Queer Disability Justice Dreams

**Pauline**

You're listening to Queer Disability Justice Dreams on 3CR for International Day of People With Disabilities. This program was a live event that was recorded by the Center for LGBTQ studies featuring the following guests.

**Margo**

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha is a queer, disabled, nonbinary femme writer, performance artist, freedom dreamer, and disability and transformative justice movement worker of Burger/Tamil Sri Lankan and Irish/Roma ascent. She is the LAMBDA award winning author or coeditor of nine books. Leah has been at the forefront of Disability Justice organising for 25 years in her writing, poetry performance art, and movement organizing.

**Margo**

Leah tells the stories and shares the brilliance of disabled, queer and trans people of colour. Of femmes and abuse survivors, mixed race and diasporic South Asian folks working always towards transformation. I was first introduced to Leah through their powerful performance in Sins Invalid. Their searing words quote, "what would it take for a river that polluted to be loved? What would it take for us to know our bodies beautiful to wash them clean? No, not washed clean. What if our working class fucked up chronically ill sick survivor bodies are beautiful, just like they are?" end quote.

**Margo**

Sami Schalk is an associate professor of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her research focuses on disability, race and gender in contemporary American literature and culture. Schalk's first book, "Body-Minds reimagined, dis (with parentheses) ability, race and gender in black women's speculative fiction" (Duke University Press 2018), explores how black women writers use nonrealis genres to reimagine the possibilities and limits of body-minds, challenging our understanding of the meanings of disability, race and gender.

**Margo**

These two brilliant thinkers, writers and activists give us a way to rethink disability studies and Disability Justice starting at the intersection of dis-ability, race, class, nation, gender, sex and sexuality. A way that centers the long history of activists work and social movements that have created new forms of interdependence, relationality, and political solidarity, and perhaps most distinctive and so terribly needed right now that never bypass sex, pleasure and joy as central components of our work and lives. I took the title of our event tonight, from a recent truthout piece that Leah wrote, called, quote, "to survive the Trump-pocalypse, we need wild Disability Justice dreams".

**Margo**

In it, she writes, quote, "sick and disabled and neurodivergent folks aren't supposed to dream, especially if we are queer and black or brown. We're just supposed to be grateful the quote normals, unquote, let us live. But I am the product of some wild disabled black and brown queer, revolutionary dreaming, and I am dedicated to dreaming more sick and disabled queer brown femme dreams", end quote. And so without further ado, let's get started with Queer Disability Justice Dreams. Our event tonight is structured as a conversation. I'll be asking Leah and Sammy several questions, and we'll have a free flowing conversation. So Leah and Sammy, if you want to introduce yourselves.

**Sami**

I'm Sammy. I am a black woman wearing like a space jacket, I guess is the way I would describe it. It's um, silver and very shiny. And then it's got like criss cross lines all down my arms. I have glitter on my face and I have temporary hair dye and glitter in my hair. Because I had an event earlier today where we were talking of, and in fabulous outfits and I just left all this glitter on my face. So that's me! [giggling]

**Leah**

Hey, I'm Leah I use them/they pronouns. I'm a light brown, mixed race Sri Lankan, Roma and Irish nonbinary femme. I like to describe myself as just another aging middle aged, mixed race autistic punk. I have curly brown and purple and gray hair on one side of my head and an undercut on the other. And I'm wearing a dikhalo (D-I-K-H-A-L-O) or traditional Roma scarf traditionally around my neck, because I woke up with a sore throat. And I'm speaking to you from my bedroom in South Seattle on traditional Duwamish, territory, (D-U-W-A-M-I-S-H). And I'm so happy to be here.

**Margo**

Thank you both so much for being with us tonight. So we'll get started with the question that kind of shaped the panel as we were thinking about it, which is, you know, giving the ongoing police brutality against disabled brown and queer, brown and black, queer and trans folk? How can we think about intersections of Disability Justice and black lives matter?

**Margo**

What are the strategies and practices that are working? What have we learned? How can we theorize from the present moment, take into account past Disability Justice work? I'd love to know your thoughts, both of your thoughts on that big set of questions.

**Sami**

I can get started. And, again, there's so much to say about this. So I'll say a few things. One, I think at the core is that there is no, there is no black liberation, without Disability Justice. So there is no way that we can fight racism and anti black racism if we're not addressing ableism, because these systems are completely dependent upon one another to function.

**Sami**

So I operate from that standpoint, as a beginning, it's a beginning place. But in terms of the way that I see that understanding of the intersection of oppression, then working in practice in on the ground activism and organizing work, is first recognizing when Black disabled people have been killed. And naming disabilities as part of their identity. And often part of the reason that they have been harmed. So naming that and making sure that that's prominent so that people recognize that disability is part of, a central part of police brutality, particularly mental disabilities often and mental health crises.

**Sami**

So I think that naming that is first and foremost, really important, and then starting to get Black Lives Matter and other black liberation organizations to learn about disability justice practices, in their organizing work. So that is a range of things. So some of the things that I have been working on with local organizing groups here in Madison, particularly Freedom Inc, has been things like making our virtual things accessible.

**Sami**

So including image descriptions, making sure that when we have event logos, that then there is all the text is also available down in the description, right. So just some basic accessibility things for letting people know. Then also starting to really challenge our ideas of what the different roles are in organizing work and recognizing that walking in the streets, being out, you know, getting gassed by police are not the only ways that we do change work.

**Sami**

That disabled folks can be a part of movement work in a whole bunch of different ways on the ground and behind the scenes that need to be recognized and valued in a lot of different ways. So here in Madison, when we were having the uprisings and protesters were being gassed every night, those of us who it was not safe for us to be out during a pandemic and having unknown chemical substances sprayed at our faces. Not possible for us.

**Sami**

We stayed at home but we were up all night following live feeds and giving people information about where to go, where medics were, if we needed more food or water taken down for people. So we were eyes and ears for people on the ground in a way that supported that work without putting our body minds in the same kind of dangers.

**Sami**

So those are some of the things that we've started to do is really think about how we incorporate and bring disabled folks in to organizing work. Rather than just assuming that if you cannot do these particular functions, that there is no place for you in the movement.

**Leah**

Totally, I'm just at the risk of being, the thing I say a lot is like disability is in everything, right? Like that's one of like the central Disability Justice precepts. And just backing up everything Sammy said, um, where I always go to in terms of talking about, like, how we're going to win is that if we want to end police murder of Black, Indigenous and people of colour, we're not going to do it unless we look at ableism and racism, because, you know, six years ago, I remember Sins Invalid, putting out a poster that was like, okay, there's no federal statistics, but like, what we have gathered is that 50% of BIPOC folks were murdered by the cops are also disabled, deaf, neurodivergent, etc.

**Leah**

And now the stats are more looking like 80%. Right? So I just want to name that. And in terms of people who've been doing this work, I just want to start out by naming the incredible, incredible work of people like Sins Invalid. Leroy Moore, of Criphop International, who literally has been working on police murders and violence of Black disabled people since the 1990s.

**Leah**

Um, you know, Harriet Tubman collective and their statement about fulfilling the vision of the movement for Black lives, and really looking at the intersections of, you know, antiBlack racism and ableism. Um, I want to name all these things, because historical memory is so short, especially on the internet, and I've got a rolodex in my head.

**Leah**

And I know a lot of people who might be new to thinking about those intersections are like wait, what? And I'm like, yeah, some of this is six, seven, ten, twenty years ago. But people have been doing this work for a long time. Something I also want to lift up is that when we go back to anti-police brutality work in the 80s, or 90s, Disability Justice may not have been a word yet, but there were and are Black and brown disabled folks doing work in prison justice and against police brutality, that looked at disability, right?

**Leah**

I think that is one of many examples of how in doing this work, and in being in our communities or movements, sometimes as disabled, Black and brown folks, we go into our communities that are not the all disabled part. We have a lot of work to do to get people to be like, "okay, I can say the D word, you know, I can talk about disability".

**Leah**

Because historically, there's been ways where we've been excluded by a majority white and racist disability rights movement that has not looked at our issues as disabled BIPOC people, or it has not really seemed either safe or worth it to claim disability. But it doesn't mean disability's not there, it means that people go "oh, yeah, my stuff, you know, that thing I deal with." Right?

**Leah**

So a lot of our work in our communities is doing that unpacking. A lot of the work that I've seen happen over the past decade of Disability Justice work is that those of us who are disabled BIPOC people, there's been some movement, we're 10 years ago, in abled Black and brown leftist spaces.

**Leah**

You know, I felt like a lot of us were being like, "disabled, disabled, deaf, disabled", and there just be crickets. Like, you know, we're not going to call you back, we're not going to, you're asking for these things, we're going to forget about it, we're going to pay lip service once and then nothing happens.

**Leah**

That's still there. But I will say that I have seen some really encouraging movement. Over the past few years of not specifically disabled only BIPOC groups, being like "Disability Justice, we want to learn about it, we want to implement it!".

**Leah**

When somebody asks for basic or not so basic access, we're not just acting like "God, there's no way we can do that we have no money, we're so pissed off".

**Leah**

So that's a really big win and that's a lot of the cultural work we've been doing to create disabled movements that look like us and center the issues and lives of us as disabled BIPOC people.

**Leah**

So I want to say that and I also want to say in terms of solutions, just adding on to the access work that Sammy you shared about with Freedom Inc and other spaces and cripping the revolution, right?

**Leah**

I also think about this year in particular, as we know, it's been this wild year where abolition and defunding the police is in the New York Times, all the time [laughing] in a way thar I never expected and that most people didn't. So many people I know who are doing transformative justice and abolitionist work. We've all been like "oh my god, it's go time we have to make this real! People are talking about you know, defunding the police!"

**Leah**

And masses of people are saying, "okay, we know the cops aren't cool, but really, what do you got that is going to protect me from my rapist". Or you know, the guy who wants to break into the house or whatever instead. For me Disability Justice is central to also how we actually create the world that we want, that really creates those alternatives.

**Leah**

A really cute example is that we've seen in some movement areas, people say, "well, you know, people don't really need the cops, they need social workers, they need psychiatrists".

**Leah**

Thankfully, you know, disabled abolitionists have pushed back and said, "actually if you show up, and it's not a cop with a gun, but a psychiatrist, with two weeks of Depakote and a needle, maybe I won't be dead". But this is actually an issue that mad and neurodiverse people in particular, black and brown people have been organizing around for 40 years where we're like "actually, that's not what we want, either".

**Leah**

We don't want to be policed by normalcy, by these ideas of what sanity is. We want peer support, we want affordable housing, we want to be able to access good therapy, we want to be able to be weird and public without being shunned or shot or locked up. Right?

**Leah**

So I think there's really great work people can check out. One place that I want to shout out is the Disability Justice and Abolition Coalition or Abolition and Disability Justice Coalition, if you Google it, you'll find it. I also think that Yolo Akili and Dean's work in terms of looking at Black mental health from an abolitionist perspective, and giving people real tools around like, "hey, you know, like, my friend or family member or myself is having emotional, mental health crisis, what do I really do? That's not 911 that's real?" is so important.

**Leah**

Last thing I want to say is that, in the book that Ejeris and me co-edited, I'm holding up Beyond Survival right now, I wrote a long rant called "cripping TJ". Where I just was like, "I've been disabled, a survivor, and a stressed out TJ organizer for 20 years". It's something I see a lot, is that as transformative justice workers, we really, we have vicarious trauma, we have post traumatic stress from holding all these really intense abuse stories.

**Leah**

And a lot of the time, you know, we're putting out calls saying, "if we're going to do TJ, everybody has to learn these skills". And we're kind of like, "how come people aren't doing it?" My thing was, well, actually, people are kind of hesitant to do it, because they're like, "I already have trauma, why would I have more trauma?"

**Leah**

So I think really looking at the ways mad and neurodiverse and disabled people have so much disabled skill and figuring out how to hold and be resilient with trauma, is so important if we're going to make this movement take off.

**Leah**

Last but not least, I really want us to keep really talking about, again, not forgetting about disabled people, but being like, "oh, so there's a whole lot of ways to be a disabled survivor". If we're really creating alternatives, and dealing with violence, we can't just be this like hangnail of like, "oh yeah, some people have those weird bodies or lines and I guess it affects their abuse story".

**Leah**

But to really talk about things like desirability politics, or if I can't leave my house where my persons abusing me, because they're also my primary caretaker, and it took two years for me to find an accessible apartment. If we don't put those into our TJ plans. The plans not going to the fly. Okay, I'll stop. But that's what I've got somewhere.

**Margo**

That's amazing. Yeah, I mean, absolutely. Right at the center of, of all of our justice movements. Sammy, did you have anything to add? Or shall we move to, yeah.

**Sami**

I mean, so many things that I would just like echo and say "yes" on. I guess two things that I just want to throw into the mix is, yeah, going back to Leah talking about disability identity.

**Sami**

I just started to really be public about my disability identity and I have been in disability studies for over a decade [laughing].

**Sami**

Um, so all of my early writing, like talks about me as like non-disabled, but like identifying with disability and really, not being able to understand my experience, with, with depression/anxiety through a disability lens, because I felt like I wasn't disabled enough. I felt like a lot of my depression stems from trauma that is specifically racial trauma being raised by white folks in small town, Kentucky.

**Sami**

So, for me, I was like, well, it's not it's not the same thing or it's not enough. I don't have a diagnosis. I don't take medication, so therefore, it's something else. It took me doing research on Black disabled activists. And doing interviews with Black disabled activists to finally be like, I really just need to go ahead and just really lean into this and fully be out there because... it really is about building community.

**Sami**

I've been doing the work of building my own support networks privately, but that building of support networks and that care work right, is our essential skills that I realized were needed in the movement. That's what I found myself doing this summer was doing a lot of trauma informed responses to folks.

**Sami**

Yeah, providing care, providing food and water for folks who have been marching things like that, that are 100% coming out of my experience as a disabled person, and having been in disability community for years and years and years.

**Sami**

So it's, I would never say that someone has to identify as disabled, but I am recognising that for those of us who want to be leaders in movement work, and in the field, it is essential for us to be open about our experiences in claiming disability. So yeah, I wanted to add that into the mix and and also just really say that yeah, Beyond Survival, I have been reading in the smallest increments, because it is hard. It really challenges me. So the chapter on like community solving murders, I literally thrw the book, I was like "No! I can't, I can't solve a murder! I'm not ready!"

**Sami**

So highly recommend the book, but also recommend pacing yourself through it and not expecting that suddenly, you are going to have all of the skills because you read one book.

**Leah**

If I could just go into that, god I appreciate you so much. And when I saw your bio, and was like "Wait! Sami identifies as disabled now, yay! I want to send her a cake!". That's so great. I just, it's so real. It made me want to say Margo, when you were introducing me and you were like "Leah has been at the forefront of Disability Justice for 25 years", I was like "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!".

**Leah**

And it's so important to say because, like, just the other day I was doing this class speak for this Disability Studies class, and they were like, "how did you get into Disability Justice". It's a story I tell a lot, it's about my mom as a polio survivor, right? This very slow, pain filled walk we both did one day, the year the ADA got passed, right? You know how my mom, working class Irish/Roma, polio survivor, no medical care, her parents took her to the doctor once, they were like, "okay, yeah, put her a bike. Hopefully, she can still be mobile".

**Leah**

My mum, you know, has never used the word disabled to describe herself. But when the ADA passed, she was like, "you know, I can't walk more than 50 feet without pain, right?".

**Leah**

And I was like, I was a 19 year old little bitch. So I was like, "I can ask for accommodations". She's like, "no, they'll fire me. And they'll hire someone younger with no disabilities". To me that that's a teaching moment of both. That's disability rights. And the cliffhanger that Patti Burns speaks of, of where disability rights is so useful, and then it stops and then DJ had to take over, because rights alone won't save us, right?

**Leah**

Because my mum, the rights, the law, let her maybe have that conversation. But it didn't actually materially change her life. But then 20 years later, her kid could be at a Sins Invalid show that I'd snuck to because after being really chronically late 20s and my 30s, I moved to Oakland. And I was like "okay, yeah, I'm good. That's all in the past. I'm not crazy anymore. I don't have chronic pain. I'm eating fresh fruits and vegetables!".

**Leah**

I wanted to be with the cool kids, but then disability wouldn't leave me alone. So I snuck off to Sins, didn't tell any of my cool ablebodied, queer people of colour friends. I was in a whole room of disabled Black and brown folks flirting and talking and seeing performance art about coming home and I was like, "Oh, this makes it worth it. This gives me something".

**Leah**

I say this always because before and after, and during whatever coming out and claiming disability looks like, we're always in disability. One of my favorite anthologies, that's a racial autobiography, racial memoir anthology from the early 90s is called "names we call home".

**Leah**

To me, I just want to say, I've been thinking a lot about what does it mean to shift the idea we have of disability as this medical identity that a doctor has to give you, to a name that feels like home to us?

**Leah**

That feels like such the work of DJ for me. It's something that I see in Black and brown community spaces where I see more and more people, because of our work, all of our work being like, "okay, I looked all of this autistic Black and brown Instagram and I finally was like okay, I count. I'm going to clean this name, I'm going to claim my people". Once you claim and start finding your people and yourself, so much more power becomes possible. Right?

**Margo**

Yeah, that's fantastic. I want to go back to those community spaces that both of you are referencing and ask you to continue thinking about that. As I know both of you have been involved for a long time and mutual aid work and activism during this past year of the triple pandemic, right of white supremacy, COVID-19, climate change, but also you have a longer histories of building those kinds of disability communities.

**Margo**

So can you speak to the ways you've brought or witnessed Disability Justice principles to that work? That mutual aid work, but also maybe ways that disability, that mutual aid projects play into ableism? And complicating that dynamic and look to, yeah, hear a little bit more about that.

**Leah**

Sami, do you want me to go? Or do you want to go? You want me to go? Okay, yeah. So much stuff to say, I'm so happy. Oh wait, do you want to - okay, I'm going. Yes, great. This year, I mean, again, it's a year where like, all of a sudden, mutual aid is a mainstream term where it's everywhere. It's so complicated to me, because, first of all, I want to say, I get really pissed off when people in this current wave, say "mutual aid, mutual aid", and they don't acknowledge the disabled roots of it, and all the disabled work and brilliance and science and histories and lineages of it.

**Leah**

I get pissed off about that, both because I feel like it's so important to name disabled genius and labour and not erase. Also because I don't think that a) we have any of the mutual aid projects we do without disability work in terms of collective care. Also, I think that if you don't have understandings of Disability Justice and access in your mutual it's doomed to fail. I'll explain what I mean by that. I mean, first of all, I just want to say that I came up personally, as a young political radical in anarchist and anti-authoritarian spaces where people, we did say mutual aid.

**Leah**

We would quote Gramshi and Kropotkin and whatever. Those were also spaces that when I first got sick when I was 22, nobody was bringing me soup. People were like, "why didn't you send out all the mail to the prison newspaper"? And I was like, "I crawled to the bathroom today".

**Leah**

And people would go, "oh you're sick? Oh, haha yeah, sick, sure". Then that was it. So I think I want to name that there's a real history IN political radical communities, Yes, of collective care, but also of ableism. Of like, "well, you're not militant, if you can't keep up with you know..." Last week. I was like, "yes, the anarchist five k", it's like DR dash, right? Then one of the first places that I witness disabled collective care was when I was still living in Toronto, and Loree Erickson, who is a white, queer physically disabled femme.

**Leah**

Who immigrated from small town Virginia to Toronto and couldn't access state care, has this very long running care collective because she needs help with daily care with transferring and toileting and all the things. Her care collective brought so many people into those collective care skills in the Toronto community because it was fun to hang out with Loree and she trained so many people in how to do personal care work.

**Leah**

In a lot of the finer points of how complicated it is to give and receive care well, in a way that feels safe. Having said that, Loree's white, and I was watching her and I was like, "this is cool", but I was like, "I could never let anyone see my house when it's dirty, and I can't do the dishes. I used to clean houses, I can't have anyone clean my house". I had very... my own race and class and gender versions of it all.

**Leah**

So then, you know, something I've written about in the 55 page chapter I chose to start Care Work with, is all these different experiments in care collectives, and how they're really complicated and something that I just want to say briefly that like disabled people have been at the forefront of these experiments on how to give and receive care for each other and there's so many different versions of it.

**Leah**

Some things I really want to stress is that, there are places where I see, mutual aid faltering sometimes or missing is that, mutual aid falters when there's not an understanding that it is political and risky and vulnerable to access care. That for so many of us care has been a site of violence, right? I have friends who have groovy care collectives, and I have friends who are like, "no, I paid my attendance well". Because I don't, you know, I had a friend once, who I don't know if she wants to be named, but she's physically disabled woman of colour. And she's like, "I never want my ability to go to the bathroom to be based on how popular what you or I are, popular I am".

**Leah**

Um, and then there's the issue of so many of us who are disabled either have very little or no community because we're not cool. And we're isolated by ableism. So where do these people come? Or, you know, there's so many of the basics of like, in order to accept care, we need to be able to say, "I'm saying yes to this, I'm saying no to that, like, I get to have control, I get to have autonomy".

**Leah**

I don't have to be grateful in this very charity based way. I was doing a workshop around care work this Monday, actually. Somebody was like "what's a need? How do we even know what our needs are?"

**Leah**

You know, it's a group of all BIPOC people, all queer, and we had to have this whole conversation of, right! Most of us have survived by being like, "I don't have any needs. I'm fine. I'm independent". So the gap between "just call me if you need something", and being able to even know what your needs are, let alone to be like, "Yes, I will let someone see me when I'm messy". That's a huge gap, right?

**Leah**

It's bridgeable, but it takes work, to be able it takes all these different little disabled microsteps to be like "this is a need", and it's okay for me to have it. These are the conditions under which I can ask for it and receive it, and unpack all the stuff that we've internalized around "that means you're entitled, that means you're spoiled".

**Leah**

Often it means really thanking ourselves for "Yeah, I've had to have no needs in order to survive. Thank you". And also, we want to create a world where there's something else. Oh, there's more, but I'm gonna stop there.

**Sami**

Yeah, what I've seen emerge around the idea of mutual aid is so different from my understanding of mutual aid as learning from from care collectives, right? Because they've been divorced from community. So what kind of popped up in Madison and I think has popped up in a lot of other places, are these like Facebook groups, where people post "I need this, I need that", or someone says, "I have a whole bunch of XYZ thing".

**Sami**

And we don't know, you don't know who these people are. Um, no one is actually connecting with one another beyond that individual give. Then there's all this policing that happens so quickly. So quickly, people started to be like, "you've asked this, so many times for this, like, what are you doing?"

**Sami**

Or telling people that, when they're asking for one thing, saying like, "oh, well, what you should actually do is XYZ other thing", to get it. So it just became a space to dump goods. I don't think goods is mutual aid. It's not just like, I don't know, a flea market for food or something like it actually is about connection and care.

**Sami**

That requires an understanding of a person and like actually, being in community with that person. So I think what I learned the most over the summer, with the kinds of attempts at mutual aid that were happening within organizing communities here, was that it required us to actually get to know each other and to be vulnerable with each other.

**Sami**

I think where we got ended up being this place where we would say like, everyone should, you know, do self care like, rest when you need to rest. Encouraging things that I had not seen as encouraged previously, in my experience with organizing collectives, but still not quite able to do it for one another.

**Sami**

There was this expectation that the care happened outside of the organising network. So there was an encouragement of support, but not quite able to provide it for one another, because everyone was providing so much care to other people. So one of the things that consistently strikes me when I go back to reading Care Work is the incredible load of carework on femmes that consistently what I see, in organizing networks, are femmes doing all of this emotional labour to support and care and calm people down and keep people from doing stupid shit that they know is stupid! [laughing]

**Sami**

Don't do stupid shit. But so it's care work. It's like, so firms become these, like moms of these groups that I think is, it's just not it's not healthy. So I think the mutual aid people are interested in receiving, but they're not interested in developing the skills to be able to contribute sometimes. So that's what I really saw and was concerned about. So it was less about ableism popping up in those spaces, but like sexism and femmephobia coming up a lot. This expectation that yeah, femmes, we're going to do to the labor, but then not wanting to actually listen to their leadership.

**Leah**

Thank you, thank you for naming all that. Like, real quick, I just want to say that, um, there's disabled mutual aid this year that I've been a part of. It's not, the mutual aid network you find on Facebook, it's really just been, for me, it's been me and my disabled friends just texting each other being like, how you doing?

**Leah**

Cracking a joke, or like, you know, and that's the thing, too, is like, yeah, when you were talking about, like, the supermarket of care. It just made me think, a lot of what we do, and this feels like really, cripping or disabling care is like, I think in the abled idea of what care is, it's kind of like the ambulance rushing in to drop off the soup or to fix it.

**Leah**

Then in disability community, it's a lot of us just being like, "how you doing? Just checking in love you, here's a meme". Also some, like, "I can go get your pills. I can listen to you, when you're freaking out. Oh, you're going into the ER, great, you just need to let me know. That's cool".

**Leah**

Also stuff that's not glamorous, but really real. Where my, I have a good friend who's like "look, I'm feeling a little sick. I live by myself. I need people to text me morning, and in the afternoon. And if I don't pick up call 911 tell them I'm supersized and they need to bring fat accessible equipment to get me out here. Because I may not be breathing because of my conditions". And I was like, "oh, sure, yeah, no problem". I was like, I don't know if a lot of abled mutual aid people, if this would be on their radar, as like what a one way cure could look like.

**Pauline**

You've been listening in to Queer Disability Justice Dreams on 3CR. This conversation went for much longer than what we aired today, the full conversation will be on the 3CR website after this broadcast. I want to leave you though, with some final words from Leah Lakshmi and Sami, about their queer Disability Justice Dreams for the next 10 years.

**Sami**

Let's see. I want a world where there's universal health care. That would be great. I think I want a world where we carry some of these lessons from the pandemic on. Even just these these zoom events, like I'm able to do more now that I don't have to travel for them.

**Sami**

People I love get to see me talk, I go to these little colleges, where these undergrads don't give a shit about me. They don't care, they're going for extra credit for class. But now, like my friends, and the people in my community get to see me do my thing. I could just see them doing theirs.

**Sami**

So I hope that we carry some of these practices and realize how much accessibility benefits so many of us in ways that I think we didn't even realise, because people were forcing themselves into an ableist model of work. So I hope that work from home and online classes, and all of these things carry over in different ways. Yeah.

**Leah**

Yeah, I guess, why not go big. I want an end to the medical industrial complex. I want reparations to everyone who survived medical abuse and violence and death and their families and experimentation, right. Yeah, I absolutely agree. I want universal health care. And for me is like, I don't want just universal access to the shit pie, which is the current medical system.

**Leah**

I want care providers to be trained by disabled people. Yeah, full stop. That means I mean, where do you even start, no more medical stripping, no more, you know, gatekeeping of access to treatments, drugs, pills, etc. You know, all of it. I want no more prisons. I want no more police.

**Leah**

I want there to be TJ committees and councils, transformative justice committees and councils everywhere that are informed by Disability Justice. I want universal deep accessibility and I want there to be the resources. So it's not just the neoliberal model of like, oh, if you want to ramp you got to come up with money yourself, but that like the government pays for that or the collective pays for that.

**Leah**

I don't know I just wrote a short story that my friends, it's my second ever disabled science fiction story, that my friend Cyrus Marcus-Ware, who's a brilliant Black trans disabled artist and activist and we've been friends for over 20 years, asked me to write, that I just called "There are disabled people in the future".

**Leah**

I guess that's the thing too, it's radical to say that we exist in the future. My friend Qwo-li Driskill, who's a disabled Two Spirit Cherokee poet and activist and academic, has a long quote I can go to where he was just kind of decrying all the ways in which you know, like the heart of the quote is like, in so many radical spaces, as disabled people we're not even present in their visions of a supposed liberated future. Right?

**Leah**

So to really insist that we are disabled and joyful and vibrant, and that when autistic kids are born, everyone's happy, and not trying to gene edit us out of existence or torture us into not being autistic, right, like, what are the possibilities that happen when that happens, right?

**Leah**

Like what happens when CRISPR is not used as a technology to eliminate disabled people from the future but we're seen as inherently valuable as who we are. Um, you know, the phrases that people like Patty Burn, and Aurora Levins Morales have said, or they're like, there's no one right way to have a body or a mind. What does that mean, if that really is true in the future, right? If we can start practicing that right now, there's not the 'normals' and 'everybody else'. But that people come into the world and it's like, "Oh, what's this person like?" Right? Um, yeah, I think that's where I would start.

**Pauline**

Visit 3cr.org.au/disabilityday2020 to find a link to the full length program. Thank you for listening.

**TRACE**

Eyes are tired, looking for a sign

Of anything that might give relief

Fantasizing all the things in my mind

Will I feel more me?

Punctual, waiting for a thrill

To wake me from this deep dark sleep

Blaming myself for making plans that fill

Into the cracks I call my dreams

I know you seen it all around my anxiety

It likes to strut, it loves the sight, oh

The sight of me

Creeping through the doors and under all my sheets

I can never sleep, it worries me

Search the world, parties, even girls

But nothing makes me feel anything

Tried to attach to anybody's hope

But help me get me off my knees

Over controlled, the tension leaves me holding onto all of my personal things

Now I'm out calling every doubt

That's tryna make a fool of me

I know you seen it all around my anxiety

It likes to strut, it loves the sight, oh

The sight of me

Creeping through the doors and under all my sheets

I can never sleep, it worries me

It's not lonely, in the seams

Anxiety I'm your fiend

It's not lonely, in the seams

Anxiety I'm your fiend