

An Interview with London Wright

Tim Lattimore: How old are you?

London Wright: I am 30.

TL: How long have you lived in Syracuse?

LW: I was born and raised here in Syracuse.

TL: What do you do for a living?

LW: I am a social worker by trade and currently working as a mental health therapist for Le Moyne College and Eastside Counseling Services.

TL: How long have you been writing poetry?

LW: I have been writing poetry since I was in the 6th grade.

TL: What is your poetic drive/motivation?

LW: Poetry has always felt more like satisfying an internal need for me. I would often feel a need to speak to the complex emotional experiences I was having by putting pen to paper. Sometime too my day-to-day experiences and interactions would create a spark in me that drove me to write. Maybe I'd visit a cafe and see an interaction unfold that I found to be profound/meaningful or other times, I would be going for a walk at the park and witness people simply existing then feel the need to write about that. Writing feels like an intersection between intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of mine.

TL: How do you identify within the LGBTQ+ community?

LW: I am a pansexual, transgender Black man. My journey was not linear, however. I knew as a little girl at five years old that I wanted to play the dad when we played house (or the dog if that role was taken), but never the mother. I suppressed my desire to wake up a boy someday for years after realizing that this magical thinking was not reality. I did not re-engage with that part of myself until my early 20's. As I began to allow myself the opportunity to explore who I was, I started identifying as gender fluid and pansexual. Eventually, I was able to reconnect with that inner child who always knew I was a little boy and allow him to fully express himself.

TL: What are your future endeavors?

LW: I hope to connect with an agency/practice that is either Black-owned, Queer-owned or Black & Queer-owned so that I can directly serve marginalized populations that benefit from receiving support from people who look like them. I also am striving to become a published poet and to continue developing fictional short stories that I would also like to publish. More recently, I have begun imagining developing non-fictional texts as well, as I have always found the concept of human identity, its fluidity and its performative nature to be interesting. I want to see if I can offer new knowledge to that area of study from the perspective of an individual with a number of intersectionally marginalized identities.

TL: What has been your greatest challenge in life, and how did you overcome it?

LW: My greatest challenge in life has been my battle with Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Depression. As a child, I could not put a name to the constant, visceral fear that would keep me awake for hours at a time in the middle of the night or cause me to completely avoid trying new and interesting hobbies that I wanted so badly to be a part of. My life became small, painful and very dark. This followed me into high school and college, which eventually resulted in what started as mild depressive symptoms. In the midst of college, these things became so severe that I began to consider ending my life. I was able to begin healing by seeking help and beginning to identify what it was that I was facing. Through attending one-on-one and group counseling alongside doing personal research on skills I could put into practice, I was able to make leaps and bounds in my condition. I have and continue to face some of my biggest fears each and every day, healing the anxious parts of me step by step. As cheesy as it may sound, overcoming the mental and emotional challenges I have faced throughout my life has helped me recognize that I am more than capable of all that I wish to achieve. And I am truly grateful that I can now be a healer in today's world to help others achieve this same belief!

TL: What is your greatest accomplishment or achievement?

LW: My greatest achievement has been cultivating a sense of belief in myself and trust in my abilities. Because of this, I have reached a number of goals: obtaining my Masters degree, becoming a licensed therapist, becoming a spoken word performer, transitioning/coming out, learning to dance salsa/merengue/bachata, winning my first ever poetry contest (thank you again, SAGE) and many others!

TL: What gives you peace or relaxes you?

LW: Mindfulness meditation, going for walks, reading and quality time with my loved ones.