

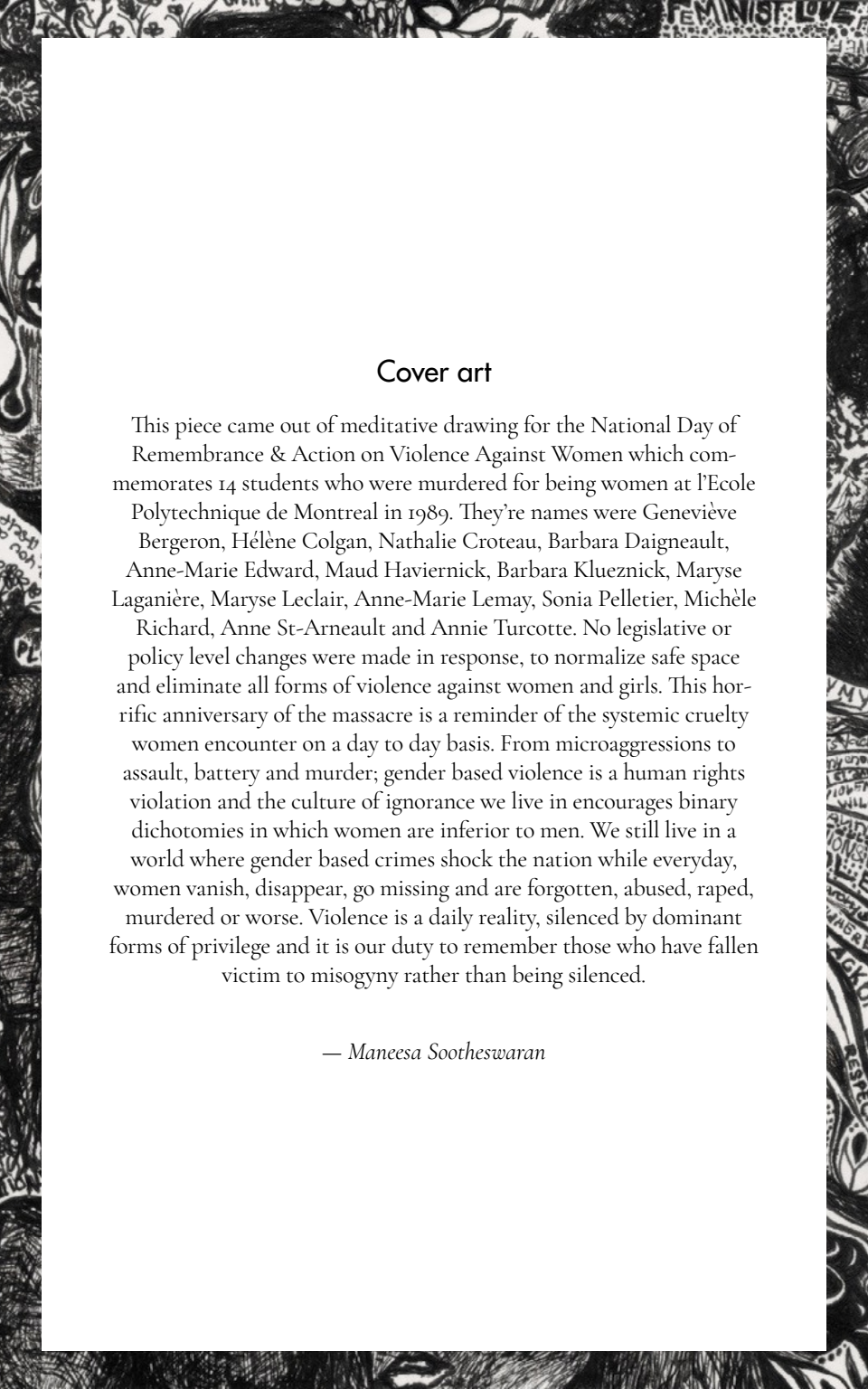


RECOGNITION 2

Trans and Queer Writing
on Sexual Harm



WAVAW



Cover art

This piece came out of meditative drawing for the National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women which commemorates 14 students who were murdered for being women at l'Ecole Polytechnique de Montreal in 1989. They're names were Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klueznick, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Anne St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte. No legislative or policy level changes were made in response, to normalize safe space and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. This horrific anniversary of the massacre is a reminder of the systemic cruelty women encounter on a day to day basis. From microaggressions to assault, battery and murder; gender based violence is a human rights violation and the culture of ignorance we live in encourages binary dichotomies in which women are inferior to men. We still live in a world where gender based crimes shock the nation while everyday, women vanish, disappear, go missing and are forgotten, abused, raped, murdered or worse. Violence is a daily reality, silenced by dominant forms of privilege and it is our duty to remember those who have fallen victim to misogyny rather than being silenced.

— Maneesa Sothieswaran

Land acknowledgment

This zine was created on the unceded territories of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

Trans and queer people are talking a lot about accountability these days, and looking outside of carceral systems that have mostly harmed us. Those of us who are settlers need to start with our own accountability to the Indigenous peoples on whose land we live.

It is impossible to overstate the relationships between sexual violence, colonization, and trans antagonism. As we made this zine, our colonial government approved a militarized invasion of Wet'suwet'en land, despite years of talking about reconciliation. Along with the countless other devastating impacts, this invasion will directly result in sexualized violence towards Indigenous people, especially women and Two Spirit people. We stand in rage and solidarity with Wet'suwet'en as we demand an end to sexualized violence, and an end to colonial occupation.

Introduction by Jane Shi

Art and writing and poetry, like trauma, are like time travel machines and teleportation devices. One minute you're at a dance party at red gate with the smell of pot and makeup and booze floating in the air and the next you're alone in your room, several weeks into self-isolation during a global pandemic, hiding from viral micro droplets as ubiquitous as rape culture. Somewhere in between, you find yourself in a moment you'd rather forget, frantically searching for the exit light of a memory that continues to grasp at unwitting skin.

A home is just a metaphor for a body of memories. The body of memories that queer and trans people hold between us shifts and morphs over time just as our ideas of home.

We are each other's witness, judge, and jury. We barge into the family court systems of our Facebook threads and break the cop car windows of each other's silences. We commit treason against our too-soon pinky swears. We deploy mass surveillance on each other's Instagram accounts.

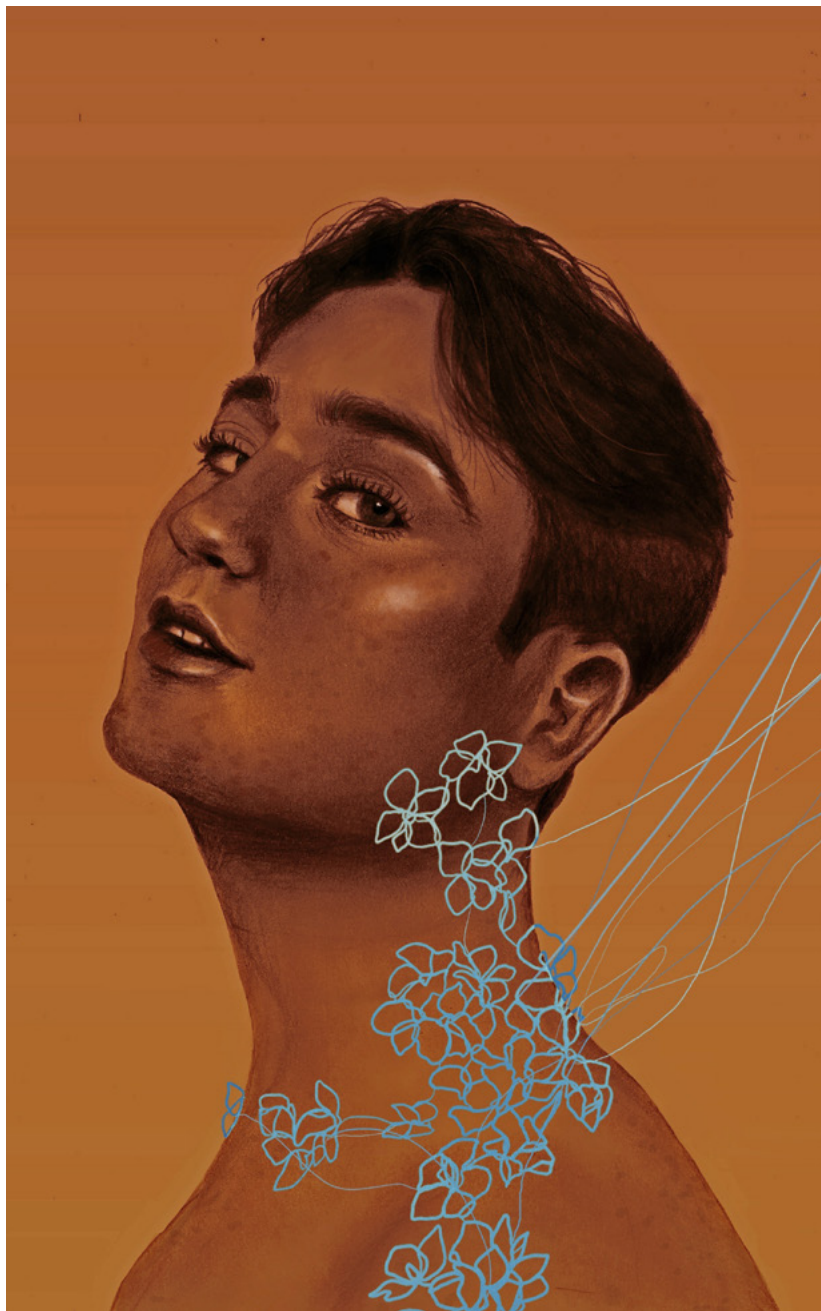
I want to believe that amidst the blur of coming together, fighting for rights, and each small trespass we'd rather shrug off we have not forgotten that liberation is how we got our names. Art and writing and poetry will free us from sexual violence when we continue to tackle the structures that harm us, and the structures that enable us to harm each other. Our line breaks and reflections and collages make up a blueprint for survival, and magnify the world lying beyond it. These stir of songs and shadows dream that we are accountable to each other, and accountable to ourselves.

All this is magic, sci-fi, and speculative. Yet there is also no magic to doing the work. Ending sexual violence is a commitment we can all make with ourselves and each other, and if you are reading this, wherever you are, whoever you may think you are, it's not too late. Your accountability is yours, and your healing is, too. It's a hard truth to let sink in (believe me, I know) but let this zine be evidence that no one is too fucked up to create a world worth believing in or to imagine a reality worth teleporting and time-travelling to.

Wherever you may be as you read this, I am glad you are here, and I'm grateful for your attention, your secrets, your buried memories, your desire to heal, your skepticism, your biting wit, your tenderness, each and everyone one of your emotions (yes, especially rage), and your capacity to love.

In solidarity and solitude,

— Jane Shi



— Guntaj Deep Singh

Dear trans survivors,

Over the past three weeks, our world has turned upside down. COVID-19 has forced us to stay in our homes - that is, those of us who are lucky enough to have homes. We're missing the first few nice days of the year, and missing each other.

For many trans people, it's not the first time our lives have suddenly upended, and it's not the first time we have felt isolation. I haven't seen another trans person in three weeks, which feels just like the time when I was the only trans person I knew. For many of us, this feeling is a daily reality, and I'm more aware than ever of the strength it takes to know yourself in isolation.

I wanted to write to trans survivors, especially the ones who are quarantined with their abusers right now. We're starting to see thinkpieces come out about the reality of being stuck inside with your abuser, and they're good, but they're all about straight cis women and I don't see us reflected anywhere.

I want you to know, firstly, that what you're experiencing is not just 'drama'. How many times have we minimized abuse because of the stubborn belief that cis women can't cause harm? Or because we just feel lucky that cis men will date us? How many times have toxic relationships, that might be called abusive if we were straight, been written off as 'drama' because our analysis doesn't allow for queer people to hurt each other? And how many times have our bodies been the place where the difference between theory and reality is reconciled?

What does it mean to have a body that is always being reconciled?

I want you to know that your consent is still mandatory under quarantine. It can be hard to believe in our bodily autonomy when we're routinely hypersexualized, and when doctors treat us like science experiments.

When saying no has the potential to cost us our community, or the roof over our head, 'safety' and 'consent' are ambiguous terms. This is doubly so for trans women, who are often treated as disposable even within trans community. I know trans survivors might be making hard choices with sex right now, but we deserve a world where our sexuality is ours.

I want you to know that the beauty standards that trans people are held to are ridiculous at the best of times, and close to impossible under quarantine. It's OK if you haven't shaved for a few days or a few weeks; your gender identity is still yours. Nobody else gets to name it. It's OK if you're binding less or not at all, because who has time for shoulder pain in the apocalypse, and we're talking about a respiratory virus after all.

I want you to know that you deserve support and access to healing, even though I know that many places still aren't accessible to trans survivors. You deserve to bring your whole nuanced self to your healing work, and to not worry that it will make service providers uncomfortable or unsettle their analysis of harm. You deserve a shelter if you need one. You deserve to access help without hiding parts of yourself.

You deserve safety in your home, and you deserve to hide from coronavirus without your identity being called into question, or the fear of being outed. You deserve safety all of the time, and I know that right now, it might be harder to come by than ever.

WAVAW is here for you, and we believe you. Even if you've never named what you're experiencing as abuse; even if you have named it and chosen to stay. Even if you're worried about getting another queer in trouble. Even if you still love your abuser, or if you've done things to survive that you're not proud of. Our crisis line is standing by, and our trans specific services are still available.

It has been so hard feeling this isolation from each other, but I promise we will see each other again. We will run into each other at the dog park or the book store, and give each other a nod like we always do. We are experts at knowing ourselves under dire circumstances, at holding our trans-ness close and safe. We are experts at surviving.

In solidarity,

— *Felix Gilliland*

Community Engagement & Inclusion Coordinator at WAVAW

Picking the Stiches

I had hoped to hollow myself into a holy thing
Too scared to take what I feel obliged to give
I considered crushing consent into compromise
I don't know how to love myself when there is someone else in the room
Only ever orgasmed under my own hands
Unravelling independently/always felt I had to lie
Always feel I take too long/too uncomfortable to get fully naked
The first time I told a partner no one's had the patience to make me cum
I cried under the blankets when they left
How many last conversations included me saying no?
Yes because I felt guilty/Yes so he wouldn't leave
Here I am sacrificing my own pleasure
for the approval of someone I'll never see again
Said yes as self harm/yes to avoid the anger
I change my mind and he says/*Shut up you like it*
I ring in the new year in the ER
Like blood test like rape kit like plan b like Std panel
like antibiotics on an empty stomach
Pressured into not pressing charges
Grateful to not be ousted from the friend group entirely
so I keep my mouth closed
Wash the memories down with the medication because I
didn't say no/couldn't say anything

Wont call it what it was/Can't even write it down
Took the teasing and the touching & ignored the hands on my shoulders
back and waist/at work/at school/in public
She took what she felt entitled to in front of everyone.
Told I wanted it /thought I just regretted it/bruising on my neck a fallen halo
My arms/heavy in hers and/I find myself/
buried by the body beside me under cement sheets
My reflection kept captive under/greedy fingers
I don't know how to love myself when anyone else is in the room
this is not about setting boundaries
I want to not be afraid of sleeping with someone I care about
Someday this poem will just be a poem
And not a precarious prayer offered
After I allow myself to be untangled,
anymore.

— Catherine Garrett

kiss. or. two drunk girls leaving a party

girl.

this was inevitable.

like heartbeat soundtrack on repeat

this was lifetime limelight

wishing it was golden time,

time,

is halting.

between her lips on your neck

and your hands on her hips

pausing,

between pulling her close

and pushing her away,

you know what mistake looks like.

what regret tastes like.

that using your body as an apology

or an offering to the gods of her temple aren't enough to soothe this purging,

kiss me,

she says.

like she's not asking you for anything.

that your insides melding with hers

is as simple as

"i want you"

she says.

kiss me.

she does,

on your neck,

your weak spot,

your stomach drops,

breath hitches,

fingers tighten,

pull her closer,

you want to puke

but she feels so good.

like want.

like validation.

like two black girls fucking the system,
she tells you this
as she attempts to fuck your system
we are beautiful anarchy.

this right here is honesty.
ripe cocktail breath
vision split too far to the left,
stumbling, lost cab roaming,
call it bulldozer roving,
black girls have to fight so hard,
so give yourself this,
kiss me.

she touches your lips
to hers,
tastes like
midnight snow angels,
tires scratching gravel,
bulldozer raking over skin,
like electric crumbling,
no,
you say,
like that means anything,

girl,
this was inevitable,
from the first time you didn't quite mean it.

no,
was never taught to be strong enough for itself.

so this was the only outcome
of self-doubt,
she kisses you.
and you feel like
sarcophagus opened too soon,
like dust
like "i should have walked home"
like "she made me moan"
like "i'm drunk too"
like excuses to permiss anything,
she made you into excuses,
for everything.

she wanted

you too soon.

girl.

you didn't want this.

and your mama taught you to know your own mind.

so what is this if not a sign that

no.

means no.

baby girl

no means no

so you push her away.

and the cab rolls up.

and he laughs at how plastered you two are on a tuesday night.

and you find it in yourself to laugh at your plight

because bad decisions reap bad outcomes

but hey, he ain't one to judge,

this is a regular scene, hun,

and both of you still don't quite get it.

this,

is a regular scene, hun

said like, you're breathing oxygen, hun,

like, she's hungry, hun,

and you were so easy to hunt,

teeth were only ever good at doing one thing,

and she has such a beautiful smile.

girls always get what they want.

but you still don't get it.

so you take her home.

and you tuck her in.

and she calls you an asshole.

and a tease.

and you take it.

and you kiss her forehead,

tell her she'll thank you in the morning.

and you leave.

walking home in the darkness,

hoping

that she'll thank you in the morning.

kiss. or two drunk girls leaving a party pt. ii.

(a reflection 3 years later)

i didn't know.

i didn't know what she meant.
only that my intuition said
be careful you're going to have a rough night
i didn't know.

that this
is what attempted theft looks like.
tequila sticky lips
trying to lick a 'yes' from between my lips,
i kissed her.
i say i didn't.

but i did.

to stop her badgering
to soothe my fracturing
to ebb away
the pressure to give
to receive
her want inside of me
and
i thought she *wanted* me.

me.

because women know better
girls do better
and i am a bring home to your mother type of lover.
i am now knowing better.
i am better.
and i can name her for what she was
a friend who attempted to rape me.
who invited me over to her house
for a "party"

(there were three people, including us)

because

‘i’m black and gay’

and 19 years parched and thirstin’
hooked onto her wanton gaze.

and i am so angry

and yet

and yet

i still can’t speak her name.

because...

because...

And I'm Sure

And I'm sure a hyena is still conscious of his laugh

A nervous tic he has to cut his anxiety in half.

In a fit of panic he exasperates

“what kind of tyrants run this place?”

A reflection of an empty face.

And I'm sure an octopus still struggles with its clutch

Grasping at the past because it's familiar to the touch

They can not let go and they ask

“how do I forge my own destiny?”

Another sucker for that ecstasy.

And I'm sure a black widow still cries about her fate.

To choke the living love out of someone she embraced

To justify the pain, to save face, she cries out

“what cursed arms I must possess!”

while replacing her lace the way she knows best.



SEEDS



Seated forward fold
 Inhale and lift the sides of your waist.
 Exhale and fold forward from the hips.
 Release your arms to the floor, if possible palms flat. Shoulders are stacked over your wrists. Relax your head and neck. Stay here for 6 breaths. Inhale and slowly lift yourself up to seated, with your head coming up last.
 Exhale.

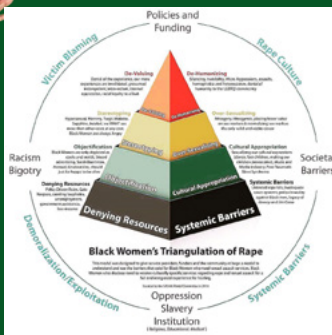


YOGA 4

BY YAMIKANI MSOSA
 @YAMIMSOA

SURVIVORS

Lateral Bend
 This stretch can be done standing or sitting. If done whilst sitting, as shown in the photo, one arm can be used to support the body as you stretch towards that side. As you stretch over to one side, also reach upwards to help elongate the side of the body on the stretched side.



Seated Pigeon
 Bring your right ankle to rest on your left thigh, keeping the knee in line with your ankle as much as possible. Hold this chair pigeon for three to five breaths.



TAKE A DEEP BREATH

consent

● n. permission, ● v. give permission.
➤ agree to do something. — PLEASED
informed consent permission granted in
the knowledge of the possible consequences.
— OROON! ME: from OFr. *consente* (n.),
consentis (v.), from L. *consentire*, from *con-*
'together' + *sentire* 'feel'.



YOGA 4

BY YAMIKANI MSOSA
@YAMIKANSOSA

SURVIVORS

seeds-yoga for survivors of sexual violence
was born out of a desire to connect with my past experiences of trauma
to reclaim my body and support others. all the shapes and forms are
practiced
using a healing centered engagement approach (trauma informed).
i got tired of seeing white bodies.
so i decided to take up space
connect with my mind and body

WHY?

because...
i avoided
my body
i hated my black queer femme body
i've reclaimed
black non-binary body

I BET THAT YOU LOVE
THE WORD
INTERSECTIONAL... WITH
YOUR TRANS
EXCLUSIONARY FEMINISM
WORRIED ABOUT WHO
WALKS THROUGH THE
DOORS AND WHATS
BETWEEN THEIR LEGS
F**K YOU



— Yamikani Msosa

loyalty (or, when proximity isn't freedom)

sometimes

queers

find each other

see each other

feed each other

dress each other

second-guess each other

raise eyebrows at each other

fold soft skin with each other

spill careless words on each other

crinkle birth charts with each other

rip hair out over monopoly with each other

run away with each other

sing off key with each other

hold each other

mold each other

imitate each other

mother each other

stick with each other

relearn respect with each other

burn incense with each other

stick & poke tattoo each other

buzz undercuts for each other

pour over text messages with each other

laugh out loud at each other
blow bubbles at each other
cut their own bangs for each other
shoot marbles with each other
hack each other
yank at each other
say “oh my god that’s so fucking intense” to each other
catch a cold for each other
throw lightning for each other
break up for each other
throw up for each other
grow the fuck up for each other
mosh pit with each other
join a cult for each other
mutual aid with each other
smell bad for each other
get caught for each other
tweet out bad takes for each other
misread tarot cards with each other
get stomach aches with each other
paint stars on a digital drawing app with each other
fix tires in the middle of the woods with each other
shiver in the mouths of tigers with each other
get real with each other
reach across tables for each other
shatter each other

memorize each other

misunderstand each other

slit the throat of sixteen enemies for each other

sink gold teeth into each other

play dirty old tricks on each other

sacrifice each other

tell lies for each other

fall in love with each other

forget each other

build homes with each other

find mold in each other

rent strike with each other

betray each other

believe each other

believe each other

believe each other

— Jane Shi

The Start

Light to dark,

How do we know where to start.

Happiness to sadness,

How do we know we are not going to fall apart.

Understanding to confusion,

And where do I start again.

Warmness to ugliness

How do we get where we started.

— Nichole Marie Reynolds

*Who can see the unseen?
They live in the in-between
Similar to you and me with just as much humanity
What hears the unheard?
Their voices are just as clear, yet we choose to muffle it still as if it is all too shrill!*

The Key

If it were up to me I'll never see it again.
The tattoo on your throat
Deeper than the surface; with you forever

I never knew you
And still you put yourself in.

All I can see is a key on your throat dripping with sweat.
I can feel you.
In this, nothing was fine.
Where was this going to hide?
The key was left inside.
Lost somewhere within it closed my mouth and all my senses were shut down.
It was left to me to find the key that would unlock the shit that was left to stir
in me. On that day that I gave myself permission to hate.

Your key was seared in my sites for many nights.
Where would blame lead? What would my shame feed?
For so long I allowed myself to be convinced that I was the problem.
I built up our distance to keep this all in one place,
Behind me and without a trace.
The fear of judgment kept me alone and heavy hearted.

What happens within when you spend your time unseen?

I hate the secrets that hold us down as less than them.
The hate that I knew then was determined to keep me far away from this
moment here with you.
This feeling of being the problem guided the belief that I did not deserve
to be fully heard.
Have you ever felt locked in a small space?
Where the silence is deadly.
Who am I to ask for your help?
What happens with your time when you spend your time unseen?

Forgiveness

In time I realized that in order to step away from my own hate I must
let myself out and into the open.
Open the mind.
Learn.
Open the heart.
Support.
Open the spirit.
Feel all the complexities of our human capabilities.
Open up this conversation so that hate can turn to learning and lead to love.

So at this moment I am grateful. You have listened as I spoke my truth;
Who am I to spend my time unseen?

— Paula D

Ides

There is a day in March to settle debts, take it. There's no sense of urgency in this city. just bureaucracy and strange notes on walls and wells that start brutus, brutus. Cut yourself from hip bone to opposite shoulder. Step out into the parade with the injury.

Aren't you tired of anatomizing the moment before. Static thirty years blue, pre-dusk, a kitchen timer. A baby on a doorstep on an island. Packed and shipped and at the last second the whole loss slipped in the box. The lights at the intersection are still blinking, the moon is stuck ticking in the sky.

this nowhere is the perfect receptacle. ~~Sitting across from her over coffee and neither of you can speak.~~ You in the absence while she's hauling stones. all that excavation at home and then you had to transition. your voice to the sea witch, it's Not Funny. Always leaving for more nothing. You just want your body back. Soft. She wants a cellar for the unsettled thing at her neck. It's water. You don't say. You made it halfway to each other but they blew the bridge. Fragments, you can't see.

~~At your place on a Thursday she's cleaning. The stack of dishes in the rack are growing.~~

Your friends with the war want you at city hall. They want you to disintegrate into this held time, whip the structure with the long tail of it. You & your rushing history at the threshold of the cafe and the street. Wishing for some dusting of god in the rain. Just to wake in a dream that died last April, let it go. It's time to upend, why do you wait. Was it too neglected – the little thing you left to grow in the shade.

Black Femme Harassment (in the Workplace)

How does misogyny put Black femmes at risk?

Conversations about harassment in the workplace faced by womxn¹, often exclude femmes, let alone Black femmes. However, in light of the flood in “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” policies, initiatives, and discussions, meaningfully including Black femmes is not only a matter of urgency, but is also a matter of our survival.² From not-for-profits, to legislative spaces, to unions to “non-traditional” workplaces, Black femme harassment is real and needs to be firmly situated and named in discussions and solutions to address it.

Femmes³ – a gender identity or expression that presents as feminine – experience unique forms of harassment in the workplace. To be Black and femme, adds a layer of oppression that is deeply rooted in anti-Black colonial history.⁴

Do y’all even know Sara “Saartjie” Baartman?⁵ Let’s start with her. Born in 1789 and known as the Hottentot Venus, she was a Black Khoikhoi woman who was taken from her home in what is now South Africa in 1810 by two white men, and was brought to London, England.⁶ There, she was put on display in circus-type spaces for white consumption as a “spectacle” because of her curves and big hips. Upon her death in 1815 at the age of 26, her body was exhibited at the *Musée de l’Homme* in France until 1974 in a way that emphasized only her curves and intimate body parts for the white [male] gaze. It was not until after eight years of advocacy, organizing, and pressure on the French government, that Baartman’s body was rightfully returned to her home of South Africa in 2002 where she finally received the proper burial and respect that she had always deserved, but never got.

¹According to Knotty Vibes in *Intersectional Feminism 101: What is Womxn?*, “The new modification in spelling of the word ‘womxn’ is finished in an endeavor to stress the concept that womxn are their own separate individuals [...] The new orthography is additionally seen as intersectional, because it is supposed to incorporate transgender womxn, womxn of color, womxn from Third World countries, and each different self distinguishing womxn out there.” See: <https://medium.com/@knottyvibescompany/intersectional-feminism-101-what-is-womxn-36coa3140126>

²For the Law Needs Feminism Because 2020 Forum in Calgary, I created a Prezi titled *putting EDI into practice: a Black Femme perspective*. See: https://prezi.com/4kym1maobsop/putting-edi-into-practice-a-black-femme-perspective/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy. See also: <https://www.lawneedsfeminismbecause.ca/workshops-2020>

³According to *Trans Student Educational Resources*, “Femme: An identity or presentation that leans towards femininity. Femme can be an adjective (he’s a femme boy), a verb (she feels better when she “femmes up”), or a noun (they’re a femme). Although commonly associated with feminine lesbian/queer women, it’s used by many to describe a distinct gender identity and/or expression, and does not necessarily imply that one also identifies as a woman or not.” To be clear, femme includes non-binary and gender non-conforming folk and does not only apply to cisgender women. See: <https://www.transstudent.org/definitions>

Unfortunately, this is just one of many examples where Black womxn and Black femme bodies have been co-opted as a sight of intrigue and consumptive focus, commodification and harassment by white folx.⁷ This also illuminates a colonial pattern of scientific racism and how Black womxn bodies are seen as ‘objects’ rather than human (via museums and other mechanisms) and of course misogynoir,⁸ just to name a few.

Today, whether it is in magazines,⁹ music videos, movies, books, songs, porn or workplaces, Black womxn and femme bodies have continued to be reduced to our lips, tits and hips. And while part of my Black femme-ness is being comfortable with my Black femininity and sexuality, our bodies are often viewed as an affront to white beauty

standards and white heteropatriarchy. Our bodies, our curves and our Black femme magic, are often seen as “up for grabs” via the hyper-sexualization of our bodies which can at times lead to sexual assault, sexual harassment, and in the case of some sex workers, it can lead to their death.

To situate Black femme harassment in “traditional” workplaces, it can mean many things. It can range from the assumption that we are straight, and as a result we are subject to hearing violent queerphobic and transphobic comments, to being touted as an “Angry” or “Strong” Black womxn and facing disciplinary consequences as a result to being viewed as a Jezebel or Video Vixen and becoming victims of sexual assault and/or sexual harassment.

And while the obvious assumption is that misogyny puts femmes at risk (which has been discussed and continues to be discussed at great length), it is also important to name how white womxn and white femmes too, benefit from

⁴In *An Act of Knowing: Moving Towards a Black Femme Politic*, Cortez Wright states “[...] in Black Femme, I have found a history of resistance and liberation grounded in Black femininity – born from the blood and broken backs of Black women and girls, but also their laughter and hope – that deserves to be uplifted and honored in our movements. I invite you to know Black Femme”. See: <https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/an-act-of-knowing-moving-towards-a-black-femme-politic/>
⁵See: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/sara-saartjie-baartman>

⁶There are conflicting stories about the way in which Sara “Saartjie” Baartman was taken from her home in South Africa and available records are unclear as to whether she was forcibly made to leave or went willingly.

⁷According to *We are Gay UK*, “Folx is a gender-neutral way of writing or saying “folks”. The word folk is already considered a gender-free expression however some in the community feel that it has gender connotations”. See: <https://www.thegayuk.com/what-does-folx-mean/>

⁸Coined by Black queer feminist Moya Bailey in 2010, misogynoir is the anti-Black racist misogyny that Black women experience. See: <https://www.blackburncenter.org/single-post/2020/02/12/What-Is-Misogynoir>

⁹In *Time Magazine's* 2014 *Kim Kardashian's Nude Photos and Saartjie's Choice: History's Problem with Fascinating Bodies* article, Kim Kardashian West was critiqued for “capitaliz[ing] on the public’s fascination with her body and likeness both financially and

the oppression and harassment of Black womxn and femmes in workplaces and beyond. Bottom line: misogynoir – misogyny toward Black womxn and femmes – is killing Black womxn and Black femmes, and it's not just perpetrated by men and masculine of centre folx.

I recall moments in workplaces where I leaned into “sisterhood” when I was being harassed at work. White womxn’s solution? Just leave. Don’t make noise. Don’t say anything, just leave. And this, exactly this, is what puts Black femmes at risk in the workplace: a liberal white feminist politic.

The dangers of “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion” policies, initiatives, and discussions are when it is done in and through a white feminist politic – a politic that does not centre or even consider the unique experiences of Black womxn and femmes and is dismissive of our voice and the complexity of our lived realities.¹⁰ White womxn and femmes often do just enough to “feel good” but not enough for Black womxn and femmes to feel good and safe. Hire us? Potentially. Ensure that there are permanent protocols and mechanisms in place which ensure our health and safety in the workplace? This may be a *cute* panel discussion, but not an actual practice.

“Sisterhood with white women seems to be a set-up for betrayal and disillusionment ... [thus] we need to stop looking for sisters and start looking for collaborators. These would be people who share our political vision and are willing to participate in collective political action”, Notes on Feminism, Racism and Sisterhood, Charmaine C. Williams and Shirley Chau (2007).

What we need are collaborators when fighting misogynoir. And in that fight against systemic anti-Black misogyny, white womxn and white femmes need to be held to account. Anti-Black racism is a health and safety issue for Black womxn and femmes, so convenient calls for sisterhood mean absolutely nothing when it's at the cost of the life and livelihood of Black womxn and femmes in workplaces and beyond. Black femme harassment needs to be explicitly named. And now that it has been, it is due time that our voices are being heard, respected and answered to.

socially—but when we consider that that fascination is rooted in the same (perhaps perverse) curiosity that turned Baartman from a human being into a museum display, it is not unfair to wonder just who is exploiting whom”. See: <https://time.com/3586176/kim-kardashian-saartjie-baartman/>

¹⁰Ten years ago, in 2010, I coined the term “white feminist supremacy” and unpacked it in my thesis titled *Whose Classroom Is It? Unpacking Power and Privilege in University Women's Studies Classroom Spaces*. While my analysis has developed since then, my thesis remains the same: “white feminist supremacy has pushed Black women and other women of colour out of mainstream rhetoric and has assumed a colour-blind politic thereby erasing different histories and neglecting the intersectionality and multiple identities of women” (Peters 2010, p. 70). See: https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/32338/1/Peters_Samantha_E_201011_MA_thesis.pdf

— Samantha

Featured Artists

5 **Guntaj Deep Singh** is a Vancouver based Queer Artist from Punjab, India. He nourishes his imagination to life through Mixed Media art, working with fundamental drawing elements like pencil and charcoal, combined with digital tools such as Photoshop and Illustrator; thus, inducing a rare blend of both. He believes that life imitates art, therefore periodically indulging in creative self-expression through his keen eye for aesthetics, intellect and fine arts. Art for him is the purpose of life, and the process of creation – the ultimate joy.

8-9 **Catherine Garrett** is a queer/non-binary line cook turned poet-journalist currently living in Prince George, BC. They were born in Ontario, raised on Haida Gwaii, and went to Journalism school in Vancouver. They are currently the associate editor for Dovecote Magazine, and a full-time reporter. They have represented Vancouver and Victoria a total of 6 times on national and international poetry stages, have two self-published chapbooks, and really love hockey. Their work has been featured in The Hellebore, Muriel's Journey Poetry Prize, Wide Eyes Publishing, Oratorealis, Turnpike Magazine, and Link Magazine.

11-15 **K.P Dennis** (the artist formerly known as Ann-Bernice Thomas) is a black, non-binary, multi-disciplinary artist, producer, director, and activist. They were the 2016 Youth Poet Laureate of Victoria, BC and are currently the artistic director of COLORQODED, QT12POC arts collective. In 2017 they were the recipient of the VACCS Community recognition Award and just finished a cross Canada tour with their critically acclaimed shows, *Monica vs the Internet & LUBDUB*.

In February 2020 they released a chapbook entitled *Growing Pains*, available for purchase on their Instagram @wild.womxn, and are currently working on their new play, *The Cowboy Church & the Arena of Life* in residency with the Belfry Theatre.

17 **Marion** is lucky to be alive. They have lived on unceded territory their whole life under the harsh rules of democratic capitalism. Under such systems of oppression, they have chosen to be a jokester, a poet, and an artist that tries to challenge the authority and rule of an unjust society. They're not the greatest at it, but they try their darndest anyway.

18
-19 **Yamikani Msosa** is a grassroots feminist organizer, frontline worker, consultant, educator and yoga instructor. Born in Lilongwe, Malawi and raised in Ottawa, Ontario. Ze identifies as a child of the diaspora occupying many spaces of the "in-between". As a queer black femme with invisible disabilities, she strives to work against systems of oppression that seek to silence those on the margins. Yamikani started teaching in May 2017 in Ottawa after finding that most yoga spaces did not reflect the communities that ze was apart of. They needed to find home and community, so started to teach Bodyfull Yoga for folks in larger bodies and collaborated with Kind Space to offer Yoga for Queer and Trans folks. Since moving to Toronto they have offered trauma-informed yoga classes for survivors of sexual violence called SEEDS.

21-
23 **Jane Shi** is a writer, poet, editor, community organizer, filmmaker, and dumpling-maker. These disciplinary hats converge in a lifelong interest in cultural reclamation, survivorship, and healing intergenerational trauma. She is a recent graduate of The Writer's Studio program at Simon Fraser University, and is also an alumni of English Honours and Asian Canadian and Asian Migration studies at the University of British Columbia.

Jane wants to live in a world where love is not a limited resource, land is not mined, hearts are not filched, and bodies are not violated. She has learned the most about the practice of interdependence, possibilities of transformative justice, and what it means to reroute yourself in a world of constant change from residents of the Downtown Eastside and from fellow sick and disabled, queer and trans racialized survivors. She is committed to continuously asking herself what she owes the Coast Salish peoples on whose lands she has lived for much of her life, and acting accordingly.

24

Ncole is an incarcerated trans woman living in Texas. She is a survivor, a gentle spirit, and a beloved friend.

26

-27

Paula D is a lesbian born in Costa Rica, adopted by Mississippi raised missionaries and lovingly raised in Alabama. I am called to create healing space within myself and the community I surround myself with as I learn. I earn money as a Licensed Massage Therapist and Grower for High Tide a Cannabis Operation. My creative pursuits are still forming but I am an aspiring poet, improv actor, and dancing queen with a dream to re-image community service with care.

29

J Lee is a queer writer and poet on unceded Coast Salish land. They write short fiction and poetry about borders and states of transition – migration, grace.

31-

33

Samantha (she/her/hers) is a Black queer femme in law who is interested in labour, employment and human rights law — particularly as it relates to keeping Black womxn, femmes, trans* and non-binary/gender non-conforming folx safe from the various ways in which violence manifests in the workplace. Graduating from the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law with specializations in public law and dispute resolution & professionalism, Samantha most often engages in work at the intersection of law, education and policy, ranging from law reform to legal education to legislative research. Currently, Samantha is creating a #BlackFemmeLegalToolkit: a workplace toolkit that provides resources and legal support specifically designed for Black queer folx.

