

## Metanoia: Theology of Contradictions (Spoken Word)

By: Nathan Bakken

I am writing theology of contradictions.  
Or so I have been told.  
Queer and Catholic dissolving lines  
fusing norms  
altering the way in which my Church is understood  
like a chemical reaction.  
I am the ultimate HOMO-genius mixture.  
Mixing prophets of queer theory  
Lorde, Sedgwick, Anzaldua and Althaus-Reid.  
With the biblical radicals  
Beloved Disciple , Mary Magdalene and  
Christ Jesus himself.  
Producing a concoction on my tongue  
that tastes like Truth and Communion wine  
But Communion wine is supposed to taste of blood  
not rainbows.

This blood  
Blood lingers still on the back of my throat, A  
Blood shared between those who have lost their lives at the hands of "God's word."  
Their blood has been shed, all over the world.  
shed in the sheets  
shed on the streets.  
shed in the sea.  
shed in fires  
shed on the cross.  
Yes, I said cross.  
Because when I see Jesus on the cross  
Thorns piercing his crown,  
nails of oppression hammered into his hands  
hate and fear taken shape in a spear driven into his side.  
despair painted onto his face.  
I see myself.  
I see those who have felt the weight of oppression and marginalization on their shoulders.  
They call this scene the Passion of the Cross...  
And I never saw this as passionate, growing up.  
Passion, to me, was  
love,  
fire,  
earth-shattering sex where the only feeling left is you and your lover stuck on cloud 9.  
unable to touch the island earth shrapnel sinking into a rising sea.

It wasn't until I came out that I understood what the Passion means.  
With each struggle of locked closet doors,  
those who "love" me take the thread of church teaching trying to sew my lips shut

not with a needle  
but with a thorn broken off of Christ's crown.  
Being pushed through the soft tender chapped lips of a child crying in the third pew in a  
mass praying that Jesus was like him. Like them.  
That Passion hit me in the face like a sponge soaked with vinegar.  
when I finally got that taste out of my eyes...  
I saw Him. Them. Her. Hir  
Jesus...

Like me is queer.

Jesus...

Like me is radical.

Jesus...

Like me experienced  
a metanoia of the self

Metanoia: n. The act or process of changing one's mind; penitence, repentance, spiritual  
conversion.

Spiritual conversion closet into closeness, gospel into bones only seen under my stained  
glass skin.

He came out.

of the Cloests.

of the Confessionals

of the Church.

of the dark.

I was afraid of the dark until I was 9. I would lay in my bed quietly as a child, wrapped in  
grandmother's quilt. Singing

*This little light of mine*

*I'm Gonna let it shine*

*This little light of mine*

*I'm gonna let it shine*

*This little light of mine*

*I'm gonna let it shine*

*Let it shine*

*Let it shine*

*Let it—*

But when the Church turns into a bushel basket and the Lavender flickers of your candle  
light-self struggles to make its presence known

You get discouraged.

You get depressed.

You get angry.

You get angry.

And you struggle through scriptures, theologians, and gay bars trying to find words to calm  
the storm you are called to walk on.

Walking on this storm by faith means holding on to your anger. Because your anger has  
been earned. it is righteous. It challenges you to make a difference in your life because you  
are worth it.

Jesus knew the meaning of Earned Anger. Jesus knew the meaning of Radical Love.

You search for the words in your theorist, your prophets. Fighting the contradiction by  
envisioning compliment. You see yourself on the cross. You try to let your light shine. You

are left with your anger and a God who has learned how to hold it. You are left with your love and a God who embodied it.

Passion forms itself gay bar martini with rad queer zine and a rosary wrapped tightly in your hand

Handing off each bead through your fingers. Praying. Fighting. Yelling that one day.

You too can call this Church home.