

In the final pages of Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki's young adult graphic novel *This One Summer*, two childhood friends on the cusp of adolescence say goodbye to one another at the end of the season. "So," says Rose, the older of the two girls, "I guess maybe I'll see you next year." "Yeah," Windy replies. "I guess, I mean. We'll always come here for the summer, right?" (312). Blank white space stretches between their faces and the tree branches above them. This space puts distance between environment and embodiment, between the girls' current location and their liminal (pre-)adolescent bodies, constituting a visual representation of their verbal uncertainties: I guess, maybe, I guess, right? We never learn the answer. Instead, *This One Summer* lives inside the bend of the question mark, a practice that refuses linear continuation or advancement.

That refusal, that bend, is a gesture that productively exposes the disruptions of childhood and early adolescence, reframing it away from unbroken development and towards a precarious state of doubt. Through its resistance to a fixed trajectory of growth, *This One Summer* invites a queer reading, one that enables us to consider how irreconcilable incongruities between bodies and their environments might haunt the fantasy of yet-unrealized adulthood. In many respects, the act of undertaking a queer reading here may seem surprising. The Tamakis' graphic novel focuses heavily on heterosexual relationships and gender-normative characters, particularly stressing Rose's unrequited crush on a much older boy and her growing interest in heterosexual sex. Yet in an interview conducted shortly after the book's publication, lesbian/queer writer Mariko Tamaki opens up a space to consider how a queer lens might illuminate this text's complexities and possibilities. Queerness, she notes, is always a part of her writing, even if it's not explicitly present. The younger of the book's two main characters, Windy, is to Tamaki "very queer... Not because she's doing or expressing any interest in anyone sexually, but because there's something about the character that feels very separate and as though she's in a different place than the typical straight experience" (Barquin). In this essay, I draw from Tamaki's characterization of Windy as queerly "in a different place" to show how that sense of difference characterizes the novel's spatiality more broadly. *This One Summer* is geographically queer, in that the novel troubles sequential development through unsettled relationships between child bodies and their locations. This troubling ultimately postpones and puts into question the

successful arrival of heteronormativity. While both Rose and Windy are caught up in narratives that gesture toward expectant futures, the physical environments in which they exist help disturb the order of assumptive progression in ways that undermine readers' assumed epistemologies around growth.

The text accomplishes this disturbance not only through its narrative content, but through its form, which queers its portrayals of growth. As a graphic novel, *This One Summer* uses the conventions of comics and visual narratives in ways that draw our attention to spatiality, making material the complex relationships between bodies and their contexts. Marni Stanley has observed that the graphic novel's visual elements "deliberately slow us down... interrupt[ing] the momentum of the story" (192). The chronological process of movement Stanley identifies is also spatial: a disturbance that operates geographically. Through its visual elements, *This One Summer* denies the totalizing hegemony of "growing up," a process Kathryn Bond Stockton spatializes as verticalism. It does so visually by moving both characters and readers along a "queer slant," Sara Ahmed's term for inhabiting an orientation that deviates from the straightening line of heteronormativity (66). This slant constitutes a course that incorporates both the vertical and the horizontal but resists the conclusive pull of either axis, troubling easy directionality. The particular mobilities of child bodies in *This One Summer* are a response to environments that attempt to shape them towards the future reproduction of straight narratives. The queer reach of this novel, then, is one that rejects assumptive outcomes of heterosexual adolescence by embracing the multiplicities of potential and uncertainty rather than inevitability.

### **Growing Slantwise, or the Question Mark of Adolescent Growth**

In shunning the pursuit of linear development, *This One Summer* departs from a long history of narratives around adolescents that attempt to structure aging and growth in hierarchical ways. One of the principal ways young adult literature operates ideologically is through its continual stress on development, a practice inextricable from Western perceptions of teenagers as evolving. Adolescence, writes Michael Cart, "has always been viewed as a period of transition, of moving upward from one stage of development to another" (25). Frequently, young adult works implicitly codify intellectual, emotional, and physical changes as normative

progress, a push towards a series of growth markers that “participate in a mythology of cultural legitimization... [encouraging] an acceptance of one’s cultural habitat” (Trites 18). Growth therefore becomes synonymous with development, as texts for adolescent readers often employ the rhetoric of change in ways that reinforce cultural imperatives privileging normative progress. And while growth as a narrative device is certainly not limited to writing for young people, its significations are tied to Western cultural concepts of adolescence as a construct defined through regulatory development. Young adult literature characterizes the state of adolescence as a perennial act of “becoming.” That state of becoming-teen has historically been panoptical, monitored by the gravitational gaze of adults. Sociologist Nancy Lesko has argued that at the turn of the twentieth century, emergent ideas of adolescence shaped that category in ways that were fundamentally promiscuous. The adolescent was not a person, but an unfilled container for a multiplicity of adult anxieties, concerns, and preoccupations over directing Western society towards a white supremacist fantasy (Lesko 47). Cultural institutions marked as unacceptable or deviant adolescents whose intersecting identity markers differed from normative categories, while compelling White, male, straight, affluent, and/or able-bodied young people to “advance” towards specific markers, like marriage and reproduction, correlated with successful adulthood. And although developmental theories have long since moved on from G. Stanley Hall’s argument that individual development recapitulates the development of the species, perceptions of adolescents as atavistic throwbacks still persist in the twenty-first century. Within this context, then, “becoming” anticipates a social role the teenager has not yet filled.

Queerness as identity, experience, and praxis therefore disrupts the presupposed linearity of “becoming.” It re-orientes perceptions of adolescence away from straightforward teleology. Kathryn Bond Stockton’s field-defining work on queer childhood has famously encouraged us toward a different way of conceptualizing growth beyond the vertical: as a sideways process, one not solely restricted to age or maturation and relying instead on experience, ideas, or motions (11). The queer child is a figure who delays the expectations of adulthood through the child’s resistance to normative advancement. While Stockton’s framework has enabled us to rethink hegemonic perceptions of development by defining queer childhood as an alternatively routed practice, another spatial metaphor applies more precisely to *This One Summer*: Sara Ahmed’s

concept of the “queer slant.” According to Ahmed, heterosexuality is naturalized in part through the “presumption that there is a straight line that leads each sex towards the other sex,” a line that must be followed in order to successfully arrive at “normal sexual subjectivity.” When individuals go “off line,” either by pursuing “deviant” desires or by moving in directions that prevent a heterosexual outcome, they pursue a queer slant, where “one uses sex for different points by not following what is taken to be the ‘point’ of sexual readiness.” The queer slant therefore exists in contrast to the straight line that directs developing bodies to “what is right, good, or normal,” troubling linear narratives of becoming by putting its direction into question (Ahmed 70-72). Importantly, the queer slant does not exist in binary opposition to vertical straightness. If “growing sideways” is a horizontal act, then a queer slant—the diagonal operation on a gradient—acknowledges and incorporates the contextual pressures of verticality.

Ahmed’s theoretical framework, while spatialized, remains largely focused on discursive and embodied articulations. And yet her arguments about directionality are eminently applicable to visual narratives, enabling us to consider how representational texts might address (dis)orientations. Graphic novels foreground the spatial linking of images and words, creating a visual/lexical chain. This linkage may be read sequentially, as Will Eisner and Scott McCloud have contended, or out of order and through nonlinear points of panel attraction, an alternative Thierry Groensteen proposes. Ahmed invites us to view queerness as a kind of asymmetrical cartography of time-space, stressing the extent to which perception and orientation determine its enunciations: “[W]hat we can see in the first place depends on which way we are facing” (29). For readers of graphic novels, the orientation of viewing has the potential to affirm or disturb our sense of directionality, presenting a system of images and/or words that is definitionally geographic. What these texts invite us to consider, then, is how visual representations of place respond to the ideological and spatial call of linearity. In *This One Summer*, Rose and Windy both grow slantwise. Their process of development keeps the vertical around but troubles it, postponing the child’s arrival at heteronormative adulthood while acknowledging the possibility or probability that said arrival might still occur. A slant can rise. A slant can fall. In other words, the slant queers the child’s horizon through the way it refuses teleological coherence. The slant

questions not only if and how the child might grow, but where, capturing the geographies of children who live within the question mark.

### **The Slanting Body of the Lesbian Kid**

That question mark regarding the child's growth curves around Windy, the character Mariko Tamaki has described as "in a different place" from the typical straight experience. Unlike Rose, whose inclinations are focused exclusively on boys, Windy's articulations and movements strongly suggest her queerness, an interpretation supported by Jillian Tamaki's assertion in an interview that Windy "is a lesbian kid" (Wong). Although at no point does *This One Summer* make Windy's sexuality objectively definitive, an early exchange between Windy and Rose opens up space for a queer reading of the former. Several panels after Windy's introduction, she tells Rose about her prior experience at summer camp, noting, "All the kids' parents except mine were lesbians." On the next page, Rose responds somewhat uncomfortably, hands in her pockets, facing away from readers/viewers: "Oh. Well. That's cool." Windy answers, "Yeah. Duh. My aunt is a lesbian. I mean. I'm just saying that because it's true." There's a silent panel of contemplation, a close-up focused primarily on Windy's face, before Windy asks Rose, "Sooooooo, do you have a boyfriend?" (21-22). Although the conversation turns us back towards heterosexuality, it's also one that draws our attention to the moment by stressing what's unspoken. Lesbianism becomes a distinct possibility through its introduction into the narrative, and while Windy's language stays separate from her own identification, the brief discussion leapfrogs around her own interests, beginning with other kids' parents, moving towards her own aunt, and finally terminating with Rose's potential romantic affiliations. Windy's speech is interrupted by fragments, the "I mean" functioning as both rhetorical delay and a phrase that asks us to pay attention. What *does* Windy mean? She tells us, or she tells us something close to what she means: Windy needs to articulate something true (about her aunt) or something that could be true (about herself), before re-directing Rose's attention towards safer and straighter ground, while simultaneously stressing her own lack of participation in heterosexuality. The inquiry itself reflects back on the ontology of its asker: Windy is, physically, a question mark of a character. Her round body approximates the punctuation's curve

in ways that contrast visually with Rose's linear frame and Rose's attempted trajectory towards heterosexuality. Her difference participates in reinforcing *This One Summer*'s multiplicity; her actions help shape the novel's resistance to unidirectional maturation narratives. Significantly, Windy's unruly body is the locus through which the novel accomplishes this queer abundance, drawing our attention to how physicality produces everyday spaces.

Bodies are geographic things, messy confluences and composites of materiality that frequently refuse to stay within epidermal boundaries. When we start thinking about what bodies can do, or what they refuse to do, or what they're allowed to do, or how they encounter other bodies, we necessarily perceive them as vehicles that move and act in the world, inevitably tied to place. Arguably, Windy's difference becomes perceptible through her physicality, the curves of her body resisting the straightening impulse of the vertical, refusing to be restrained. Kathryn Bond Stockton has argued that representations of fat serve as a "figuration and a referent for a child (a sexual child) we cannot fully see," a visible effect of the queer inability to grow in expected or socially desired ways (20). Windy's round stomach and limbs take up horizontal space in a way that the tall and skinny Rose does not: she extends sideways while Rose extends up. Their shared physicality plots them on the same axis, different paths that, when juxtaposed, constitute a kind of slant, a depiction of oncoming adolescence that refuses a single direction towards certainty.

How will Windy continue to develop, beyond the perimeters of *This One Summer*? It's queerly unclear, a truth made explicit through a conversation with Rose, as they speculate about the future size of their breasts. Rose's assumption is prosaic and logical: "My mom's a B [cup]. I'll probably be a B too." Windy, however, is less certain: "That's the problem," she says, "with being adopted. I have no idea how big my boobs are going to be" (Tamaki and Tamaki 35). Rose draws a clear route between her mother's body and her own, creating a straight trajectory for her future self to receive. To be "in line," for Rose, is to inherit the genealogy of development, "to direct [her] desires towards the reproduction of the family line" (Ahmed 74). Alice is a B, Rose probably will be (B) too; the verb and cup size are aurally synonymous, so that action and bodily geography replicate one another, language participating in the reproduction Ahmed describes.

As always, however, Windy constitutes a question mark, her genetic history unknown and her future ambiguous. Her delighted fascination with breasts (“BRRRREASTS!” she shrieks, jumping around, “TITSSS!”) does dual work here, leading us in more than one direction: the girl who’s drawn to a signifier of female sexuality, the girl who doesn’t know what her growth will look like or how much space her adult body will take up (Tamaki and Tamaki 36). The geographies of her frame are circuitous, winding, round. They refuse linear orientation or easy containment. They recognize hard limits as absurd. In so doing, Windy’s body pushes back against the assumed defaults of easy belonging. Her physicality articulates a queer geographic praxis by disregarding the family line and by rejecting the verticality of linear development, allowing for alternative possibilities. Echoing José Esteban Muñoz’s call towards the “not-yet-conscious,” Windy constitutes a kind of epistemological humbleness, the uncertainty of her growth allowing for a multiplicity of possibilities to exist simultaneously (28).

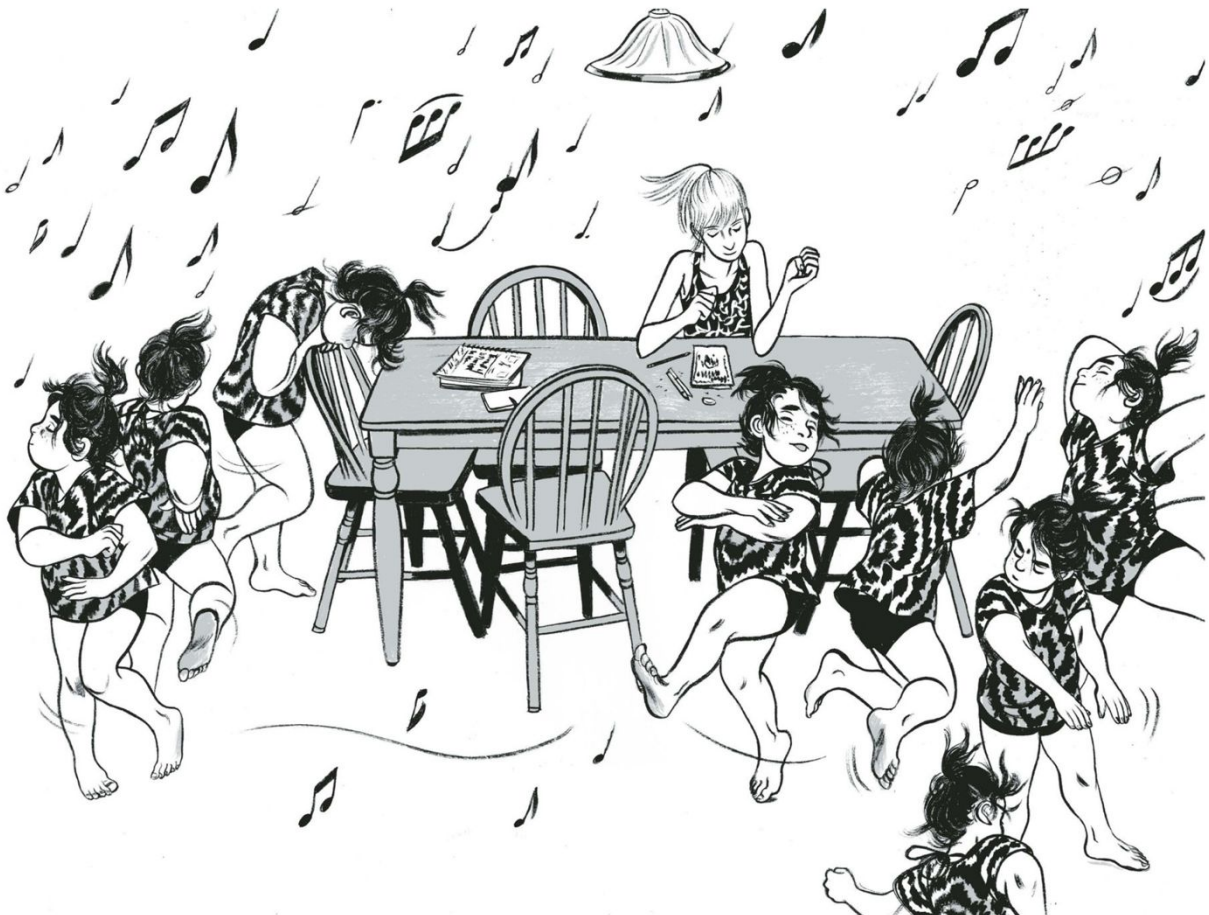


Fig. 1. Windy, uncontained, dances with multiple bodies

Queerness in *This One Summer* gains visibility in part through the way it traffics in excess, a refusal to consign itself to a state of containment. This excess manifests itself through practices that become legible only through their articulation within particular places. In another moment, one that takes place just before the two girls play the fortune-telling game MASH, Rose thinks about sex in the context of her older crush, Duncan, her language obscuring more than it reveals: “I wonder if they teach sex education here. I wonder if that guy Dunc knows...I’m sure he does” (68). While Rose’s thought trajectory aims her towards certainty, Windy puts on music and begins to dance, her body rejecting the artificiality of the panel’s restraints, extending past the borders as though she won’t let herself be enclosed by them (fig. 1). The subsequent page spread gives up any attempt at containment entirely, allowing Windy to expand and take up space (70-71). Again, time and location work here in ways that rebel against easy directionality. In defiance of realism, Windy’s body multiplies. She steps out of the panel’s chokehold and out of her body’s limitations, as joy catapults her through the room. And yet, Windy’s expansion is only comprehensible through a temporal contraction. Time collapses; eight versions of Windy, or Windy’s moving body, exist all at once in front of our eyes. The page pulls, then pulls back. Just like the scene on the beach, this disorienting moment responds to the textual presence of heterosexuality, and specifically heterosexual reproduction. Rose’s musings about sex education in the preceding panels are focused largely on “where babies come from” (66). Windy shows us a different kind of reproduction, one that’s fundamentally self-reflexive and enacted purely for pleasure. She disrupts what José Esteban Muñoz calls the tyranny of the *now*, the stultifying hold of the present, through the slant of her numerous bodies, the multiple inclines formed by their groupings (29). The versions of Windy gather around the table—the site of familial gathering—rather than joining it, refusing a metaphorical locus for adjustment; Windy will not “join this table” and “[enact] the desire for assimilation” (Ahmed 173). Rose is seated there, her desire for a heterosexual future made explicit through her contemplation, and Windy dances, refusing to find an open chair, to inherit her seat. She’s queerly in a different place.



## Queer Movements: Slanting Across the Beach

While Windy's somatic terrains are perhaps the clearest way *This One Summer* demonstrates its spatial queerness, depictions of landscape also significantly participate in acts of alinear disorientation. The geographies of this graphic novel shape a queer slant by encouraging reader/viewer subjects to be "temporarily dislocated" from familiarity by coming into contact with a series of uncanny visual effects: a form of "sexual disorientation" that fundamentally unsettles (Moon 16). This uncanny dislocation or disorientation becomes queer in part through its juxtaposition with heteronormativity, a combination that demonstrates the extent to which the narrative is "out of place" and unsustainable. Queer geographies not only reflect the places and movements of queer people, but constitute environments that deconstruct the assumed defaults of heteronormative spaces (Oswin 98). It therefore becomes possible for *This One Summer* to queer place for both straight and queer characters by disrupting the successful achievement of heterosexual life markers. The most notable occurrence of this phenomenon occurs after Windy and Rose play the game MASH, which predicts that Rose will one day live in an apartment with her older crush, Duncan. In the game's aftermath, Rose speculates: "I guess if Dunc and I got married...we would live in an apartment first. With regular jobs. Then. Then we would get good jobs. And. And he would go to medical school. Um. And I would take time off to have one. Perfect. Baby" (79-80). Phrasing here catalyzes the process of dislocation that disturbs normative outcomes. Rhetorically, this speculation functions as a kind of linguistic hiccup, as Rose's fantasy is marked with hesitations and fragments. In part, we're meant to read this verbal breakdown as gesturing towards Rose's crush on Duncan, which she never explicitly admits to readers but clearly harbors, despite Windy's discomfort with him. Beyond this intention, though, what hesitancy produces is a narrative rupture, one that complicates the heterosexual life pathway Rose attempts to construct.

Sara Ahmed writes that if "a life [is] to count as a good life, then it must return the debt of its life by taking on the direction promised as a social good, which means imagining one's futurity in terms of reaching certain points along a life course" (21). These points accrue, creating the impression of a straight line: "To follow a line might be a way to become straight, by not deviating at any point" (16). Rose's musings on this page plot out a straight line, or what

she believes to be a straight line towards happiness. Although they both join the workforce, her fantasies culminate in Duncan pursuing higher education while she leaves work to have a child, the narrative fitting comfortably within accepted gendered practices. Each referenced moment accrues in a way that mimics the successful accumulation of heteronormative and/or affluent life markers, a temporal sequence that closely correlates with affective experiences of belonging (Halberstam 153). Rose imagines marriage, regular jobs, good jobs, medical school, and finally, reproduction so successful that it constitutes perfection achieved.

These prosaic imaginings are an indirect response to Rose's parents' tumultuous marriage, a soft attempt at rejecting or reorienting the family line towards an idealized inheritance. However, her dream of a different heterosexual future is ultimately unsustainable. Readers know that what Rose envisions is clearly untenable, dramatic irony made palpably clear within the context of the narrative. Duncan is much older than Rose; neither character's age is ever definitively confirmed, a choice that reinforces *Summer's* emphasis on chronological uncertainty, but textual clues suggest he's an older teenager, while she appears to be crossing the first borders of adolescence (64-65). Our knowledge of this untenability dismantles Rose's fantasy at the same time she constructs it. That simultaneous undoing and doing is reinforced by the way Mariko Tamaki's writing refuses unidirectionality: these sentences pull, then pull back. Just as Rose dreams about moving forward while reality yanks her away from that dream, this desire to inherit a heterosexual future becomes troubled by her phrasing. The language of her fantasy simultaneously draws us forward and delays. Repeated conjunctions ("then," "and,") construct a sense of propelled movement, prompting us through reiteration and isolation to pay attention to them and think about what comes next. At the same time, these conjunctions also draw focus to the disjointed coherence of this moment through their abnormal brevity. Although the conjunctions propel us forward, toward Rose's imagined future, the sentence fragments and their repetition slow us down, postponing our arrival at the end of the fantasy. The significant white space in between paragraphs is also a participant here; it elongates our experience, forcing us to jump across long gaps in order to get to the next sentence. In this way, the multiple temporalities of Rose's phrasing can't be disentangled from the way they manufacture a sense of

place. The white space, the image distance creates, is inherently spatialized, constituting a geography of absence.

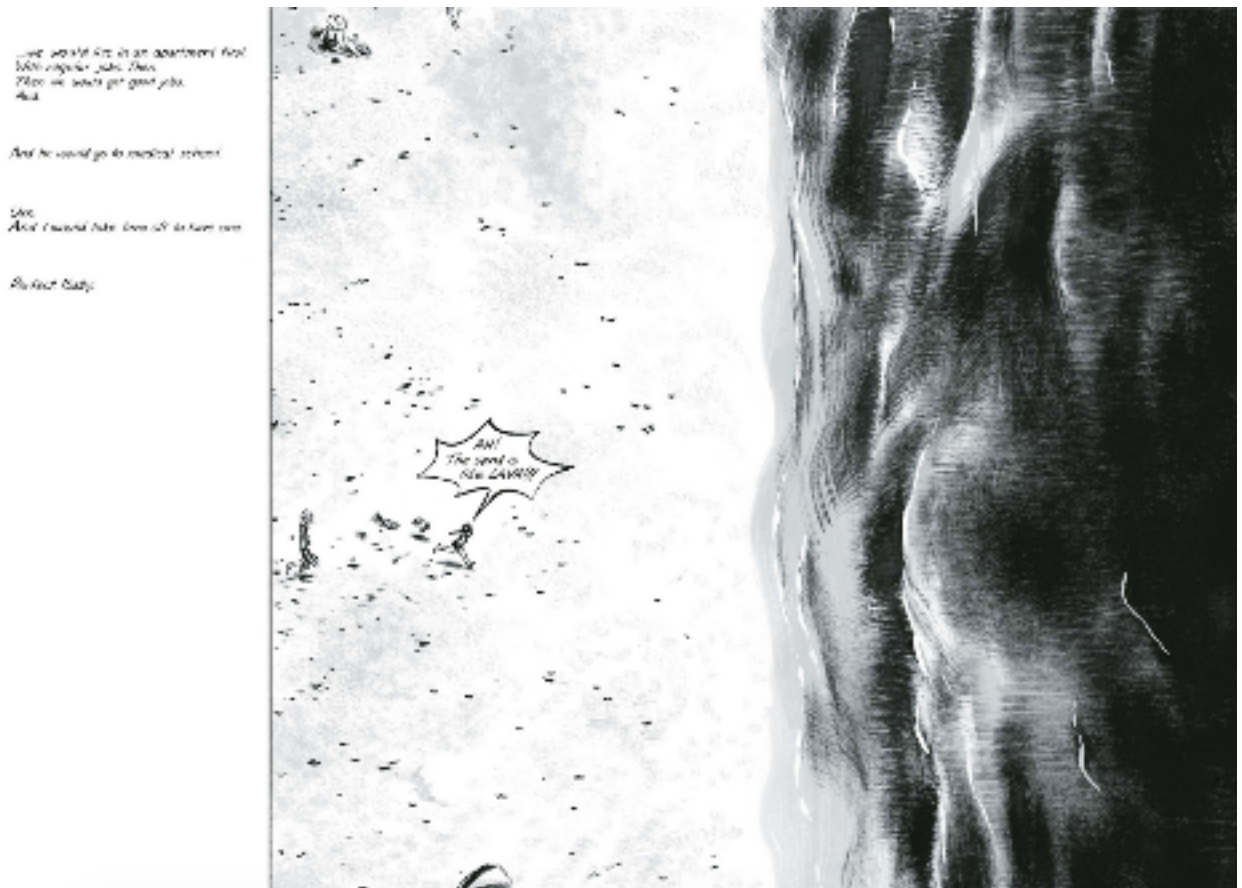


Fig. 2. Rose and Windy on the beach, slanting towards the lake.

Although this fantasy fractures in ways that suggest the impossibility of sustaining a straight line, it's the subsequent illustrations that reinforce Michael Moon's sense of disorientation, refusing the reader's efforts to "see straight." Illustrator Jillian Tamaki arranges the page spread so that we read horizontally, beginning with Rose's words, then moving towards Rose herself, appearing nearly still and self-contained as she stands on the beach, largely vertical. Immediately in front of Rose is Windy, her body pitched in a diagonal of momentum, yelling as she runs to our right. There, we encounter the lake, waves propelling back towards the shore, to our left (fig. 2). The page pulls, then pulls back. And while I've just argued that Jillian Tamaki's illustrations invite us to experience this page spread horizontally, from left to right, now it's my turn to pull back by disorienting that statement into something less definitive.

Defining this method of spatial engagement as horizontal doesn't wholly capture the precise way we encounter this transition. There's another axis here that complicates our left-to-right movement: a vertical one, an axis that takes us rapidly upwards. When reading Mariko Tamaki's words, the visual implication is that we look at them horizontally. The letters face us directly, immediately level with our eyes, forming a linear—or straight—relationship. But once we arrive on the beach with Rose and Windy, we've moved rapidly upwards, towards a bird's-eye perspective. Still, we're far from directly overhead; we can see the full length of Rose and Windy's bodies, indicating that while we're above them, our viewpoint is still more acute than 180 degrees. And again, this perspective shifts up as we move farther to the right. Now viewers are directly above the lake, looking down at the waves below. The waves and shoreline are rendered vertically on the page, not at a comparable angle to the one constituted by Rose and Windy. As we move from left to right, from written text to lake, we're also moving up, an abrupt and dizzying transition that fundamentally challenges our felt or familiar experiences of spatial mobility, taking us beyond the flatness of the image. In the print version of *This One Summer*, this transition is reinforced by the bifurcation of the book spine, which divides Rose and Windy from the water. The separation subtly encourages us to see the space of the water as different, not necessarily adhering to the exact same perspective as what's come before.

Ultimately, the movement on this page spread isn't solely horizontal, and it isn't solely vertical: it takes us along a diagonal, or Sara Ahmed's "queer slant." Queer moments, Ahmed tells us, are moments when the world no longer seems in normative alignment: "Things as well as bodies appear 'the right way up' when they are 'in line'... Importantly, when one thing is 'out of line,' then it is not just that thing that appears oblique, but the world itself might appear on a slant, which disorientates the picture and even unseats the body" (66-67). If the act of becoming straight (as opposed to being straight) is a trajectory that requires sequential inheritance, then the shift on this page spread fundamentally disrupts that development. Rose is not herself made queer, but the text nevertheless queers her future by demonstrating how her fantasy is implausible and out of place. The route she imagines for herself becomes unrooted.

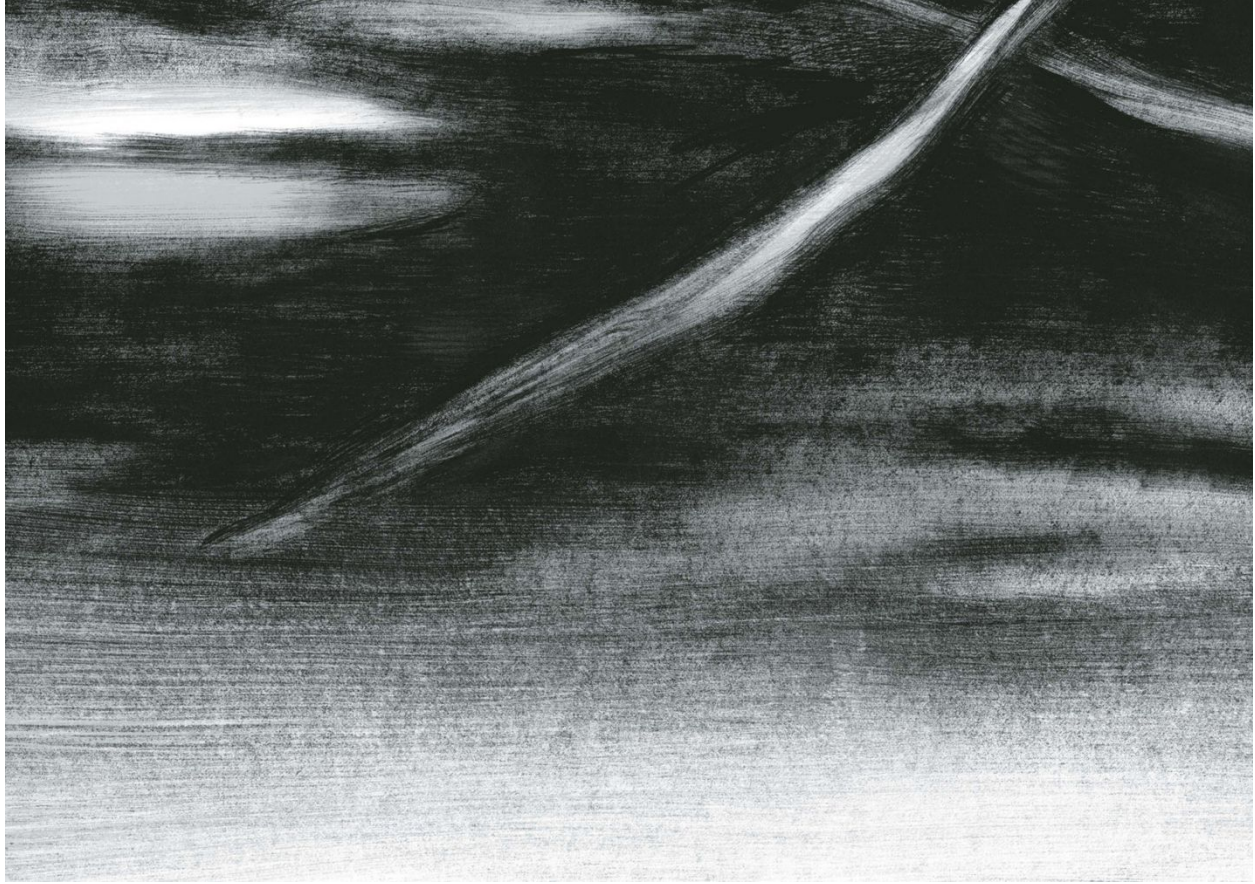


Fig. 3. Uncertain shapes

What becomes queer continues to disorient past the material boundaries of this moment, taking us into another page spread of dark blues and whites (Tamaki and Tamaki 82-83). Transitions within a graphic novel often ask us to connect disparate moments in order to create a contiguous reality. This act of creation is known as closure: we participate in meaning-making by filling in the gaps between panels and pages, associating one with the next (McCloud 63). Frequently, graphic novels facilitate this process, linking panels and pages in ways that require little closure. In this particular chain, however, our attempt at closure between images becomes challenging, even jarring, since the page spread in figure 3 is dislocated from clarity. Looking at this image, it's somewhat unclear where we are, or how far we've traveled, or for how long; by turning the page, we've transitioned into the indefinite, lacking any overt signifiers that would establish obvious location. Thierry Groensteen's theory of braiding, or the potential communicative interrelation of a given panel with other panels, is arguably more productive for a



reading of these pages than McCloud, since Groensteen sets aside the assumptions of order to consider how images can speak to one another through repetition rather than sequence. The dark blue and white streaks and shades on this page spread recognize what Groensteen calls “a recollection or an echo of an anterior term,” gesturing towards what’s come before (*The System of Comics* 147). Braiding therefore arguably directs us to guess we’re looking down at the lake, in that “repetition summons up the memory of the first occurrence” (“The Art of Braiding” 93). The abstract shapes here are strongly reminiscent of the lake’s waves, turned horizontal.

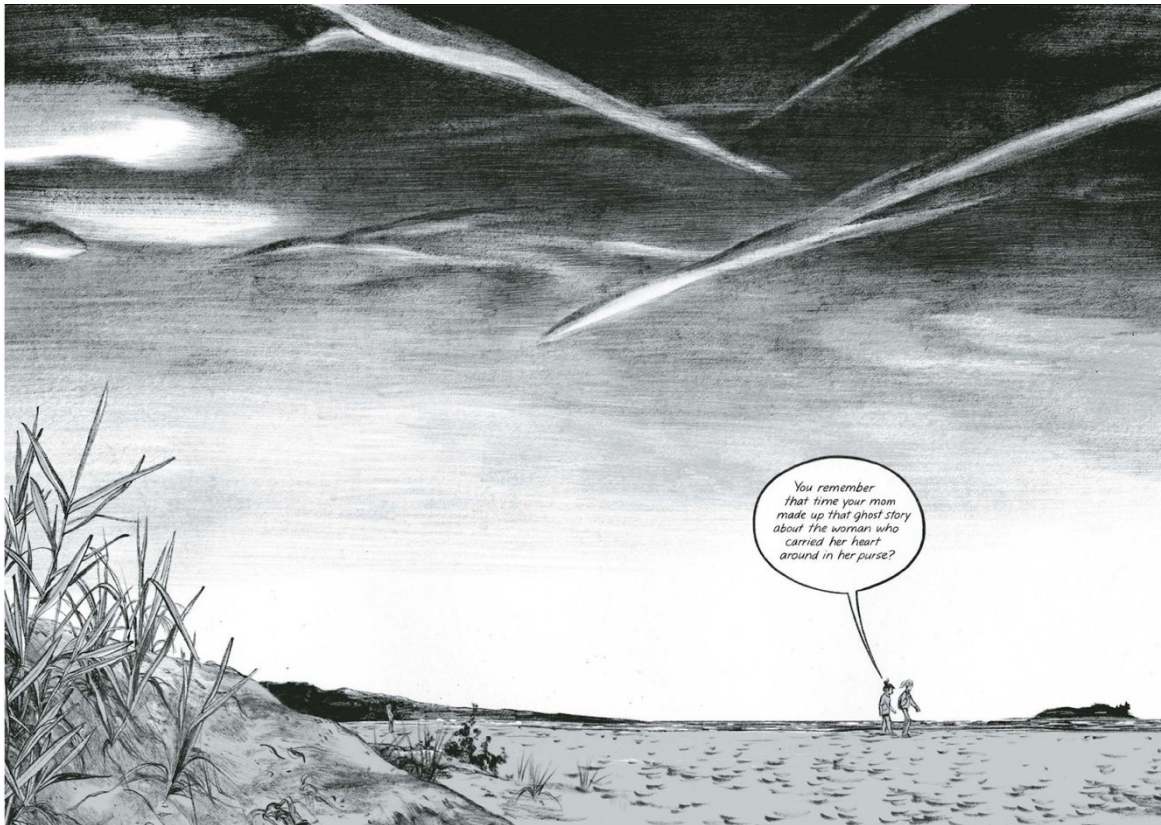


Fig. 4. Horizontal on the beach again

However, what the subsequent page turn shows us is that what we’ve been looking at isn’t the lake: it’s the sky (fig. 4). Our viewing position drops back down into the horizon line, as we rejoin Rose and Windy on the beach, where the clouds above repeat the diagonal streaks represented on the previous page spread (Tamaki and Tamaki 84-85). Temporality simultaneously distorts and clarifies; we realize the extent to which we’ve been disoriented only once we’re reoriented. Our perception retroactively becomes a shaking thing, estranged,

uncertain of itself, and this happens at the exact same moment our viewing angle is comfortably reunited with the horizon. That reunion is an uneasy one. We can't enjoy the comfort because we're uncomfortable from the disorientation that accompanies this epiphany. We go back at the same time we're pulled forward, braiding these pages together through a slanting process that requires return and the revision of assumption as much as it advances onward movement. "It is by understanding how we become oriented in moments of disorientation," Sara Ahmed writes, "that we might learn what it means to be oriented in the first place" (6). To become oriented, *This One Summer* suggests, first requires a dismantling of the assumption that orientation is synonymous with acclimatization.

There's a way to read the perspective of this page as an attempt to re-straighten the narrative, to overcome the queer slant as a way of managing readers' discomfort. But despite this ostensible straightening, the text still persists in implicitly acknowledging what's still out of place. Windy asks Rose, "You remember that time your mom made up that ghost story about the woman who carried her heart around in her purse?" (85). The language here mirrors the dislocating work of the illustrations. We're asked to go back at the same time we're kept in the present: "You remember that time?" Windy tells us about a ghost story: something that asks us to see what's disappeared, what's been hidden, what continues to haunt beyond the borders of perception. And we're reminded that bodies can transgress their limits in ways we can't always anticipate or predict. The page's horizon might be a straight line, but the sky, which occupies most of the image, is filled with queerly slanting elements, diagonals that indicate the anxieties of arrival and recall the long slant on the ambiguous page spread preceding this one. Grass leaves slope away from the straight-stemmed plant in the foreground. Windy's dialogue is constructed as a question, anticipating the uncertainty the girls convey towards the end of the book: I guess, maybe, I guess, right? Of course, readers turn the page, continue up and across the extending slant, and encounter Rose's answer. But for this moment, for this page spread, we're left only with Windy's question, with our lingering sense of disorientation, and with the awareness that Rose's heterosexuality will not accumulate in the way she imagines: we don't know what the rest of Rose's life will hold, but we know she won't marry Duncan or raise a family with him while he attends medical school. In queerly moving from unsustainable fantasy to dislocating query,

the novel responds to the supposed certainty of a heteronormative life with a queer question. There's a future here, but *This One Summer* wants us to be uncertain about it.

And we are. What the conclusion of *This One Summer* demonstrates to readers, paradoxically, is a refusal to conclude. In the final pages, Rose and her parents drive away from Awago Beach, away from a waving Windy, who disappears in the closing panels while Rose questions what the next year will bring. As Rose's narration speculates, "Maybe I will have massive boobs. Boobs would be cool," we're led back into her empty summer bedroom, the pile of rocks she collected as a younger child pooled on top of her mattress (318-19). Again, the novel resists easy temporalities. Mariko Tamaki's words indicate the possibilities of physical maturation, stressing uncertainty (maybe, would be) while Jillian Tamaki's illustrations draw us back into the affective past of the novel, denying the ending an uninterrupted sense of forward momentum. Windy's future is even more uncertain, absent narrative speculation. And through the last three pages, a clock marks the relentless passage of time, its loud ticking a reminder of the pressures that teleology promises: *tick, tick, tick*. Like all humans subject to chrononormativity, Rose and Windy's bodies will be curated by institutional forces toward a particular manipulation of time to encourage their sociocultural productivity (Freeman 3). Their lives, then, are inevitably articulated within normative constructs of temporality. If the potential queerness of their futures is made visible through spatiality—the simultaneous progression and retreat of words and images—the clock's ticking makes audible the inexorable pressures of linear development. Not a vertical "growing up," and not a horizontal "growing sideways." The slant extends.

If we are to extend along with it, then our practices, as readers, must acknowledge that queer geographies do not inevitably produce radical outcomes. Instead, they embrace uncertainty. What *This One Summer* offers us is a map delinked from cardinal directions, a rhizomatic pile of rocks spilled on a mattress rather than a clearly-marked pathway towards a guaranteed end. The Tamakis' novel is queer not because it has characters who are acknowledged in-text as LGBTQ, or because it promises a fundamental rejection of conventionality, but because it is deeply invested in interrogating the alinear ways that sexuality and environment shape one another. This exploration prioritizes queerness through one character



who resists the straightening device of normative development, and through another character whose faith in a vertical trajectory is undermined by the narrative in which she exists. *This One Summer*'s deconstruction of the assumed defaults of heteronormative spaces extends beyond the dominant disciplinary work of queer geographies: to "describe and reify the spaces" in which queer people exist (Oswin 96). In so doing, the graphic novel suggests that we can locate queerness in both the possibility of resistance to norms and the possibility of conforming to them, as long as the narrative refuses to locate a final stillness or certainty. What matters most is continual oscillation: light feet dancing around a table. What matters most is the refusal to finally arrive.

Growth in *This One Summer* is tremulous, tilted, conditional. It embraces the politics of perhaps, the politics of maybe, the politics of would, the politics of guessing. Place and physicality are unsettled; by the graphic novel's conclusion, readers have traveled along a slant that works to destabilize Rose's heteronormative predictions, and that bends Windy's uncontainable body into a queer question. Futurity is shaped by a geography of doubt. Ultimately, Rose and Windy are simultaneously here and not now, their movements—and our own—slanting towards an ending that will never fully reach a destination, even at the last page.

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