

Divorce Party August 18th, 2019

Huson, MT

Rohanna Erin:

Welcome everyone, thank you for being here today. First I'm going to give a quick overview of the events this evening. We're going to do some talking up here for a bit then after the ceremony we're going to do a group photo, so stick around for that. Then I'll ask you to carry your chairs to the tables over there. Dinner will be around 6, we have some live music and dancing starting around 7, then I'll be switching into dj mode and we'll dance the night away and be in bed at a reasonable hour.

Before we get started Margaret and Tracy asked me to take a moment to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of Salish, Blackfeet, Pend d'Oreilles, Shoshone people. Indigenous people have been the stewards of this land for thousands of years. Let us pay respect to them, and elders both past and present. Let's keep this in our hearts and minds as we gather on this land today. We know this acknowledgement is just a small way to disrupt colonization and the oppression that perpetuates today. Let's continue to notice the ways that genocide, racism and colonization affect ourselves, our neighbors, our friends and family. I challenge you to notice how you are influenced by colonization and white supremacy and consider what you might do to dismantle this within yourself or in our society.

Tracy and Margaret, your people have gathered here with you today to honor and celebrate you as individuals, and your relationship together and support you through this transition. Friends and Family of Margaret and

Tracy, thank you for holding space for these two amazing humans and for being a part of this ceremonial ending of their romantic relationship.

In preparation for facilitating today I decided to turn to Spotify and listen to several “break up” playlists, and wow are there a lot of them. You may not be surprised to hear this, but this actually wasn’t super helpful. Don’t get me wrong, some really good songs were written during break ups (who knows, maybe I’ll share some of my favorites later when i dj) but mostly i heard lots about hurt feelings, betrayal, anger, sadness and blame. I couldn’t find many that reminded me of how you two are moving through your divorce. I have been amazed by the two of you. The honesty, care, mutual respect and love that you have for your relationship and for each other has been incredible. You are models for our community in this way and I hope we can all learn from this process how to be more honest, caring and respectful humans.

When I talked to you two about this ceremony, something Tracy said struck me. She talked about how in our society we have so many joyful public celebrations of beginnings or milestones that mark a “first”, whether it’s an engagement or a wedding, the birth of a baby, but not many opportunities to honor endings. When endings happen we are often encouraged to grieve in private, only talk to a few close friends, rush through the mourning process, get a haircut and move on quickly.

Tracy and Margaret- This ceremony is about giving you both a chance to honor this relationship, to appreciate one another and the growth you experienced and truly honor this ending so that you can move forward to

this next phase of your life. This is not the ending of your time together, but rather a new phase of relationship - as ex's, as forever family and as friends.

Margaret and Tracy's wedding was 6 years ago on this day, at a time when gay marriage was not legal in Montana and there were not a lot of models of what queer marriage could look like. Unsure of what this would mean, they defined their marriage together with honesty, communication and self knowledge at the foundation. Queerness and the fluidity that comes along with it informed their own relationship and others. And as queerness affected their approach entering this union, it is infused within this process of divorce and exit.

This gathering is also about all of you! We all experience endings and transitions that we often move through quickly without paying our respects or honoring how that experience enriched our lives. I'd like you to consider something that you have had to let go of, or something that has been important to you that has ended. How can you more fully honor or appreciate that experience, that place or that relationship? What feelings do you still need to feel about it?

For these two humans, this relationship has been intimately connected to, and supported by their community.

Right now Tracy and Margaret have asked two dear friends to come up here and vow their support as they close this chapter, and walk into a new phase of their lives. So I'd like to invite Alyssa and Katie to come up and stand next to your friends. Tracy will start.

Tracy to Alyssa

Going through change and divorce is a hard break from the person that holds you. The pull of transition feels tumultuous and unsettling. Margaret and I are lucky enough to have all of you to keep us supported and held through these moments and these transitions. Investment in community is something I'm only beginning to truly comprehend and in these spaces it comes to the forefront. I am here to dig deeply into the people around me, the people I love, all of you, to hold you in your hard times, feed you, shelter you, be present when you want company, give you space when you don't. This farm, this place, it's for you: you are always welcome here.

Alyssa to Tracy

I knew Tracy and Margaret's names before I moved here. Such is the way of small communities — reputations can be built across time zones through words and words of friends of friends, of friends & lovers. I felt from a distance — their partnership and their built life together as a cornerstone to this queer and rural community way out west. What I felt foremost for them was respect and I hoped to be their friends.

It wasn't until winter that we connected — because they were farmers, so duh. Margaret and Tracy and Katie Koga and I would go to the Sunrise Saloon and dance. I would dance with Tracy and I would watch Tracy and Margaret dance and sometimes Katie would dance.

Of my friendships, here, I look again and again to Tracy as a grounding and stabilizing force in my life. I know of no one else who has always shown up for me with presence to my emotions, with neutrality, with compassion for

how we can heal and stay gentle with ourselves. I take pride in Tracy's and my low-key obsession to learn all the country dancing styles we can. We have no shame in stopping people on the dance floor and asking them to break down new steps. Over the years we've held onto dancing in all forms as friendship, as community—trying to find new configurations of holding space through teaching what we know or through hosting queer warehouse dance parties at County Rail.

For Margaret, I have so much admiration for watching her resilience over the years. For naming things for herself — from the separation of farming to starting her own business to the transition of now. I trust her so much in every endeavor she takes on. I am stunned and stunned again by the things she makes with Smalltime & I'm excited to see more.

My life has been enmeshed with Tracy and Margaret's through so many different connections and overlays of how people relate or fall in love with one another. I have always looked to their relationship as a working example of non-monogamy and polyamory — and have found strength in observing how relationships bend and fold and evolve through process and communication, through learning and stumbling. I expected nothing less of this Divorce Party than to be as graceful a celebration as I had seen day to day in their marriage and partnership.

I want to support a community that sustains agency in individuals in partnerships, in transparency & dialogue. I toast to our ability to celebrate and hold space for transitions, even when awkward or steeped with emotion, we can still move with grace. Here's to choice & to championing lived experiences and memories built in partnership. I look forward to the intersection of Tracy's and Margaret's individual lives moving forward.

Margaret to Katie Koga

Katie Koga, when we met four years ago, I needed a friend so much. Tracy and I were in a difficult moment and we had a lot of mutual friends, but I really needed someone in my corner. Someone who had no interest in glorifying farming, or even talking about it. Someone who was excited about sewing and knitting, social justice, and who exactly was the most annoying character on Grey's Anatomy? Is it Izzy? Or Meredith herself?

Thank you for putting up with my loud chewing.

Thank you for your support and patience with my endless romantic escapades and trials.

Thank you for calling me on my shit when its needed, that's the mark of a true friend.

I am always awed by your work ethic, you will make an amazing nurse. Your skill and attention to detail in your art is enviable. As well as your impeccable fashion sense.

I vow to support you in all your endeavors & to bother you with obnoxious medical questions for years to come.

Thank you for your friendship.

Katie Koga to Margaret

Tracy and Margaret: I want to acknowledge that, from what I observed and experienced from your partnership, you two have provided a warm and welcoming community to so many people and have so often, opened the doors to your home and offered seats at your dining table. The times that I've had a place at a Passover dinner, non-christmas and non-thanksgiving dinner, or a sweet family trip to Glacier have sincerely meant so very much to me. Thank you for that.

Margaret: Truthfully, as a friend, I often feel inadequate in that I don't always know if I'm doing it right. If I'm showing up enough, if I'm showing my love and care enough, if I'm being firm enough or supportive enough...but what I am sure of is knowing when a friend is doing right by me. I know when they're showing up enough, showing their love and care enough, being firm enough and supportive enough.

You are a friend that does these things for me. I am going to set aside my feelings of inadequacy to just really be grateful for all of it. I'm so grateful for your ability to commiserate with me, to be angry with me, to be happy with me, and to celebrate me and my accomplishments. I'm so grateful that this is a friendship where I can hold you accountable, tell you when you're eating chips too loud, ask you pestering questions about running your business, and remind you that you have the ability to both put on sunscreen AND take a vitamin every day.

I am so thankful to have known you both as Margaret who is partnered with Tracy, and Margaret who is not partnered with Tracy. Both versions are equally wonderful and I'm thankful for them.

Tracy to Margaret vows

The summer we got married, Margaret decided to take banjo lessons, a dream of hers. We had a young flourishing business, and I outwardly encouraged her to take time to practice during CSA pickup while I was inwardly annoyed, not having yet honed the skills to interact with all our members by myself. Then, at our marriage party on this date 6 years ago, she surprised me, in a dress she made, by singing and playing Junebug with Chelle who is playing here tonight. I was utterly blown away. So was everyone else; not a dry eye in the orchard. This celebration is such a beautiful acknowledgement and reflection of that moment, the years before and the years after, the ways we bring and brought joy to each other, and of community ... so thank all of you for being here with us.

Margaret. It has been my absolute honor and pleasure to be by your side for the last 10 years. We've seen each other through a cross country move (with a craigslist stranger and just enough spare space in our hatchbacks for Sophie-sized hole), the risks of starting this farm and all the stress that comes with it, the joys and terrors of puppy raising, the incredible experience of building loves and relationships inside and outside of our own, through heart breaks, rebuilding after harsh changes, the starting of your company, and finally in separation.

Through all of those (and more) we've had the ability to hear each other, not without work, and support each other's dreams and needs. In this separation of household and partnership, I feel so blessed be doing it with

you. Our relationship has enriched my life and my emotional landscape tenfold, bringing self awareness and communication, acceptance and breath. Thank you for your saltiness, for teaching me how to be a supportive partner, a (mostly) socially responsible member of society, and making me take vacations. I am a better human, a more generous, rounded, ever growing human because of you, because of us. And with us, the partners we've had, the partners we could give space to, who deepened our relationship, our understanding of ourselves, and our connection to our community.

Our experiences, relationship, time spent together, and our emotional work, continues. We love and care for each other in different, beautiful, complicated ways and I am so proud of you, of me, of us, and the way we've been able to navigate the hard spaces and our divorce with love and care and respect. You will always be here in my heart, welcome in my home, and on whatever ground I land. I love you.

Margaret to Tracy

The court documents ask if we are irretrievably broken, and society calls us a "failed marriage". We are neither of these things. When we got married we said to each other this may not be forever and that's OK. I said "I believe in divorce".

When I think about this legal tradition with its bad reputation, I think about my mother. After her divorce I watched her change and grow. She left an awful marriage to attend community college, to learn photography, the magic of the dark room. She expanded on her already formidable artistic gifts. She got her BA the same year I graduated from High School. Now I am almost the same age as when she got divorced at 36, but the

comparisons end there. I am leaving a secure and fruitful partnership, with confidence, joy and maybe most importantly-----financial assets.

I thank you for being a safe place for me, for loving me in all my difficult moments. I thank you for continuing to do that despite the end of our romantic partnership. I thank you for encouraging me to start Small Time. I thank you for seeing and acknowledging all the complexities of my gender and sexuality even when I have difficulty talking about them.

I think about all the things I want to do in this life and I'm not sure I would have had the courage to do them if we were still together, but neither can I do them without the wonderful 10 years we had together. Thank you.

I vow to continue to answer your farming questions, and remind you which plant is which.

I vow to love and care for our pups in any way that is needed.

I vow to continue to encourage and support you in your work and romantic life.

I vow to be your friend, and your family for many years to come.