



LGBTQI+ History Month 1st -28th February



An anthology of poems, novel extracts and articles by or for the LGBTQI+ community & allies.



Audre Lorde ; February 18, 1934 – November 17, 1992) was an American writer, feminist, womanist, librarian, and civil rights activist. She was a self-described "Black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet," who dedicated both her life and her creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, capitalism, heterosexism, and homophobia

A Litany for Survival

For those of us who live at the shoreline
standing upon the constant edges of decision
crucial and alone
for those of us who cannot indulge
the passing dreams of choice
who love in doorways coming and going
in the hours between dawns
looking inward and outward
at once before and after
seeking a now that can breed
futures
like bread in our children's mouths
so their dreams will not reflect
the death of ours;

For those of us
who were imprinted with fear
like a faint line in the center of our foreheads
learning to be afraid with our mother's milk
for by this weapon
this illusion of some safety to be found
the heavy-footed hoped to silence us
For all of us
this instant and this triumph
We were never meant to survive.

And when the sun rises we are afraid
it might not remain
when the sun sets we are afraid
it might not rise in the morning
when our stomachs are full we are afraid
of indigestion
when our stomachs are empty we are afraid
we may never eat again
when we are loved we are afraid
love will vanish
when we are alone we are afraid
love will never return
and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive.
BY AUDRE LORDE



I carry my roots with me all the time
rolled up, I use them as my pillow.

— *Francisco X. Alarcón* —

AZ QUOTES

Francisco Xavier Alarcón (21 February 1954 – 15 January 2016) was a Chicano poet and educator. He was one of the few Chicano poets to have "gained recognition while writing mostly in Spanish" within the United States. His poetry for is nuanced and deals with issues involving same-sex relationships, violence and literary references. His poems have also been described as socially conscious. Alarcón is very careful to construct a sense of meaning and feeling in his poetry that expresses his experiences relating to sexual orientation.

Prayer

BY [FRANCISCO X. ALARCÓN](#)

I want a god
as my accomplice
who spends nights
in houses
of ill repute
and gets up late
on Saturdays

a god
who whistles
through the streets
and trembles
before the lips
of his lover

a god
who waits in line
at the entrance
of movie houses
and likes to drink
café au lait

a god
who spits
blood from
tuberculosis and
doesn't even have
enough for bus fare

a god
knocked
unconscious
by the billy club
of a policeman
at a demonstration

a god
who shakes
out of fear
before the flaring
electrodes
of torture

a god
who hurts
to the last
bone and
bites the air
in pain

a jobless god
a striking god
a hungry god
a fugitive god
an exiled god
an enraged god

a god
who longs
from jail
for a change
in the order
of things

I want a
more godlike
god

- **Dame Carol Ann Duffy** (born 23 December 1955) is a British poet and playwright. She is a professor of contemporary poetry at Manchester Metropolitan University, and was appointed Poet Laureate in May 2009, resigning in 2019. She is the first woman, the first Scottish-born poet and the first known LGBT poet to hold the position.



Warming Her Pearls

BY CAROL ANN DUFFY

for Judith Radstone

Next to my own skin, her pearls. My mistress
bids me wear them, warm them, until evening
when I'll brush her hair. At six, I place them
round her cool, white throat. All day I think of her,

resting in the Yellow Room, contemplating silk
or taffeta, which gown tonight? She fans herself
whilst I work willingly, my slow heat entering
each pearl. Slack on my neck, her rope.

She's beautiful. I dream about her
in my attic bed; picture her dancing
with tall men, puzzled by my faint, persistent scent
beneath her French perfume, her milky stones.

I dust her shoulders with a rabbit's foot,
watch the soft blush seep through her skin
like an indolent sigh. In her looking-glass
my red lips part as though I want to speak.

Full moon. Her carriage brings her home. I see
her every movement in my head.... Undressing,
taking off her jewels, her slim hand reaching
for the case, slipping naked into bed, the way

she always does.... And I lie here awake,
knowing the pearls are cooling even now
in the room where my mistress sleeps. All night
I feel their absence and I burn



Oscar Wilde (16 October 1854 – 30 November 1900) was an Irish poet and playwright. After writing in different forms throughout the 1880s, the early 1890s saw him become one of the most popular playwrights in London. He is best remembered for his epigrams and plays, his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and the circumstances of his criminal conviction for gross indecency for consensual homosexual acts, imprisonment, and early death from meningitis at age 46.

Silentium Amoris (The Silence of Love)

As often-times the too resplendent sun
Hurries the pallid and reluctant moon
Back to her sombre cave, ere she hath won
A single ballad from the nightingale,
So doth thy Beauty make my lips to fail,
And all my sweetest singing out of tune.
And as at dawn across the level mead
On wings impetuous some wind will come,
And with its too harsh kisses break the reed
Which was its only instrument of song,
So my too stormy passions work me wrong,
And for excess of Love my Love is dumb.
But surely unto Thee mine eyes did show
Why I am silent, and my lute unstrung;
Else it were better we should part, and go,
Thou to some lips of sweeter melody,
And I to nurse the barren memory
Of unkissed kisses, and songs never sung.

Captain Corelli's Mandolin

- This classic novel from Louis de Bernieres is set on a Greek island during the Second World War.
- In this extract, we hear from Carlo – he became a soldier and fought during the war, where he met and fell in love with another soldier called Francesco. He tells us about his struggles with his sexuality and the reasons why he joined the army.



I, Carlo Piero Guercio, write these words with the intention that they should be found after my death, when what is written here will not harm me.

I know only silence. I have not told the priest, since I know in advance what I will be told; it is a wicked sin and I must marry and lead the life of a normal man. Nor have I told a doctor, as I know that I will be informed that I am sick and can be cured of my disease.

What could I say to such priests and doctors? I would say to the priest that God made me like this for a purpose, that I had no choice. I would say to the doctor, 'I have been like this from the start, it is nature that has created me.' But they would not understand. I am like someone who is the only person in the world that knows the truth, but is forbidden to speak. And this truth weighs more than the universe, this burden cracks my bones.

In my search to understand myself, I have read everything, from the most modern to the most ancient, and it was in the work of the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, that I finally found myself. In his writings, he explained that there were three sexes, the third sex being men who loved men, and this idea made sense to me. Plato also wrote that if an army was made up of men who loved one another, they would be the bravest army in the world, because men would become heroes, ready to die for their lovers.

I admit that I joined the Army because the men are young and beautiful, and because I knew that in the Army I would find someone I could love though never touch. I would not abandon him in battle, I would win his admiration, I would die for him if necessary and in this way give purpose to my life.

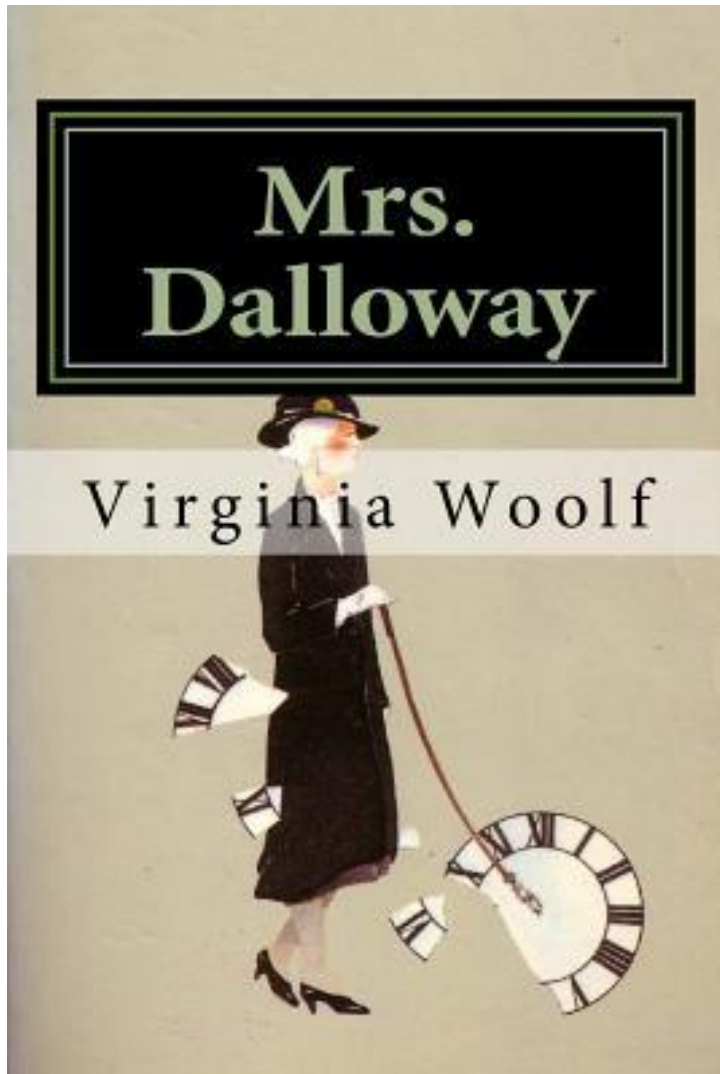
In the Army I found my family. It was a world without women, and for the first time in my life I did not have to pretend. I was very fortunate at first; our unit was sent to Albania, where there was no real fighting, and we did not realize that we might be ordered to invade Greece. No one outside the Army can understand the joy of being a soldier, of being part of a group where you are all young and strong and quickly learn everything about each other. We believed we could not die, we could march eighty kilometres a day, singing battle songs. We were new and beautiful, we loved each other more than brothers.

I fell in love with Francesco, a young married soldier from Genoa, who accepted me as his best friend without ever suspecting my passion for him. He was an entirely beautiful boy, reminding me of one of those elegant cats that give the impression of immense but easy strength. I was attracted most of all to his face, with its strong, high cheekbones, wide mouth and one-sided smile. He was always amusing and respected no one, constantly entertaining us with his wickedly accurate imitations of Mussolini and Hitler. Everyone loved him, he never got a promotion and he did not care.

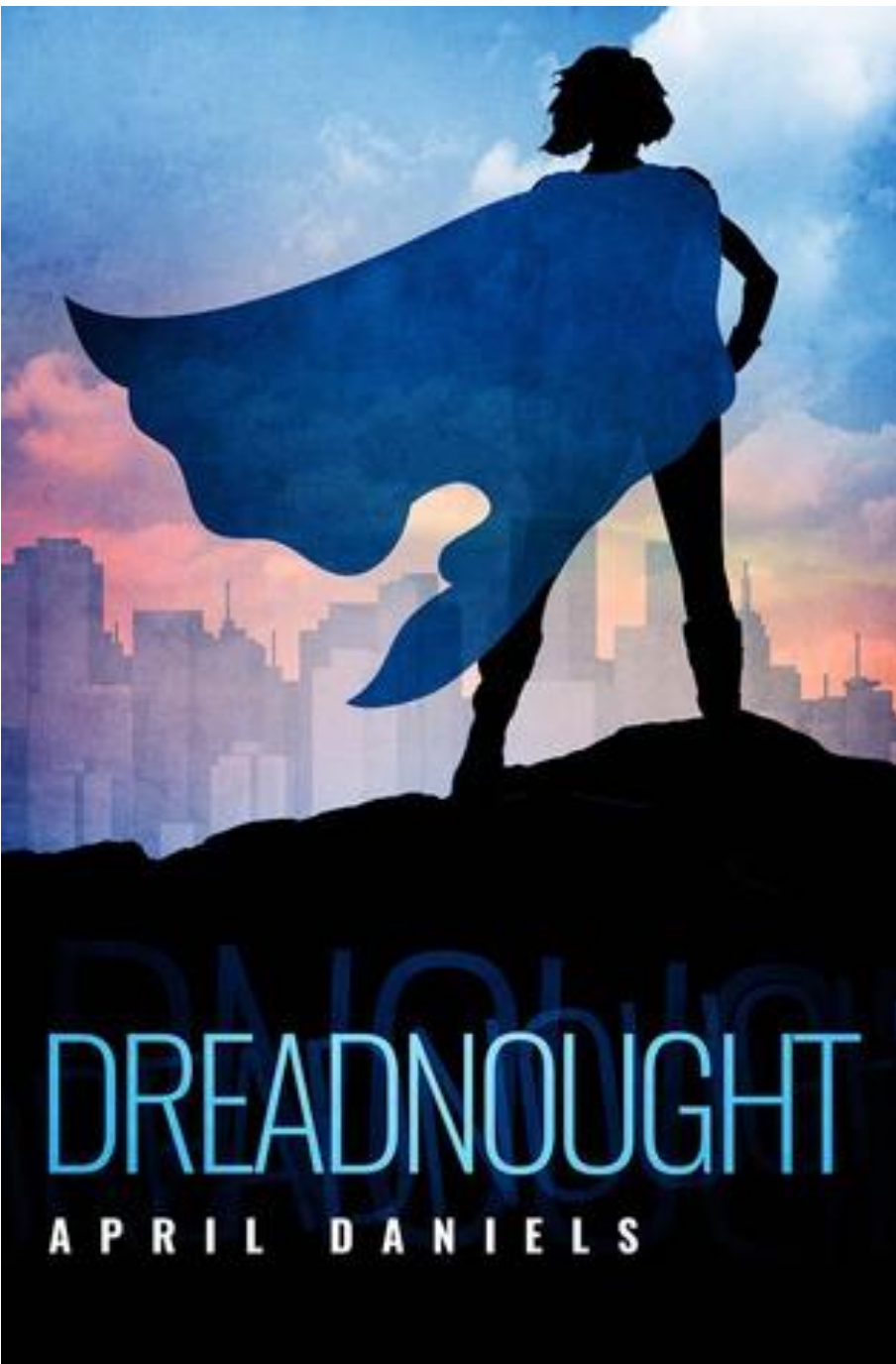


- **Virginia Woolf**; 25 January 1882 – 28 March 1941) was an English writer, considered one of the most important modernist 20th century authors and also a pioneer in the use of stream of consciousness as a narrative device.
- Woolf became one of the central subjects of the 1970s movement of feminist criticism and her works have since garnered much attention and widespread commentary for "inspiring feminism".

In one of her most famous books, *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf wrote about a married character, Clarissa, who 'feels as men do' for her friend, Sally. Her feelings are explained and described in the extract on the following slide.



“Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it — a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!”



Danny Tozer has a problem: she just inherited the powers of Dreadnought, the world's greatest superhero.

Until Dreadnought fell out of the sky and died right in front of her, Danny was trying to keep people from finding out she's transgender. But before he expired, Dreadnought passed his mantle to her, and those secondhand superpowers transformed Danny's body into what she's always thought it should be. Now there's no hiding that she's a girl.

Read the opening on the next slide...

The sky is low and gray. Traffic hisses above me. The cement is cold where I sit on it, and I am utterly alone. For the first time this week, I'm happy.

The nail polish is a nice deep red. I've been running mostly with blue recently, but I think it's time for a change. The cotton balls soak up remover and the blue polish rubs off my toes a bit at a time. It feels right. It feels *necessary*. Painting my toes is the one way I can take control. The one way I can fight back. The one way I can give voice to this idea inside me that gets heavier every year:

I'm not supposed to be a boy.

Sometimes I want to climb up on a table in the cafeteria

and scream it out at the top of my lungs. There's been a horrible mistake. I'm trapped on the wrong side. I'm not a boy. I won't be a man. I'm a girl. I'm a girl.

I AM A GIRL!

The lie is suffocating. Every time I have to play along, I feel like I'm betraying myself. Sometimes when I see myself in a mirror I get a little jolt, a little splash of fear sluicing down my spine.

Maybe I'm only imagining things. Sometimes I hope I am. There are things that don't make sense. Like, for instance, my junk. It doesn't bother me, but I feel like it's "supposed" to bother me. Isn't that how it's supposed to go? These changes in my body—I don't like them, and I'm constantly getting surprised at all the different *ways* I don't like them, but the one thing I thought I could count on hating doesn't really bother me. I don't feel much about it one way or the other. And so the

uncertainty is never far away, the lingering doubt (hope?) that maybe I'm making it up. Maybe I'm normal; this is all normal. Maybe it just means I'm scared to grow up. Or maybe I'm just a freaky little boy with freaky little thoughts that don't mean anything.

But then in health class when the teacher starts talking about reproductive systems, I get this feeling of cold invasion. My body knows what it's missing, and being reminded of it is the worst feeling in the world.

Obviously I can't tell anyone about this. If it got back to Dad, he'd kill me. He's obsessed with "making a good man" out of me. "You're a man now," he says as his justification for friggin' *everything*. He wants me to be strong and boisterous and popular. It's bad enough I'm quiet and like to be alone, bad enough I don't like sports even after he forced me to join the football team, bad enough I couldn't care less about cars. If he found out I might be a girl...well, I don't really want to think about what might happen.

The dirty little secret about growing up as a boy is if you're not any good at it, they will torture you daily until you have the good graces to kill yourself. The posturing and the dominance games are almost inescapable. It's hard to walk from one end of school to the other without getting shoulder-checked in the halls. Locker rooms are a forgotten circle of Hell. God forbid anyone ever catch you sketching flowers in class, or reading a book that's "for girls." Maybe for people who really *are* boys, that stuff works. Maybe it fits for them.

But I don't get to fit. Not anywhere.

The one thing I must never do is try to fit in with the girls. I don't know what would happen if I tried, but I have a screaming animal instinct that tells me not to even consider it.

SHAKESPEARE

Although there are no **explicitly** gay characters in Shakespeare's plays, many viewers interpret some of his characters as being gay.

For example, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio is very scathing of Romeo's attraction towards women. To some, he comes across as jealous...

**"If love be rough with you, be rough with love;
Prick love for pricking and you beat love down."**



Mercutio eventually dies while protecting Romeo from dishonour and physical violence.

'Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm'

Many interpret this to mean that Mercutio sacrificed himself for Romeo due to his undeclared romantic feelings of love for him.

What **you** do think?

Section 28

- Did you know...?
- Section 28 was a legal bill passed by government in 1988.
- It banned all teachers and schools from being able to 'promote' homosexuality.
- This meant that teachers could not be openly gay, no material containing any gay characters was allowed in school libraries and nothing about LGBT existence was allowed to be mentioned in PSHE / Sex Education
- The following slide has an article about the abolition of Section 28.



Can you guess the year that Section 28 was abolished?

Section 28: What was it and how did it affect LGBT+ people?

The law existed from 1988 - 2003 and affected LGBT+ people. Here's what you need to know about it.

Warning: This article contains a reference to a homophobic slur that you may find offensive

Craig was bullied a lot in secondary school because he was gay. "There was only one member of staff who ever spoke to me about it, my drama teacher," he says. "And I wasn't aware at the time that she could have gotten into trouble just for doing that."

Craig, who grew up near Aberdeen, is one of the many LGBT+ people who came of age during the era of **Section 28**, a law passed in 1988 by a Conservative government that stopped councils and schools "promoting the teaching of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship."

You may have heard the term Section 28 this week when it was discussed on RuPaul's Drag Race UK.

"School was hard," contestant Divina De Campo explained, before breaking into tears in yesterday's episode of the reality show. "I got a lot of flak from pretty much everybody in the school. Growing up for everybody was hard but then you add on being gay and it was just a whole other level, particularly for the time that I grew up in."

"Kids in the playground pushing and shoving and calling you a 'fag'. Throwing their drinks on you. Because of Section 28 it meant that a lot of teachers felt like they couldn't step in." Divina, who is gay and **gender non-binary**, says her school didn't provide enough support - despite the isolation and homophobic bullying she suffered during her school years. "For me, the bullying was school-wide. It wasn't just a select group of kids. School was a very difficult experience for me." And Divina thinks the homophobic abuse she suffered at school still leaves its mark today.

"I'm constantly worried that people don't like me or that they're making fun of me. And I always carry with me the idea that I'm not good enough, that there's something wrong with me."

But she thinks things have now improved. For example, there is LGBT+ history month across schools, increasing awareness and visibility of LGBT+ issues.



US election 2020: Sarah McBride to be first trans state senator.

Sarah McBride is to become the first transgender state senator in the US after she won her race in Delaware.

She beat Republican Steve Washington to take over the seat from Democrat Harris McDowell, who is standing down.

Ms McBride, 30, has worked as the press secretary of LGBTQ advocacy group the Human Rights Campaign and was a trainee in President Obama's White House. She is one of a handful of candidates who has made history in a nail-biting night across the country.

"I hope tonight shows an LGBTQ kid that our democracy is big enough for them, too," **Ms McBride tweeted** after her win.

Ms McBride is not the only transgender candidate to make history during the election. Vermont's Taylor Small, 26, was elected to the House of Representatives, while Stephanie Byers made history in Kansas as the first trans person of colour to ever be elected to a state legislature.

In Oklahoma, Mauree Turner became the first ever non-binary candidate to win a seat in a state legislature.

And in New York, Mondaire Jones and Ritchie Torres won their seats and became the first black openly LGBTQ people ever elected to Congress.

"Mondaire and Ritchie have shattered a rainbow ceiling and will bring unique perspectives based on lived experiences never before represented in the US Congress," **Annie Parker, of the LGBTQ Victory Fund, told Pink News.**



Want to find out more?

- <https://lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk/>
- <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/schools-colleges>
- <http://queerbooksforteens.com/>
- <https://www.theproudtrust.org/>