

# CALL FOR POEMS, STORIES, & VISUAL ARTS

**Proposed Anthology Title:** *To the Tenth Power: A Word from the LGBTQIA+ Members of the Divine Nine Organization*

**Deadline for Submissions:** **1159p Sunday, June 30, 2024**

**Editors:** *Kendra N. Bryant Aya*, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English at North Carolina A&T State University (See bio at [drknbryant.com](http://drknbryant.com).)

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**Contact Email:** [thedivine10anthology@gmail.com](mailto:thedivine10anthology@gmail.com)

We are looking for **unpublished** poems, stories, and visual arts pieces by and/or about LGBTQIA+ D9 members that detail, narrate, and illustrate:

- coming out to my D9 organization and/or line
- what an LGBTQIA+ D9 member “looks” like
- personal experience as an open or closeted LGBTQIA+ D9 member
- lessons learned because of being part of a heteronormative D9 organization; and
- the challenges or successes with queering heteronormative D9 spaces.

## POEM SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*Submissions must adhere to the following guidelines to be considered:*

1. no more than three original, unpublished poems can be submitted;
2. individual poems cannot exceed two pages each;
3. poems should be typed in 12pt Times New Roman font;
4. poems should be single spaced and include title; and
5. each poem should be on its own page.

## SHORT STORY SUBMISISON GUIDELINES

*Submissions must adhere to the following guidelines to be considered:*

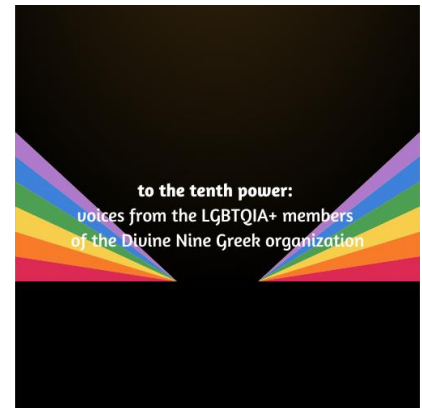
1. short stories should not exceed five pages;
2. stories must be typed in 12pt Times New Roman font;
3. they should be double spaced and include a title; and
4. stories must be factual but may include made up names to protect other people’s identity.

## VISUAL ARTS SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*Submissions must adhere to the following guidelines to be considered:*

1. no more than three pieces may be submitted;
2. visual works must be the submitter’s originals;
3. works may include graphic arts, photographs, and drawings/paintings;
4. each work should include a caption detailing its title and medium;
5. art must be scanned and uploaded as a high resolution JPG.

All works should be emailed as a Word attached (poems, stories) or JPG (visual arts) document to [thedivine10anthology@gmail.com](mailto:thedivine10anthology@gmail.com). **PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT Google Docs nor PDFs.**



Additionally, include a bio or artist's statement (with D9 affiliation and pronoun preferences) in the body of your email. You may also include any social media handles and/or contact information in your bio.

You may direct any questions to **Kendra N. Bryant Aya** at [thedivine10anthology@gmail.com](mailto:thedivine10anthology@gmail.com). For a review of the first call for papers regarding *To the Tenth Power*, read below. However, please note the below call has closed; we are currently seeking creative works only.



## ORIGINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

In May 2021, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated posted to Instagram a graduation picture of themselves<sup>1</sup> wearing a pink “woman’s” suit, black high heels, and an Alpha Phi Alpha sash. Needless to say, their post “broke the Internet.” It also broke some people’s notions of what an Alpha man is and what he is not, thus inspiring this anthology I have tentatively titled: *To the Tenth Power: A Word from the LGBTQ+ Members of the Divine Nine*.

According to Funky Dineva, a self-identified gay Alpha man whose dragging performance is aired on his YouTube channel, the pink suited, high heeled Alpha member was “out of uniform”; he “bamboozled” the Alpha organization by hiding his sexuality (although what one wears doesn’t imply one’s sexuality), and he was wrong for attempting to “push agendas not sanctioned by the organization.” “Respectability politics make the world go round,” said Funky Dineva, who went on and on about why this graduating Alpha member’s performance was “dead wrong.” But more startling than any of those comments, according to Funky Dineva, whose May 18 posting had since amassed nearly 200,000 views, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated doesn’t belong to this assumingly genderqueer person: “This is *these* people stuff,” Funky Dineva stressed, “not yours.”

Funky Dineva’s position undoubtedly mirrors and reflects the white male heteronormative Christian culture to which too many Black people have grown accustomed, by which they have been dispirited, and with which they “spirit murder” other non-conforming Black folks. Nowhere is such self-annihilating practices and propaganda propelled as they are in affluent Black spaces such as the Black church, the Black university, and the Black social organization, including the Divine Nine—all of which do not solely belong to “*these* people,” but belong to *all of us*—straight, gay, lesbian, and queer. Alas, the Divine Nine—although constituting social organizations whose members are missioned to address social issues plaguing Black and brown people particularly—has historically assumed a respectability politic that does not “make the world go round,” but contributes and compounds the –isms Divine Nine members are “sanctioned” to help disrupt. Such participation so maintains the marginalization and erasure of Black and brown people whose narratives are either copped or not told at all.

Therefore, to disrupt respectability politics, to center marginalized voices, to affirm LGBTQ+ Divine Nine membership, and to reclaim belonging in (and ownership of) a Black organization purposed to ensure America’s unrealized democratic promise, I—a Black lesbian woman member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated—invite personal narratives, original poems, think pieces, and researched essays from LGBTQ+ members of the Divine Nine organization of Black Greek sororities and fraternities to be compiled in an anthology I’ve tentatively titled: *To the Tenth Power: A Word from the LGBTQ+ Members of the Divine Nine*.

Submissions should not critically analyze or respond to neither the genderqueered Alpha Phi Alpha Instagram post nor Funky Dineva’s commentary about it. Instead, submissions should narrate (in creative non-fiction fashion) one’s own LGBTQ+ experience w/in the Divine Nine organization, while others may provide researched evidence and analysis re: LGBTQ+ politics in Divine Nine organizations. Submissions must keep a non-academic audience in mind and therefore be composed in a voice that engages both scholars and non-scholars. Because this collection

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<sup>1</sup> Because I am not acquainted with this person and am not aware of how s/he identifies, I am using the plural pronoun. However, I use the male pronoun when paraphrasing and quoting other people’s ideas about this person who is the impetus of this call for papers.

endeavors to center and affirm LGBTQ+ Divine Nine members, submissions should be written by openly declared, self-identified LGBTQ+ persons; however, submissions should avoid being a linear autobiography of events.

While topics (and experiences) will vary, submissions may possibly narrate:

- how an LGBTQ+ person navigated or navigates their participation in their respective Divine Nine fraternity or sorority;
- an instance(s) when an LGBTQ+ person was threatened, shamed, ousted and outted, ridiculed, and/or abused or harmed by other Divine Nine members;
- when an LGBTQ+ member was forced to engage and/or perform heteronormative practices as punishment for or ridicule of their queerness;
- why an LGBTQ+ member chooses to perform heteronormativity when engaging their Divine Nine organization;
- a time when an LGBTQ+ member was ousted from organization practices and initiatives because of their queerness;
- why an LGBTQ+ member of the Divine Nine has remained inactive;
- what LGBTQ+ social justice work has an LGBTQ+ Divine Nine member attempted to activate in their organization (and what are the result and/or pushbacks, if any); and
- why an LGBTQ+ person joined a historically traditional Black organization steeped in respectability politics.

**LGBTQ+ submitters who have been supported by their Divine Nine organization should also contribute their narratives, for it is the ally (preferred “co-conspirator”) whose support of marginalized folk help to center their voices.**