PREFACE

TOURMALINE

> Heavenly Blue worried all the time. He worried about the bills and the roof that needed repairing and the strange men who always watched the house and what the neighbors might do next and about Hollyhock's unhappiness. He worried most of all that he would go mad. His worrying got the bills paid and the roof fixed and drove the men away and calmed the neighbors down and helped Hollyhock be happier. And finally his worrying drove him mad. It was the madness of looking inward and being afraid. There had never been enough love and warmth around him and he thought he had gradually dried up inside. He wanted out but he did not know where out was. Lilac and Pinetree and Moonbeam and Loose Tomato and Hollyhock gathered. They held Heavenly Blue in their arms for days, they let him cry and stare and slobber and scream and be silent. They paid the bills and looked after the roof and watched the street for strange men and talked to the neighbors and Hollyhock kept himself happy. Their house filled up with comfort and routine and gladness until Heavenly Blue could no longer resist and became response-able again. (80)

I remember reading these words for the first time many years ago, and how familiar they felt. I have been where Heavenly Blue was, so many times, and I'll be there again: imagining that respectability

seems counter-intuitive. We have been taught so forcefully, especially in the deeply conservative time that we live in, that we must look out only for ourselves and indeed conserve our resources. That our resources are what others have deemed valuable - money, time, material things. But the faggots have other ideas. They say that "the more you share, the less you need." They make a way out of no way, and build a life together in fugitivity. They see renewable resources where others might not. They see their sluttiness and madness and magic as surplus, not lack. They thrive on cum alone.

> The faggots have never been asked to join the vanguard. The faggots, it was noticed, do not know how to keep a straight face and the vanguard demands constantly straight faces. The faggots, it was noticed, want only to eat so they can play love play while the vanguard demands endless talk about the hunger of others and the seriousness of work. The faggots, it was noticed, are too quick to believe that the revolution had come and so too quick to celebrate. The vanguard demands that the revolution go on forever and so demands that the celebration only be planned, never enacted. (22)

On my birthday this past year, I woke up thinking about Marsha P. Johnson. Not just about how she started the Stonewall riots (yes that too) but about the parts of her life that get left out of the story. I woke up thinking about her most unruly parts, about how many blow jobs she gave to "nevers" at clubs, how she would get tossed out of those same clubs, and especially how she would often walk naked down Christopher St. after throwing her clothes in the Hudson as an offering to Neptune. How much power Marsha had! How much magic in front of and behind the veil!

When I was a community organizer I really internalized the message of much of movement organizing at that time: aesthetics and beauty and art in general were secondary to the movement. The most authentic way to be a community organizer was to dress

and live in austerity. You didn't dare wear fantastic colors, or wear glittery faux fur to the protest. Your politics had to be pure and thorough, you had to stay sharp and have an analysis and always have it together.

I remember going to organizing meetings with other trans people, many of whom were also disabled and poor and people of color, and most of us could barely stay on topic. We were too busy talking and emoting about our basic survival needs: housing, welfare, healthcare, community, not being harassed every time we left our home. We were too busy dreaming up another space-time, where and when we could be our full selves.

> The queens display infinite wierdnesses to the world. For them, style is the path into the unique self and so to transcendence. They long for everyone to reveal themselves wherever they are. (63)

Right around the same time, pop culture realized it could make a profit off of trans people. It hurt me to see tokenization couched as representation—in fashion, art, music—to see one or two of us in systems that so often harmed us. But I was also drawn to these worlds, and craved to be able to make art that reflected our beauty and magic back to us.

It took me a long time to come back to the power and magic of image, art, fashion, aesthetics, and not least of all GLAMOUR. The faggots helped me find my way back. The faggots reminded me that superficiality, style, messiness, and play are not bad things, they are transformative ways of being. Our glamour is not superfluous to changing the current order, it is instrumental. Our glamour, our joy, our magic, are not commodities to be ripped off and sold back to us by corporations, they are ours. When they try to steal our essence, we slip away like snakes and leave them only the shedded skin.

Now, even more so than when I first left professional commu-

nity organizing, is a moment of immense violence and protracted struggle. Climate change, white supremacy, transphobia, ableism, and all systems of oppression are terrifyingly alive today. Many of us feel afraid and alone. Our images are being extracted at a rate and on a scale that is unprecedented, while at the same time our self-expression is monitored, censored, and repressed. We are told that to make change we must take individual responsibility for systemic oppression, above all be respectable.

We are truly between revolutions.

But this book is right on time. In this moment of immense conservativism & austerity, the faggots point to sharing and distributing the abundance we all ready have. They invite us to move closer to our own unruly selves, to wear color in a sea of grey. The faggots outstretch an invitation to us all to be a freak or a fairy, to snuggle and guzzle the cum of our friends, and be in the tender care collective of moonbeam and lilac and pine tree, hollyhock and loose tomato. I hope you'll join me there.

INTRODUCTION

MORGAN BASSICHIS

1

Larry Mitchell knew we would need this book. You and me. In 1977, he made us a care package of prophetic messages in the form of a slim black and red volume, hoping it would reach us.

> NOTHING CAN DEFEAT THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH: The fairies know that the earth will not tolerate the men much longer. The earth, scarred and gouged and stripped and bombed, will deny life to the men in order to stop the men. The fairies have left the men's reality in order to destroy it by making a new one. (53)

And here we are, living in yet another period of both intensified repression and infectious rebellion, gathering all the tools we can find to overcome the deadly interlocking forces of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, fascism, and climate change that threaten our collective survival. Pour yourself a cocktail or some weird probiotic drink and pass this book around. Bottoms up!

Part-fable, part-manifesto, *The Faggots & Their Friends Between Revolutions* introduces us to clandestine networks of chosen fam-

ily making lives and plotting revolt in Ramrod, an empire in decline ruled by the cruel patriarch, Warren-And-His-Fuckpole, and his minister of hate, Mildred Munich. This world is inhabited by a mythic cosmology of revolutionary protagonists—the faggots, the queens, the women who love women, the queer men, the faeries, the strong women—and, of course, their opponents, the men.

> Wherever the faggots settle they wish it to be near the women. It is from the women that they learn wisdom and magic. . . . They are friends of the faggots. They constantly exchange information with each other on the present state of the madness of the men. They commit espionage for each other so that each can survive. (91)

In the world of the book, one's role is not determined by some narrow essentialist notion of biology, but rather by one's allegiance to either the oppressed or the oppressor: "All the men could be faggots or their friends"(8). Social categories themselves are portrayed as coercive and unstable, and therefore opportunities for solidarity and play. Friendship is understood as a means and an end amidst unceasing violence—the bridge and the destination. It is racial capitalism that makes "a small group of men without color very rich" (1) and keeps ruining the fun for everybody else:

> The faggots who worked knew that it's useless to have rich people. The rich did no useful work and received large amounts of money for it. . . . The poor faggots said, 'There is only one choice for us. Take it away from the rich men or go mad living in their world.' (28)

A trip to San Francisco in the early 1970s inspired Mitchell to write *The Faggots & Their Friends Between Revolutions*. He asked his friend Ned Asta, a Queens-born graduate of the School of Visual Arts, to illustrate it. Initially conceived of as a children's book—evi-

dent in its playfulness and deceptively simple mode of address—*The Faggots & Their Friends* became Mitchell and Asta's record of a decade of their experiments in radical communal living and queer friendship from the late 1960s through the late 1970s. The book grew in particular out of a commune they founded with others outside of Ithaca, New York, called Lavender Hill.[1]

Publishing the book proved difficult: "every gay person in America had a manuscript because no one would publish anything gay," Mitchell told queer historian Stephen Vider in 2012. "I thought, why don't I publish it myself?" Mitchell founded Calamus Press—a reference to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and the Greek myth of Kalamos, who was transformed into a river reed after he drowned himself mourning his lover, Karpos[2]—and published *The Faggots & Their Friends* in 1977.[3] For the 1981 newsletter of the Gay's the Word bookstore in London, Mitchell wrote:

> My political development, from militant anti-war activity to left-wing gay liberation had convinced me that we could not continue the endless, tedious struggle against the militarists or the patriarchy unless we had our own culture and community to nurture us, teach us and take care of us. I knew that we must have our own institutions—newspapers, bookshops, health clinics, publishers, artists, neighborhoods—if we were to survive.

Despite being out of print for much of the last few decades, *The Faggots & Their Friends Between Revolutions* has stayed in circulation

1 Lavender Hill members included Ned Asta, Sunny Bat-Or, Yvonne Fisher, David Hirsch, Bobby Jake Roberts, Mitchell Karp, Lazar Mintz, Zelik Mintz, Larry Mitchell, Joseph Modica, Francesca "Luna" Santini, Chaya Spector, Steve Waring, and Allan Warshawsky. See Austin Bunn and Bob Hazen's 2013 short film, *Lavender Hill: A Love Story*.

2 Thank you to TM Davy for introducing this myth to me.

3 In 1980, Mitchell worked with author and publisher Felice Picano to form Gay Presses of New York, affiliating Calamus Press, JH Press, and Seahorse Press. Their first publication was *Torch Song Trilogy* by Harvey Fierstein.

through multiple DIY reprintings, on xerox machines and scanners, and through the generosity of friends. It is beloved by many. My friend Bobby gave me a copy—his boyfriend Blake had found it in a used bookstore—in 2005, while we were living together in an apartment on Haight and Ashbury in San Francisco above a head shop called Distractions. Colby lived there too. Lis had just moved out and Dean visited regularly. The dot com bubble of the late 90s had burst a few years earlier, but the rents were skyrocketing again, and the Google buses were starting to clog the streets. At least there was still phone-less sex to be found in the nearby Panhandle and Buena Vista Park. San Francisco was already over, everyone told me, like New York, like everywhere, but I seemed to have landed in a holdout of the city's persistent queer spirit that had been so badly bruised by the era of tech vampires, $15 smoothies, and gay marriage. Do not get me wrong: I love an expensive smoothie, but at least I hate myself for it.

It was during those years that this group of queer weirdos and so many others before and since then modeled for me how to do friendship. Friendship was not an idea or a status you took for granted, but something you *did*, over and over: When your friend is flying into town, you find a car and pick them up at the airport, and you take them to get burgers at In-N-Out. When it's your friend's birthday, you bake their favorite cake (Earl Grey if you're lucky) and make them a beautiful card from thick pieces of paper and stickers you have collected for the purpose. When your friend needs a place to stay because they are visiting town or recovering from surgery or getting out of prison, you make them a bed from the extra pair of sheets and pillow you keep for visitors, and you leave them a snack in the fridge. In the shadow of structural abandonment, political alienation, family rejection, chronic illness, state violence, and medical neglect, queer friendship saves us. Queer friendship—that thing that is sometimes called mutual aid, solidarity, disability justice, care, organizing, abolition, or maybe just love—is what raised me in San Francisco, and what forms the lifeblood of this book. Bobby inscribed my copy, "Come home soon."

My friend Dori had a framed page on the wall of her bathroom in her apartment on Guerrero Street, "The strong women told the faggots that the more you share, the less you need"(38). Craig read from his copy at a memorial for Kaitlin's grandfather, "The strong women told the faggots that there are two important things to remember about the coming revolutions. The first is that we will get our asses kicked. The second is that we will win"(21). I read from mine at a Passover seder at Gregg and Kristine's house, "The queens elaborate their dens in the rubble to create hidden places where one can live for long periods of time safe from the cold, sharp eyes of the men. And they elaborate their forms of outrage" (52). How many times has this book been passed between friends and lovers? I was rummaging through Mitchell's papers and photo albums held at Cornell University and found this letter he received from a reader living in upstate New York in 1980:

> It should be in the hands of every queer fairy gay queen in existence (which includes just about everybody, including the amnesiac Men). I belong to a Fairy Circle and at one of our gatherings following, appropriately enough, a celebration of Beltane up on a wooded hill in Inwood Park with about 50 witches (male and female) last May, we sat in our circle and took turns reading from your book with great hilarity and delight. It has given me a renewed enspiritment, and hope.

II.

Larry Mitchell was born in Muncie, Indiana in 1938. He came to New York to get his PhD in Sociology from Columbia Universi-

ty. He had family money and a big apartment on the Upper West Side that he invited his friend David Hirsch—one of the founding members of Lavender Hill—to move into. They met at Art Bar in the Broadway Central Hotel on Broadway between West 3rd and Bond in 1966. "We had sex but it wasn't very successful," David told me in August 2018 as we sat and ate bialys in the house that he and the other communards built in the summer of 1973. "But we talked a lot." How many enduring queer friendships start this way, with mediocre sex? Larry met Zelik Mintz, another founding member of Lavender Hill, at the Continental Baths in 1969. "It was amazing, you'd be sitting around in your towel listening to Patti Labelle or Bette Middler. I went home with Larry and I just moved in. That's how it was with our friends. People would come to visit us and they would never leave."

If you talk to any of the members of Lavender Hill—made up of white women and men, all gay or avidly bisexual, mostly Jews and Italians from Brooklyn and Queens—you will soon find out their entire sexual history. It's more factual than salacious—they will tell you what kind of food they were into (dessert), what music they were listening to (Aretha Franklin and Laura Nyro), and who they were having sex with at the time, including one another. "Horniness makes the faggots uneasy and nasty and distracts them from the revolutions"(12). David was cruising in the Rambles in Central Park when he met a gay witch who gave him a flier for a Gay Liberation Front meeting. (Isn't this how all of us got into activism?) It was the fall of 1969, a few months after the rebellion against the NYPD at the Stonewall Inn. They went.

David and Larry joined a gay study group inspired by feminist consciousness-raising circles, led by fellow GLF member Arthur Evans, author of the book *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture*. Mitchell reflected on the radical anti-assimilationist gay political consciousness he developed in this period:

I was thrilled to be gay because there were two things I didn't

> have to do now—go into the army or get married. And of course over the years the two things that the gay movement fought for was to be able to go into the army and get married. But we were thrilled that we didn't have to do that. We thought it was fantastic! The gay movement did not follow us there. It went towards acceptance, and we were not about acceptance. We were about changing the rules. We were about opposition.[4]

Mitchell was a longtime professor at Richmond College, later renamed College of Staten Island, and taught courses such as "Community-building" and "The sociology of men." Yvonne Fisher was one of his students. Over rugelach she told me about the teacher who changed her life:

> He sat the class in a big circle, on rugs, and didn't say anything for a while. I kept looking around thinking, Where's the teacher? And then he started talking. He was so committed to radical theory without calling it that—feminist, gay, socialist thinking. Richmond College was a hotbed of excitement, radicalism, and feminism at the time.

A main focus of his teaching was on practical applications of socialist ideals. He helped to form a commune in Staten Island, loosely named the 25 to 6 Baking and Trucking Society, and invited his students to move in. Yvonne was thrilled to join. "It was both straight and gay, but the politics were all gay. And people really believed not just in gay politics but in feminism, fighting racism and the war in Vietnam."

The Staten Island commune existed for about three years before a political split prompted the straight members to leave. The queer members collectively created a record of their growing po-

4 Larry Mitchell interviewed by Stephen Vider, January 12, 2012.

litical consciousness in *Great Gay in the Morning!: One Group's Approach to Communal Living and Sexual Politics*, published in 1972 by Times Change Press:

> The straight men were the ones who most insistently enunciated the doctrine of 'do your own thing' and 'it's all free' and 'don't tamper with the good vibes.' We began to feel that this hippy ideology was a cover for privilege and power and laziness and irresponsibility. We felt like we were doing most of the work and we were paying for all of it. They were being taken care of. (13)

The struggles over who did the "shitwork" continued—something you are familiar with if you've ever been a part of an organization or a family or a society—and initiated this circle of friends into the pleasures and pains of living together radically:

> We are preparing ourselves to live in a post-scarcity, egalitarian, world-wide society. The material resources necessary to make this society a reality for everyone exist now. We need only take them back from the ruling classes who stole them from us in the first place. We, as white, middle-class Americans, will have to lower our material standard of living so that the poor of this country and the rest of the world can have what they need. We are trying to do that. (24)

The group began to experiment with rural living, forming a short-lived commune in Fleischmanns, New York, and later purchasing 80 acres of land in Spencer, New York, in the unceded historic territory of the Cayuga Nation, part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. None of the early communards had any building experience. Despite the difficulties, the prospect of building something together was alluring. Ned remembers, "I came to do shingles and I never left." Zelik invited his twin brother, Lazar, to move upstate

and help. Lazar reflected on this process in an early issue of *RFD*, a quarterly magazine on queer rural living founded in 1974:

> The idea of building our own house was intense and easy to romanticize (which I tend to do constantly). Physical labor had never appealed to me on any level. Nonetheless, building the house was a trip. As the floors and walls went up, the mysteries of construction fizzled. The excitement of eight or ten people lifting a wall was totally unique. To know where each piece of wood came from in a house really turned me on.

Around this time, many members of Lavender Hill became involved in Moosewood, a collectively-owned vegetarian restaurant in Ithaca opened in 1973. Most of the Lavender Hill members have worked there as servers, dishwashers, cooks, hosts, or cookbook authors at one time or another, many as full collective members, providing a source of income and community over the decades.

In this transition from Staten Island to Upstate New York, the community deepened its commitment to creating "gay-liberated zones," influenced by lesbian and feminist separatist movements but intentionally committed to multi-gender space that included queer women and men and challenged dominant gender norms and internalized patriarchy. Allan Warshawsky, David's boyfriend at the time and a founding member of the commune, remembers, "We were playing with gender. We called it 'genderfuck', and this was 1971. The men were wearing dresses and lipstick, sitting around in our beards and our house dresses crocheting." For David, "We were inspired by the Cockettes, but it wasn't a performance, it was just rural living." On his couch in Brooklyn, Zelik told me, "We would use 'per' with each other instead of her or his, and we started writing 'Mx.' on our letters to one another. We were making stuff up." Are you telling me my generation wasn't the first to do this? Hold the phone!

There were a number of nearby communes outside Ithaca, all with different orientations and ideologies, but Lavender Hill was unique in its commitment to, well, faggotry. Allan told me a story about another commune that was hosting what they said was a costume party:

> Within minutes, we had taken quaaludes and opened up the box of costumes and put on makeup and glitter and we show up there and there was maybe one guy who had a blue eyelash or something, and that was it. And then there was us… All those orthodoxies, you had to have a statement, know who you are, have rules and regulations, have a mission—we didn't have that. We didn't want to!

Lavender Hill opted for delight over dogma. (They'll often text me before we see each other, "We better have fun!" The premium is on pleasure.) They staged plays, played music, threw parties, participated in the local feminist theater group, Mischief Mime, and formed a short-lived theater company called the Pink Satin Bombers. Lazar and Ned joined Hot Peaches, the radical downtown New York queer performance troupe founded by Jimmy Camicia in the early 1970s, which included Stonewall warrior Marsha P. Johnson. Performance, like the commune, became a medium for making joyful, ephemeral collectivities. "In the spaces created by ruined buildings the queens have made a dazzling new world." (60)

III.

People often ask me if Lavender Hill still exists, and I have a hard time answering yes or no. Maybe? Sometimes? It has changed, for sure. They don't all live together anymore; the house they built together has plumbing and wifi. They have "boundaries" now, Yvonne

told me, and walls made out of solid materials, not just fabric. Larry, Ned, Lazar, and Zelik moved back down to New York City and started a life in the East Village. The prospect of living rurally and all together felt less compelling; relationships got strained, something you are familiar with if you've ever been a part of relationships. Their movement back and forth between "the great gardens of the faeries" and "the devastated city" is mirrored in *The Faggots & Their Friends*, both figured as vital geographies for the work of making the next revolution.

The AIDS crisis erupted, people started dying in unthinkable numbers, and it changed everything. Lazar was diagnosed with HIV and AIDS in 1986. "The experience of Lazar's illness, which took about two and a half years, changed us," Yvonne said. "We spent our time at ACT UP meetings and demonstrations, die-ins, in Washington DC or wherever we were, we showed up." Thinking back on that time, Zelik said, "I remember feeling, we're in the middle of a holocaust, and most people don't know it's going on." They found ways to care for others: Yvonne worked at an abortion clinic and became a therapist. Zelik became a social worker at St. Vincent's Hospital in Greenwich Village, working with people with HIV. Mitchell Karp, another member of the commune, joined the HIV/AIDS Discrimination unit of the New York City Commission on Human Rights.

Ned's son Tazio was born while Lazar was on his deathbed, and Zelik's son, whom he had with a lesbian friend, was born a few months later. Zelik was losing his twin brother and becoming a parent at the same time; the two things were happening at once. They all buried Lazar at Lavender Hill, put roses and glitter in the ground, and gave him a tombstone engraved with the Stylistic's lyric, "You are everything and everything is you." Thinking back on that time while cooking green beans, Ned remembered, "Tazio would be on my shoulders, and he'd be screaming, ACT UP! Fight AIDS! at a demonstration against Cuomo or at a die-in. I remember I taped a photo of George Michael on the inside of his crib.

Is that weird?" A breast cancer survivor herself, Ned went on to co-found the Ithaca Breast Cancer Alliance with Yvonne's partner, Andi Gladstone.

Mitchell continued to chronicle the queer life around him, now in the East Village in the 1980s, at the dawn of the Reagan era and the mounting AIDS crisis. His work became more biting and pessimistic. *The Terminal Bar* and *My Life as a Mole* are polemics about queer melancholia, friendship, and gentrification in the shadow of apocalypse. Chapter titles include "Queers Dishing the End of the World," "The Limits of Cocksucking," and "The Rented Room: Wage Slavery." Mitchell described *The Terminal Bar*—his portrait of The Bar on Second Avenue and 4th Street, a popular hangout for artists and activists in the neighborhood—as "the shape of gay consciousness as the world ends." And of course pleasure persisted. Ned laughed over a glass of wine as she told me about a party she and Larry hosted at their apartment on Second Avenue during this period:

> I was making a big salad, and I said, Oh god, Larry, we have vinegar but no oil! What do I do? And Larry said, here just use this, and I said, What the fuck is that? And he goes, It's seltzer, just put the seltzer all over it, with the vinegar, nobody will know, who the fuck cares. He let me pay a 'sliding scale rent,' maybe $50, just so I would feel like I was doing my part.

Larry lost his eyesight over the course of many years, and eventually got sick with pancreatic cancer. Near the end of his life, he drifted from the rest of Lavender Hill, focusing on his relationship with artist Richard Morrison. The pain of the falling out is palpable in the group. "Richard was his caretaker and his set of eyes," Allan remembers. "And Larry loved him. And Larry felt he had to make a decision, to choose between Richard and his friends." Larry died in 2012, with the rift intact.

The lives of the other members of Lavender Hill, now in their 70s, are still very much woven together. David and his partner

John moved back into the communal home they all built together, where they tend to their gardens and cats and bake bread. Ned lives down the road at another former commune, where she grows flowers and vegetables and swims nude in her pond all summer long. Yvonne and Allan live in town in Ithaca, as does Tazio. Now in his 30s, Tazio has lived with many of the communards over the course of his life and considers them all family. Yvonne said quietly after dinner one night, "We continue to take care of each other."

Their care for one another is transmitted through *The Faggots & Their Friends Between Revolutions.* It became the prompt for the performance adaptation I organized at the New Museum in the fall of 2017 as part of the exhibition *Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon*, curated by Johanna Burton and Sara O'Keeffe. The painter TM Davy and I started writing songs based on text from the book in his apartment in Brooklyn and then on Fire Island. Musician DonChristian Jones and sister burlesque clown act Michi and Una Osato joined us to bring it all to life. There were multiple tambourines. Before the first show, the five of us drove upstate to visit the living communards, to look through their family photos because they are also ours, to get their blessing. We cried with them over vegan chicken pot pie at Moosewood, and sang them our songs. Later that night the five of us took mushrooms at a cabin in the woods because that's what you do.

We performed our "musical" on three consecutive new moons in a psychedelic living room set designed by the artist Anna Betbeze to warm the New Museum's austere top floor Sky Room, which overlooks an unrecognizably gentrified East Village. I joked at the beginning of the show that there were rumors this was going to be the next *Hamilton* and that what the audience was about to see was "in-progress," meaning that any part they didn't like was "in-progress." There was a potluck before each show that somehow miraculously amounted to an actual meal and not just potato chips and seltzer. The audience was invited to read selected passages from the book between musical numbers, each taking the risk to speak out loud in a

room of intimate strangers. It is very fun to invite people to say "tasty orgasm juice is free" into a microphone in a museum.

Many of the living communards came to the November show. We interviewed them from stage about quaaludes and friendship, and surprised Ned with a song and a cake for her 71st birthday, but the gift of intergenerational joy was for all of us. Legendary trans activist Miss Major came to the December show, and we got to ask her about the trans retreat center she's building in Little Rock, Arkansas. What an honor it was for us to perform for these two living embodiments of revolutionary hospitality.

We ended the show by inviting the audience to join us in singing one of *The Faggots & Their Friends* many prescient and practical lines, "We gotta keep each other alive any way we can 'cause nobody else is goin' do it"(36). This is not only a call to weave together networks of care to counterbalance the state's continued and escalating abandonment of life deemed disposable, but a call for what Stefano Harney and Fred Moten have described as "the abolition of a society that could have prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society."[5]

This book, like Lavender Hill itself, presents not a perfect utopia, but rather an unfinished aspiration, a play about the space between then and now, here and there, the "between" where we all live. In his research on the gay commune movement, Stephen Vider writes,

> The communes it seemed were always on the brink of falling apart, changing members, or moving—and in some cases, they had already collapsed. And yet this very instability, impossibility, might also account, in part, for the commune's attractiveness—it was always waiting to be tried again, modified, perfected.[6]

5 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*, Minor Compositions (2013), 114.
6 Stephen Vider, *No Place Like Home: A Cultural History of Gay Domesticity, 1948-1982*, PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2013, p. 184. See also Stephen Vider, "'The Ultimate Extension of Gay Community': Communal Living and Gay Liberation in the 1970s," *Gender & History*, 27, no 3 (2015), 865-881.

Lavender Hill is ours now, and so is the *The Faggots & Their Friends Between Revolutions*—something between a prayer book and a dream journal, dirty as hell, waiting to be passed around among friends.