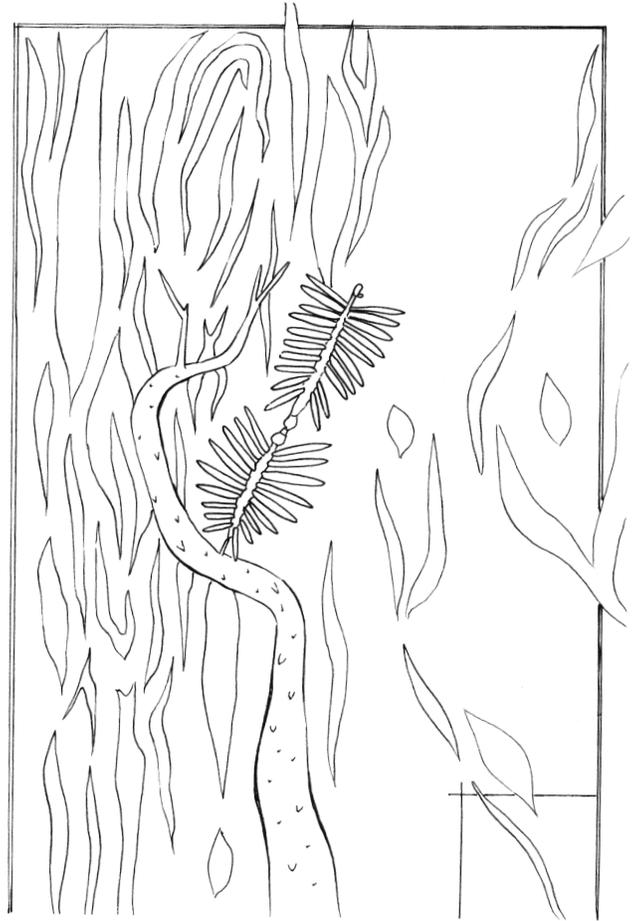


A **collectivist**
guide to whole,
fluid, and rooted
relationships

The desire to redefine the way we are in relationship with each other, set root when I started to question my experiences of yearning and grasping for traditional relationship patterns as outlined by mass media. Straight, live-in companionship, monogamous, and nuclear.

After many relationships where the most important person in my life became a stranger after the break up, I started to wonder, why was I investing so much energy into these unresilient models of support?

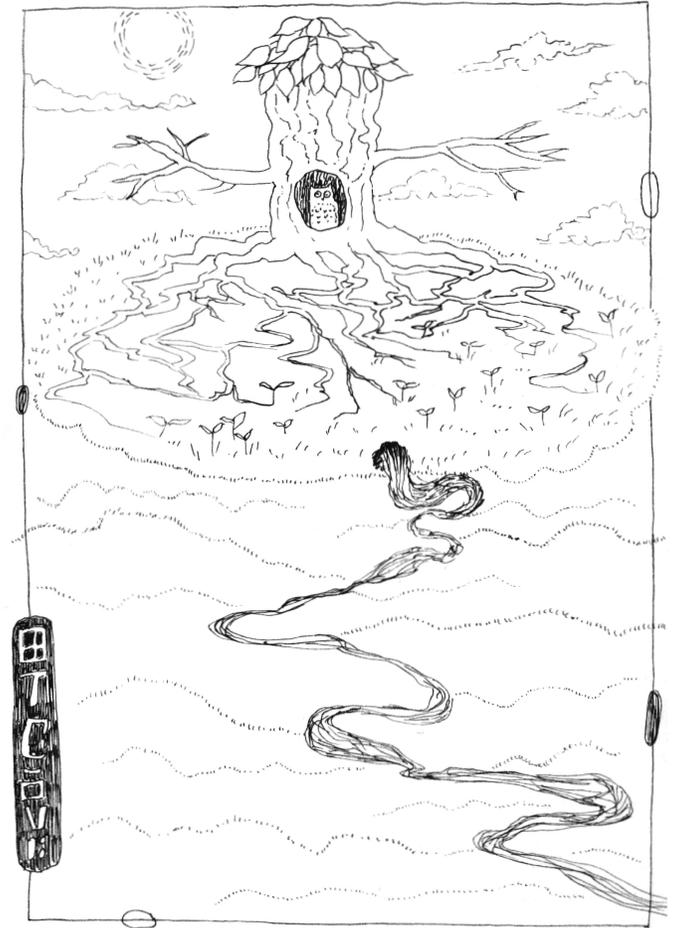
And how, after my 5th heartbreak I actually felt okay, because at that point in my life, without naming it, I had started to rely on a network of loved ones, and had already started the practice of a new type of relationship model.



This zine is a love song to a type of non-monogamy that looks to the underground networks of roots, creatures, and fungi for inspiration. It is inspired by emergence, indigenous philosophy, dialectics, buddhism, cooperatives, relationship anarchy, and the East Bay community that practices forms of intertwining that are fluid, queer, non-heirarchical and collective in spirit.

I am the author and artist of Cattails Comix, which is a nature based, post-capitalist, comic strip which inspires much of my thinking. It is the Cattails philosophy that this book on relationships rests on, which is the philosophy of all living beings at their wholest, fluidest and deeply rooted selves.

Welcome to a collectivist guide to whole, fluid, and rooted relationships



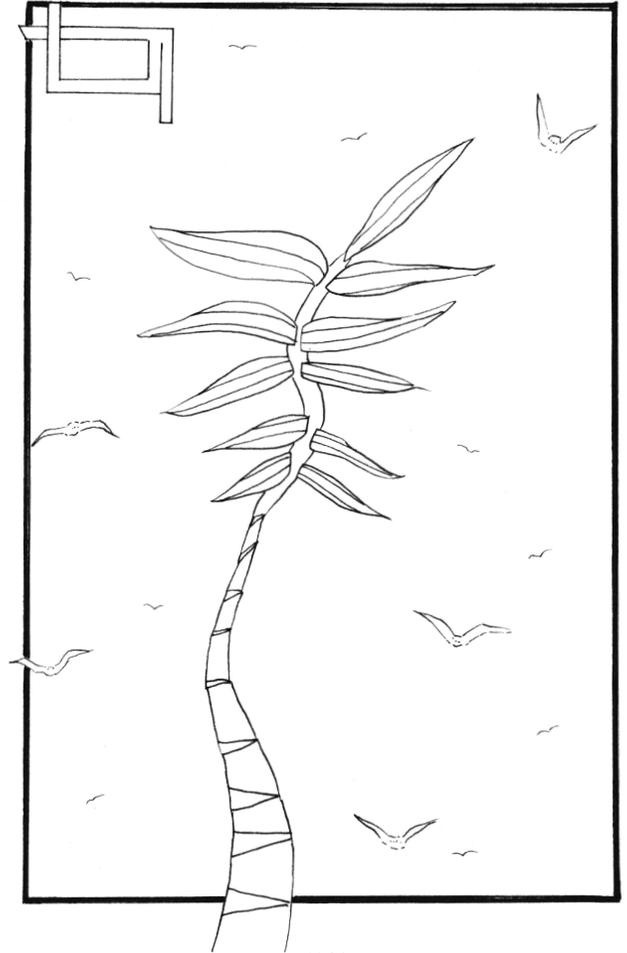
Why is love only classically reserved for a select few who commit to vows of commitment based in sexual fidelity?

If you disagree with these cultural norms, this zine may be for you:

People don't ever change
You can only love one person at a time
Relationships are all about compromise
Vows are how we trust a commitment

At the baseline this zine believes in the following cultural norms:

People are always changing
The more we practice loving ourselves and others,
the greater our capacity for love becomes
Relationships have conflict, how and if we move
through them indicates their depth
Trust is the soil we grow in, dying and transforming
back into the earth cultivate our soil



People are always changing

“Change is god” – Octavia Butler

We are always changing. Our bodies are always changing. Our nails are always elongating. Our experiences are always layering. The world around us which we are undeniably intertwined with is always changing in synchronous and non synchronous ways.

To expect relationships to stay the same is to deny ourselves of our potential to grow, evolve, and find more aligned ways of living.

To guide our change in the direction of our potential is a practice in self love.

Those who are willing to grow alongside us are family.



The more we practice loving ourselves and others, the greater our capacity for love becomes

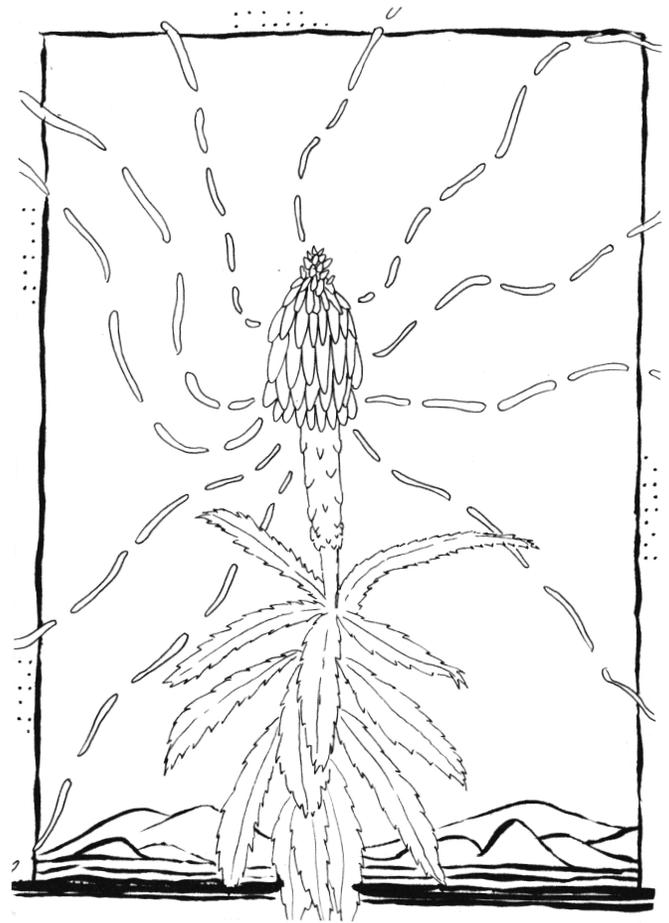
“To begin by always thinking of love as an action rather than a feeling is one way in which anyone using the word in this manner automatically assumes accountability and responsibility.”

– Bell Hooks

There is never a moment in which we find love for ourselves and our journey ends. As beings of change, we must be in an active pursuit of defining what love looks like to ourselves and others.

Our widespread usa culture has perpetrated a violent assault on our capacity to love ourselves. It has criticized our bodies, our art, our smells, our laughter, our desires, our languages, our creativity, our colors, our backgrounds, our love for ourselves. To subscribe to this culture is to minimize our capacity to love. It is to practice a small window of what is loveable.

It requires courage and practice to de-condition ourselves from this lifelong practice of loving small. But through expanding our willingness to love those outside of romantic partnership, outside of blood relations, outside of our race, age, class, gender and sexuality we can start to feel an abundance of love, a river that can nourish ourselves whenever we are quenched.



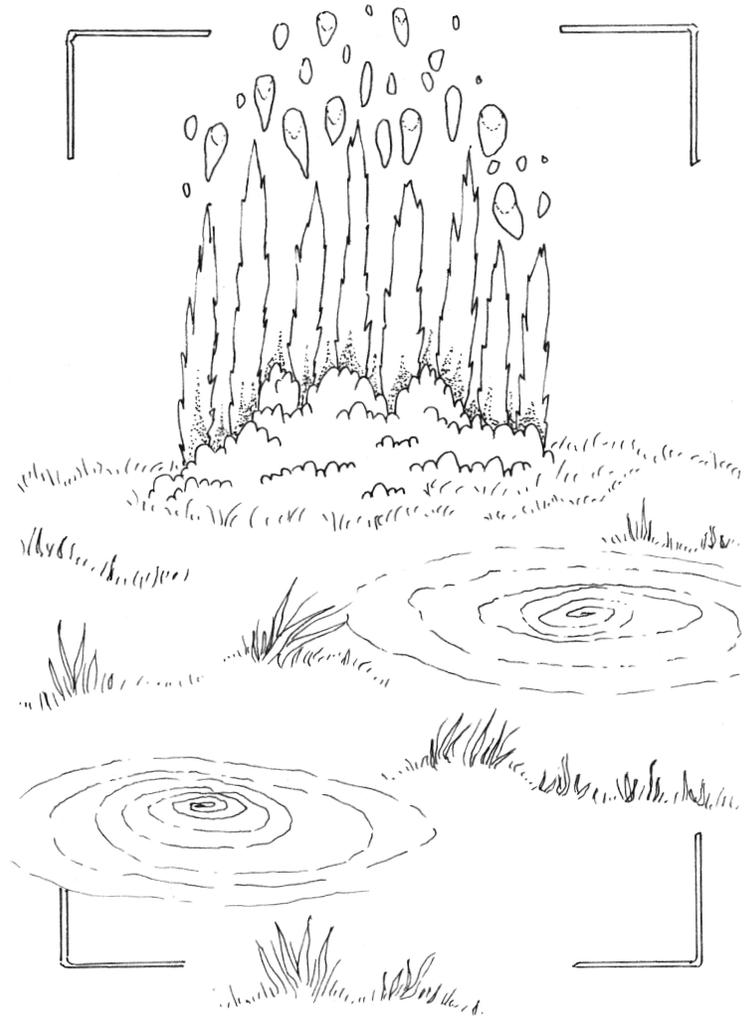
Relationships have conflict, how and if we move through them indicates their depth

“It is through conflict that relationships are strengthened, and we begin to see each other in our authenticity. When handled right, conflict is a sacred gift. But it has to be handled right.” – Kazu Haga

Conflict in this country has a blanket reputation for being bad. Yet it exists everywhere. It's the uprisings in Oakland, it's the struggle for reproductive health, it's silent repression in a household, it's resentment towards a friend, it's the self talk we have when trying something new.

Conflict feels uncomfortable. In this nation, discomfort = bad. When I see a tree being pruned or new sprouts shooting out of the soil, I know that discomfort is part of growth. We can hurdle ourselves through pain and discomfort, scaring ourselves where others have left imprints, or we can breathe through the discomfort and find ways to calm our bodies, and listen to the stories of others.

If we listen, we might understand. If we understand, we might find love for others. If we find love for others, we might change in the direction of our potential.



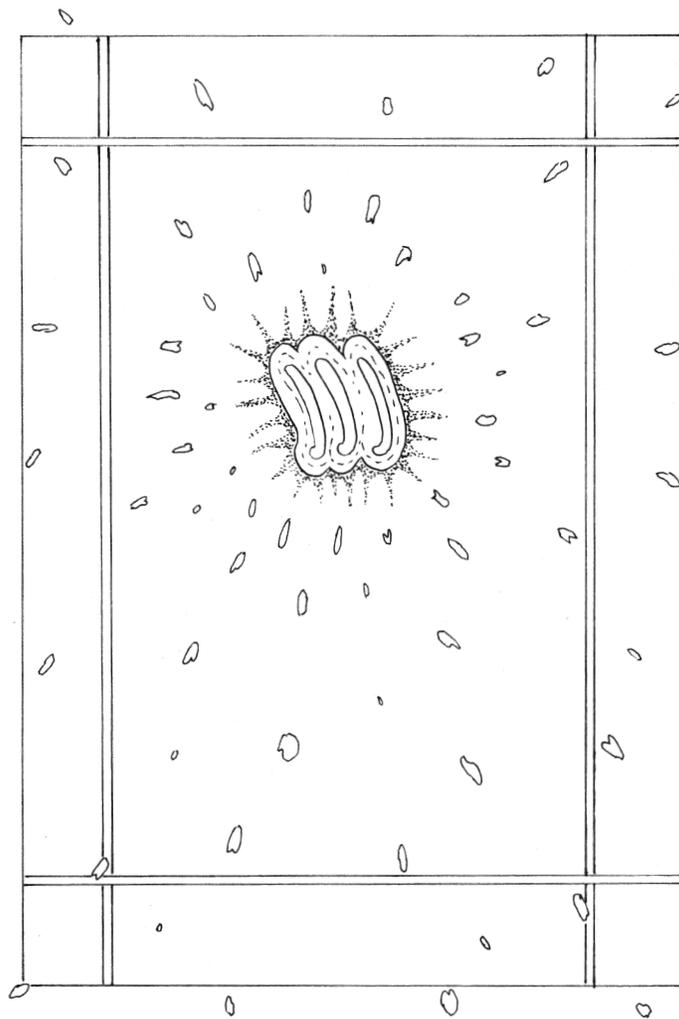
Trust is the soil we grow in, dying and transforming back into the earth, cultivates our soil

“Death is the portal to a life rooted in ancestry, faith, and gratitude”

This strange society has an extremely unbalanced attitude towards death. From its practice of pumping bodies with toxic embalming liquids to preserve the aesthetics of a body for a few days before being placed in the ground, to the multi-billion dollar elder-care facilities where my 婆婆 (grandma) is kept alive as her mind has fled and her body can no longer nourish itself.

Similarly, death is feared in relationships because it symbolizes the end to connection and relations. Yet in the fall, as I watch the leaves cover the earth with their bodies, I see them creating the groundwork for new life, new life that is not completely new but tethered to the past as the inspiration for the future.

If we are able to transform in relationships by learning from the past, we build a trust based in observation and care of our loved ones. The more we embrace death as a continuation of life, the more willingly we may spring forth. When we are in deep relationship with the many lives we are made from, we give others the recognition of their place in our lives. Integral, intertwined, part of our wholeness.



So often, I feel the urge to close in. To find ways to differentiate myself from others, to create in groups and out groups. Whether that's within a partnership or a small group, staking out the boundaries of where to share intimacy has a quality of safety to it.

Yet the world around me teaches a different type of safety, it teaches a resiliency through many networks of support, whilst changing, dying and molding each other in a feedback loop designed in relationship.

When I see myself of this world, I have hope that I can create relationships for myself that look beyond the titles and demarcations that have been created for me.

That there are ways to be in relationships that are fluid, rooted, and whole, and to be in the practice of relating that challenges us to continually return to balance in a deeply imbalanced world.

