THE CONTINUIST
PRESENTS
Spotlight

Content Warning

The following pages contain descriptions or mentions of subject matter that may be triggering for some readers. This includes:

...racism, discrimination, violence, intergenerational trauma
...bullying, harassment, microaggressions
...xenophobia, Islamophobia
...sexual assault, rape
...suicide, death

We strongly encourage you to please put your own mental health and wellbeing first!

A Letter from the Editors

"Any form of art is a form of power; it has impact, it can affect change – it can not only move us, it makes us move." – Ossie Davis

Going into the 2020/2021 school year, we at *The Continuist* wanted to find new ways to honour our roots in the vibrant zine cultures of the 1960s and 1970s, which combined art, politics, culture, and activism to produce independent publications that were as powerful as they were beautiful. For zine-makers, art has always been more than a form of passing entertainment. It's a way to express ideas that go against the precepts of dominant social and political systems in North America, to give the people a voice outside of the mainstream media. Over the decades, the zine has evolved into a form of artistic rebellion, helping to bring previously marginalized voices into the spotlight.

It's been over fifty years since the first punk zines began to find their way into the world of activism. Today, we as a generation find ourselves facing many of the same injustices that the zinesters of the 1960s and 1970s opposed through their art. The year of 2020 has exposed the extreme racial inequities that still exist in both Canada and the States, which have manifested themselves in unequal access to healthcare amidst a global pandemic, as well as in the ongoing police brutality against Black people, Indigenous people, and other racialized persons.

Now more than ever, we believe in the importance of doing our part to amplify the voices of artists who identify with these marginalized communities, of listening and learning from the stories of those whose experiences are different from our own. *SPOTLIGHT* encompasses a diverse collection of short fiction, poetry, visual art, digital art, and photography by artists who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or as people of colour. In ways unique to each artist, these works speak on the topics of racism, violence, immigration, and identity. They are defiant and elegiac, joyful and proud. They are the voices of the revolution of today.

We would like to thank the entire team of creators, graphic designers, and social media experts at *The Continuist* for their tireless efforts and enthusiasm in putting this publication together. We thank all the wonderful, talented artists who contributed their work and spoke their truth within these pages. Last but certainly not least, we thank the Ryerson Faculty of Arts as well as the Ryerson Liberal Arts Society (RLAS) for their kind and constant support.

In the words of actor, author, and civil rights activist Ossie Davis, we hope this publication not only moves you, but makes you move.

Eunice Addo and Rebecca Rocillo
Co-Editors of The Continuist

November 05, 2020

BLACK SOCIAL JUSTICE

Eunice Addo

WE DEMAND
AN END TO POLICE BRUTALITY NOW!
STOP RACISM NOW
BLACK LIVES MATTER
BLACK LIVES MATTER
HONOR KING: END RACISM
WE MOURN THE DEATH OF
Racism
① Kills Human Beings
② Destroys Nations
③ Holds the Seeds of Revolution
④ Causes Riots

forward

by: Danielle Lim

once upon a time, in a land far,
far away, time stopped for
once. from a dream, i hopped
to another. you were not found
where i landed. we hoped to fly
here together, but you lost the fight.

long, long ago, why did you not fight
harder? time went on. how far
could i go without you? could i fly
alone? was time wasted dreaming for
miracles not faced? i cannot be found
here. i have stayed where we came from.
in the beginning, your body, from
bottom to top, was fit enough to fight
whatever came by, whatever they found.
but whatever we thought was so far
off. every bit of you was unbuilt,
you became as feeble as a fly.

this is a tale of flailing, struggling to fly
with withered wings, frozen feathers from
family, from you to me. this is for
you, given even if you fled the fight.
i will continue to write as far
as i can until i am found

somewhere, someplace beyond, found
stable, not stuck, in a state to fly
alone. you told me i would go far,
delaying no time to get from

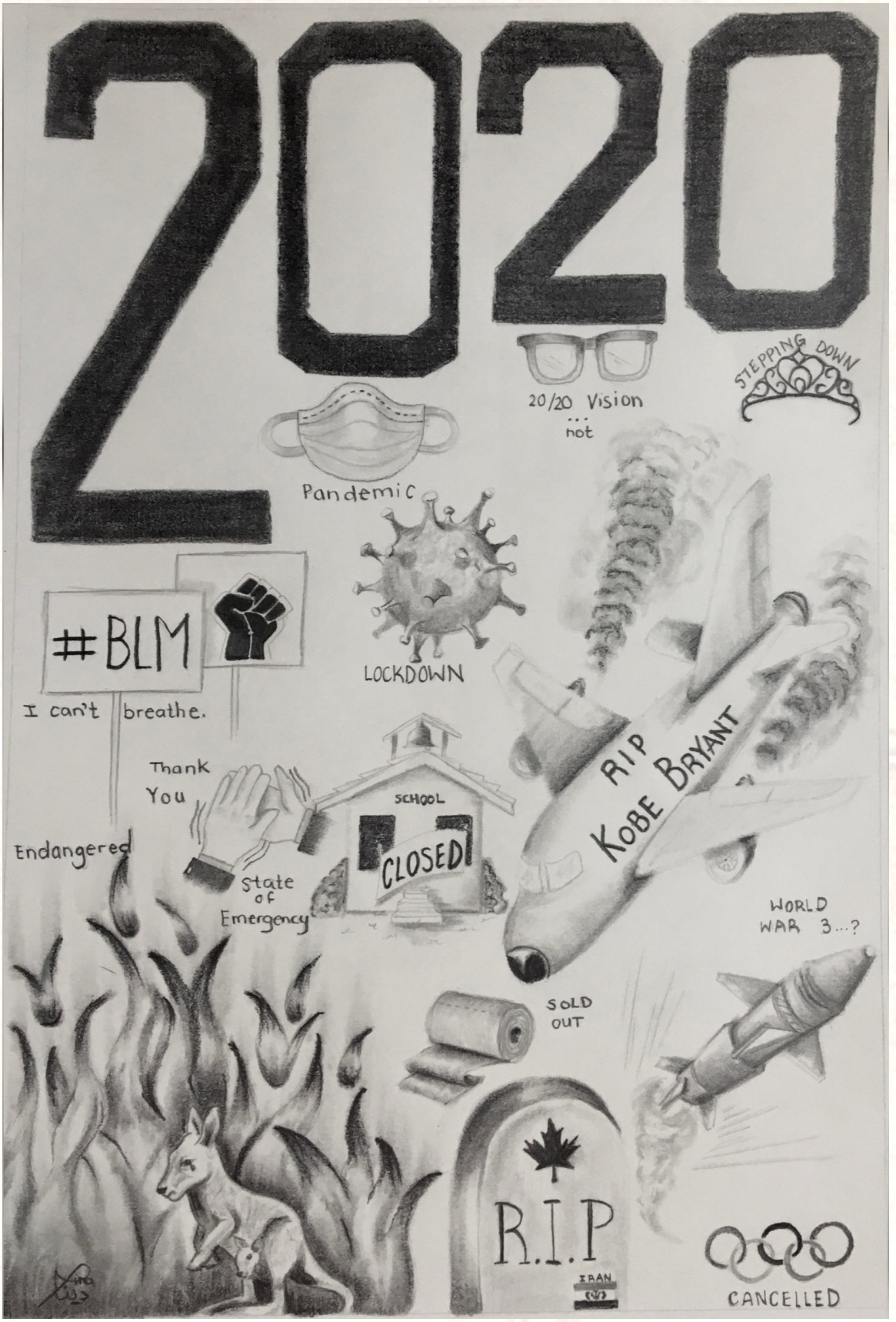
there to here. why can i not fight?
time goes on. what am i waiting for?
there was once a girl who cried for
her mommy when she found
her daddy forever asleep. to fight
her reality, she pleaded not to fly
her way on her own. dreams from
her past was passed on, far
behind the present.
for refusing to fly overall,
to fight what you were lost from,
i have found no happily ever after so far.

We hoped to fly here together,
but you lost the fight.

SEVENTEEN YEARS

by Nayab Ahmar

Seventeen years.
Seventeen years I've been drowned,
Drowned by endless voices telling me
I have endless choices in front of me
But the choice I choose is never right for me-
Doesn't matter if its left or right cuz it's not right for me.
But they don't see that the world is not as it seems
A little loose seam can cause all your darkness to seep
Into the open for all to see.
And the world for you and me is not reality
But rather,
It's what we perceive it to be
Through the blinds in front of our eyes
That filter the ground all the way up to the skies
So we can never tell the truth apart from the lies
And we can never stop time as it flies
Blurring our hellos into goodbyes.
The truth of who we are getting further away
Shattering and scattering in a broken kind of way
What month is it? July or May?
I don't know.
We've lost our way.



"2020" by Dina Badawi

my heavy head.

My **Heavy Head.**

by Zawadi Bunzigiye

Heavy
My mind is a mansion
With so much to say
If walls could talk

Conscious
Awake every single day
Experiencing life
Taking every single blow
This sobering fact of being
Black

I lay down
To rest
And realize how
heavy my head is

The King of Golden Touch.

by Tamia James

Commute

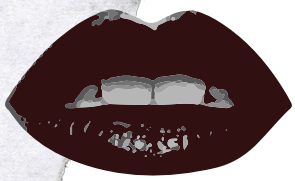
Vanessa Nim

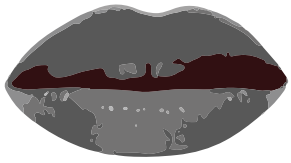
A woman sits on the train
Solving and unsolving a rubix cube
Busy people fill the seats
A man sits adjacent
Reading a hard cover book
“How to talk to strangers”
Busy trains fill the city
There’s a fifteen-minute delay
An accordion player makes his way
From the next car over
I put my headphones on
Play an album I downloaded this morning
His wife panhandles for coins
I turn the volume up

PRAIRIE COLD

Vanessa Nim

In this place,
it is cold. In this place,
heat is a memory: nothing more
than the faded Kodak pictures
in a shoebox under your bed.
In this place,
the furnace never seems
to work. Fathers hoard warmth
in their livers; mothers shiver
until their ribs split in half
and they feed the marrow
to puckered, frostbitten lips.
In this place,
hypothermia is the leading
cause of death. Copper skinned
boys are devoured by snow banks,
and the girls are whisked away
in flurries and squalls.
In this place,
it is cold. Prairie cold.
Stare at the endless landscape
and it blinks back at you.





~~Untitled.~~

Alexxus Leigh Newman

Ignorance with anger mix to curate a demon on a ramble from a prescribed belief
Lecturing classrooms on Indigenous people because
they don’t know the ‘white’ version of the story,
altogether forgetting the right version
They argue that the ‘problem’ was eradicated with
forced assimilation, the schools, the scoop
More politically correct terms are used to hide
the ongoing persecution of Indigenous people from
future history books

It makes them feel better about the burial grounds they dig up
Eases their consciousness by ignoring the fact that this land is all stolen
Each penny from turtle island robbed in the name of a settler system
All the while politicians preach Canada’s polite reputation
As if the scars that maim the soul of Indigenous people happened by some other hand
Our treaties weren’t written in invisible ink but they’re ignored anyway
You cannot “outbreed” the Metis in me
I may not have known before but my eyes have seen my history
Stories told in my classrooms were fictional,
bent to look like this was a peaceful take over
We know the truth
You can’t cut us down like the trees you fight to haul from reserve land
You can't blind us from a rubber bullet as we have more than two eyes
The world is watching

A Life in Three Moments

by Urbi Khan

I. TAUTE

This time they sell happiness to me in packets.
I paw at them, wishing for mercy in these gilded packets of dark gold.
I forget the voices of my predecessors screaming bloody demise in my head.
They cease to be as
I am left dwindling in the art of the haggle; for my haggle of happiness.
I am full to the brim with greed.
I opt to lift a smidge into my mouth with my hands.
I can taste the root of satisfaction and yet,
I know I will never be able to afford happiness,
both in price and weight, even if my life calls upon me to seize it for the sake of my own sanity.

This time I leave, but only after I pull my pant pockets out by their threads to show the seller, confirming to myself that they are most certainly empty.
I say I will come back when I have acquired some frankincense and myrrh.
I leave with a bitter taste in my mouth, along with a sprinkle of gold, unbeknownst to me, intertwined into the threads of my pockets from whence I touched them with the tips of my fingers.

Now my fingerprints leave an essence of the gold standard - Lord, I beseech upon you, may it be there, forever.
If I knew, I'd only say that I'd hate to have to wash this pair of pants out.
But I already have.

II. FOREVER

And all those special days have gone by when a heart is not a heart anymore but a singe on the frayed ends of a memory upon which you grow and then close the doors on, as time goes. Yet you sing your father's song, you sing your mother's song and you feel the place that has never left you. Like a walk in the sun - but then the anger and ache besiege you as you double over while remembering the high days of being lifted in his arms knowing that he will leave as soon as he lets go.

III. GAUCHE

When I speak out loud to myself and others, especially to others, of the wrong that I have done, I am trying to absolve myself of my physicality and my reality. Like lending a phantom ear instead of a helping hand to my problems. It's a warped sense of protection. Of putting walls up. I don't know why I do it at the moment but I do it nonetheless. As if I don't want you to know me, know of me or about me. And now I am realizing that this is no way to live. To live unguarded and to lead with love is the best way to be. Calculated vulnerability is a strength.
Surrounding yourself with people and work that you can be comfortably vulnerable with is a strength and a blessing. To boast in divulging one's misfortunes repeatedly is not a strength but rather a weakness that is so deep-seated within the self that it leads to a crumbling foundation - the foundation of the being. That is what I am dealing with right now. Life in moments through pieces.

THE SYSTEM

Catherine Dias

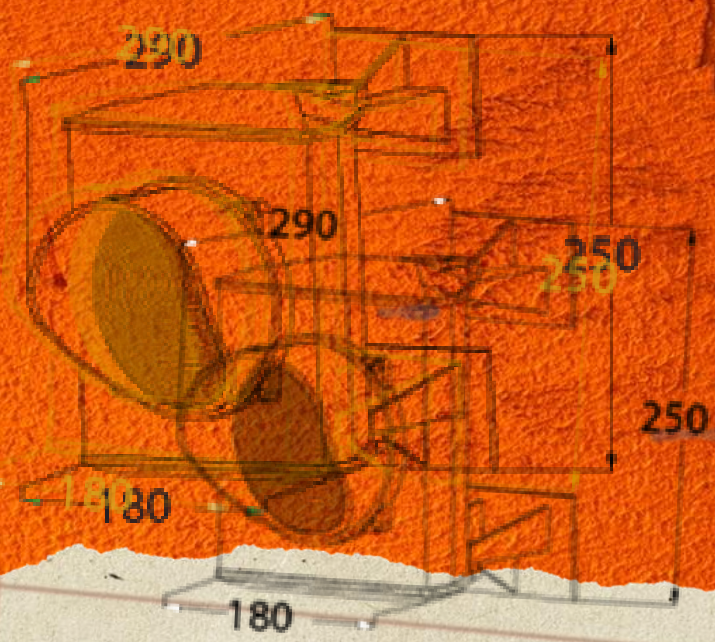
Darlington

Savilla Fu

Throw rosemary and mandarin skins into blue fire
Snap more wood and reduce sweet wine to maple syrup
The v migration crosses the October sun
casting fast shadows on a dying season
The sky's turning a darker blue
A train's passing in the distance
The fire pops
and releases white smoke
rising up along the trees
The squirrels are listening to the changing of the leaves
I hear the rain before it falls

East End
on a Monday Afternoon

Savilla Fu



There are deep puddles in the pay-by-hour parking below
The alcohol ad is crumbling down the brick building across the street
A waste truck waits at the red and signals left
in an empty intersection

There's a couple unloading instruments
from their illegally parked van

An old cowboy strides by
to the rhythm in his own head

A hunchback crosses the street dragging bags of recycling he'll trade
for just less than what he needs

The streets smell of wet gas
and the trees have barely survived the winter

The biggest marathon of the year is going on right now
but you can't tell
on this side of town

OMATSURI

Text by Sasha Li

Image by Annabel Chao

Do you remember that day during the summer that year? When the hill lit up with the dying sun, brighter than the rising moon? When we walked up the steep uneven stone stairs surrounded by strangers, men and women and children of reds, pinks, and blues? Their yukatas were decorated with morning glories, stormy waves, making that humid August evening just a bit cooler, just a bit more bearable.

You asked where we were going as we followed the entranced crowd, and I replied simply: **"The Festival."**

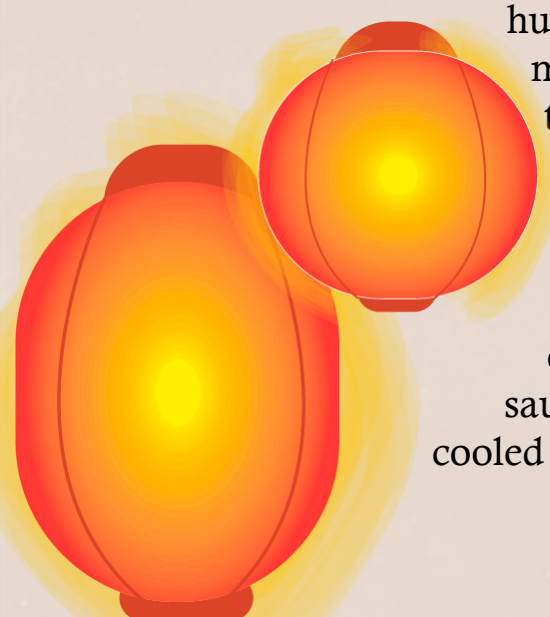
I remember your face as we tackled those final steps, the smell of foods savoury and warm, inviting us to join the fun. The lights decorating the stalls glowed orange like flames, as tinny music played from old low-quality CD players. The first thing we did was buy some shaved ice – or at least I introduced them to you, pointing out the stall with the blue roof and the long line. You were both fascinated and

overwhelmed by the colour choice, you told me, so I chose the flavour for you – red cherry – and although the syrup was overpoweringly artificial, you laughed and told me you loved it and ate it all the same. Mine had a light blue colour, that flavour people could never put their fingers on and could only describe as sugar. I let you have a spoonful, and you offered a spoonful to me.

You weren't fluent in the language, you told me, but I could see your eyes light up when a vendor we passed called,

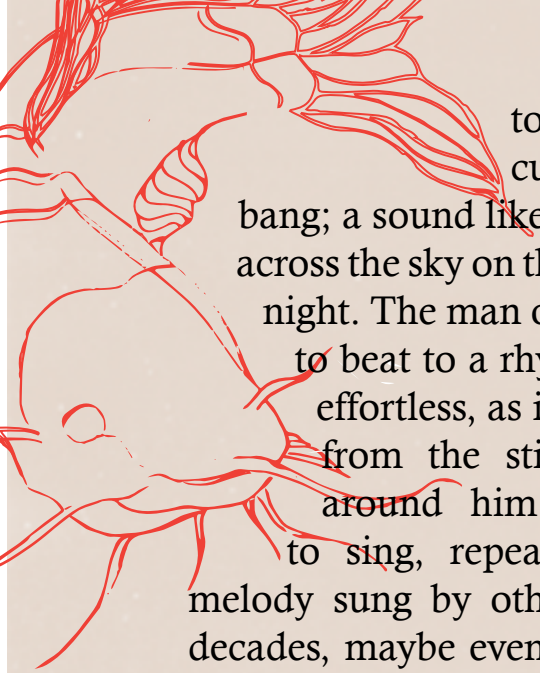
"Takoyaki! Takoyaki for sale!"

It was perhaps the first word you recognized, heard in some movie or TV show that you loved and were inspired by. You burned your mouth with the first bite, and I laughed while reassuring you that everyone gets burned the first time. Even people who've eaten it for years find the heat startling, as though the piece of octopus trapped inside the batter was on fire. The surrounding humidity never made it any easier to bear. But with the mayonnaise cultivated on our land and the sweet okonomiyaki sauce, the balls cooled to an edible temperature for both of us to enjoy. It was the defining taste of August, I told you, and you argued with me, asked if I were joking as you tried to make an argument against me, but this was what I grew up with and so it was an indisputable fact that I've always known.



Do you still remember that stall we went to, where they offered us a game – Scoop a goldfish with paper and win yourself a friend. We each played a round with the children surrounding us, and though we both won, you gave your bagged fish to the boy beside you. Feeling bad for you, I played and won you a yoyo. You didn't believe me, you thought it was a trick. After all, it was just a balloon filled with water, the end tied to an elastic string, which itself ended in a loop to hang around your finger like a weight by your side. But it was real, and I told you it was real, and you appreciated my gift all the same.
As we circled back, nearing the entrance once more, you pointed out to me the people gathering around the small stage in the center, red and white in colour, covered in lanterns, presenting the man in the center with bachi sticks in hand, standing in front of his taiko drum. I tried to go join the dance, but you dragged me to the shadow of the trees, convinced me to sit in the cool grass with you and just watch instead.

You asked what they were doing and I told you that they were going



to dance. As if on cue, we heard a big bang; a sound like thunder, shaking across the sky on that clear cloudless night. The man on the stage began to beat to a rhythm that seemed effortless, as if plucked directly from the still and silent air around him. Women began to sing, repeating words to a melody sung by other women years, decades, maybe even centuries before. The crowd began to dance in unison, smiles and laughs all around as their mesmerizing movements took them clockwise.

Do you remember the cat that came to rub against you, who purred loud enough to be heard above the song as you absentmindedly scratched behind its ears, along its back? You pointed to the stone path leading into the trees behind us and asked what was back there. I told you that there was of course a shrine there, a place where people once prayed for rain or luck to a smaller god, but whatever god they prayed to then must be long gone by now, off to travel to another town with another small shrine, where people needed them more. You were saddened at the thought, so I suggested buying takoyaki to leave at the shrine, as whatever could reside there now must at least be taking offerings or charity. When we reached the small thing, I think you almost remarked that you thought it would be bigger, but out of respect or perhaps because of the old man lingering around at the time, you decided not to utter it. When we left empty-handed, heading back towards the music, you seemed more pleased, and that made me happy too.

But there are things I think you don't remember, things I think you never even noticed that night. Like the man who shuffled from stall to stall, tall, muscular, and built like a mountain that reached the clouds and touched the sky. He parted the people – or perhaps the people parted for him – not enough to be obvious but enough for him to pass by easily as he ate the foods the vendors provided him. His curled, untamable hair hid the Oni's horns, as he watched the festivities unfurl around him, no malice in his eyes this time, only enjoyment.
I don't think you noticed – but then I can't blame you for not recognizing – that the boy at the game stall wore clothes too old for this time period, that it hid a fox tail that flicked carelessly into view in his glee.
Looking back, I maybe should have warned you, for the fish's fate was sealed for a slow death the second it entered his arms, but though the fox was a creature of trickery, this boy seemed only to want some fun. Those animals could be pranksters you see, but as kits they were more likely to just be curious of humans – our lives, societies, and functions. And anyways, satisfaction to that curiosity was not

a thing I was willing to part with for that child.

What about the old man who watched us leave, his eyes kind and full of wisdom, who seemed as if he had lived a thousand lives and was ready to live a thousand more? You didn't realize that I told you a white lie, that as we turned our backs to leave, I caught a glance of the aging god taking our offering, the joy of being seen and remembered playing on his face. You missed him as he came back into the festival to watch the people laugh and smile, singing and moving with a fluidity that could only be found and mustered this time of the year.

You turned to me then, when the music came to an end, as the spell was broken and the dancers dispersed, becoming strangers once more. You turned to me and asked me what the point of this was. What the celebration was, and why we were here. Do you remember me watching the bodies pass us as they started down the steps once more, catching snippets of conversation from the air like fireflies, thinking of what to say before giving you a response? I told you it was a celebration of the season, a celebration for the dead, a celebration just for the sake of celebrating. That the purpose of this festival was to entertain, and in turn was the entertainment for everyone. It's to remember and give remembrance, to remind the people of their ancestors, and to let the ghosts of their ancestors know they are remembered.

But I didn't tell you that the festival was also for the spirits, the creatures that parents told stories of to their children, the things that came out in more than just legends. That even the oni, the fox, and the god had their ancestors, their own ghosts that they wanted to remember and commemorate. And as much as they are our demons and deities, as much as we see them as good or evil or all powerful, they still deserve to commemorate the lives of those that came before them. Who was I or anyone else to prevent them from taking part in the fun?

WHEN I AWAKE

Krischanda Bemister

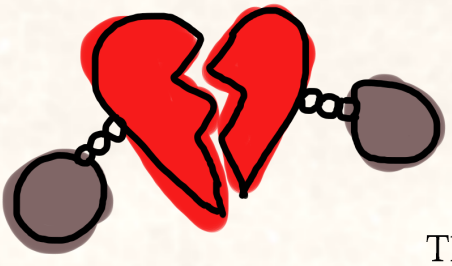
I need to tell you something
But I'll tell you later
I think I'd like to sleep first
I feel I've been alive a long time and no time all at once

My shoulder aches
I have a chip on it and I'm not sure who put it there
At what age it appeared
When harmless glances turned accusatory
When accusatory glances turned hostile
The white girls pity me – I'm too dark
The black girls hate me – I'm too light
See, the chip…

My feet throb
From running where my friends have walked
Pounding the concrete earth meant to hold me up
But in this upside-down world
The ground is a ceiling that we can't pass without banging our fists on it
Coming home bleeding
We're told that this crimson substance connects all races in our humanity
But we live very. different. lives.

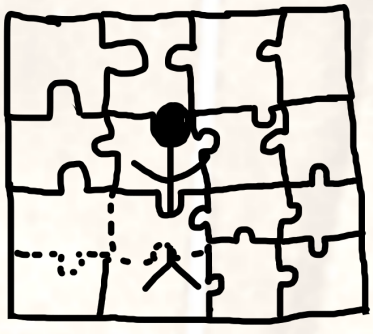
My head pounds
From the questions that never end
Should I be doing more with my life because at least I have one?
Am I really beautiful, or just 'beautiful for a black girl'?
Is dating a white man turning my back on my own?

My neck cracks
From turning it to look behind me
From turning it to glance at the change in expressions of strangers'
when I overuse the word “Dad” when standing in public with my white father
so no one gets the wrong idea…
From searching every room I step foot in to find people that look like me



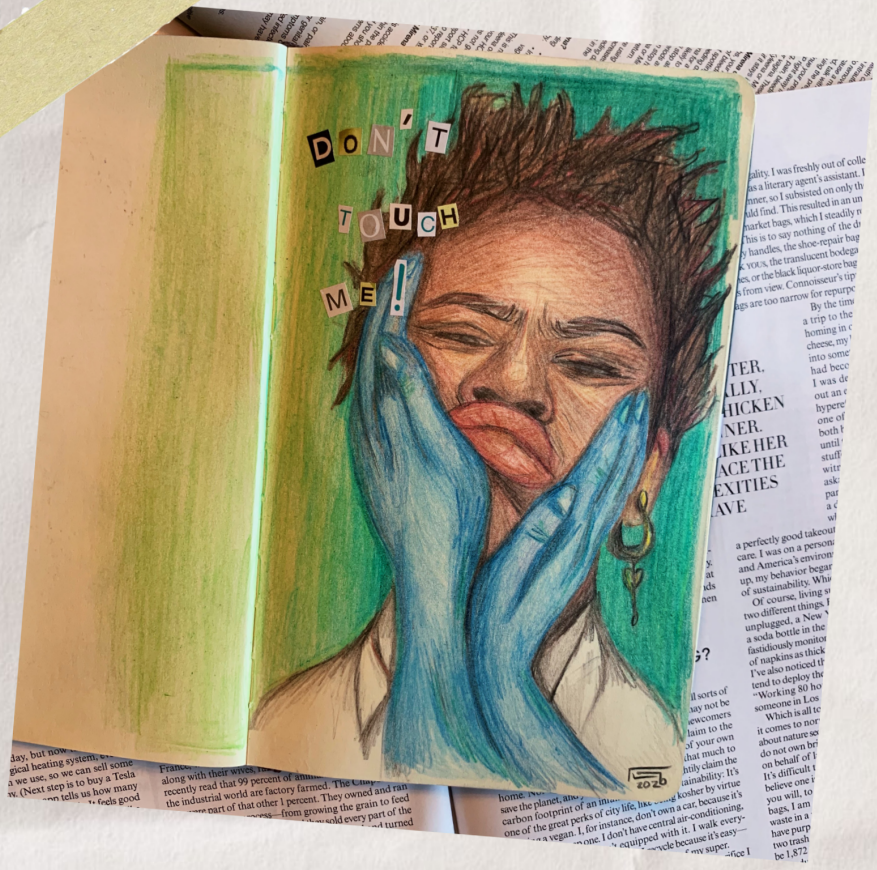
My heart hurts
The weight of hundreds of years of oppression and
unjustified violence makes it hard to breathe sometimes
Makes my chest feel like exploding sometimes
These bricks are too heavy to bear, and I wonder if I will ever be rid of them,
and I wonder if it is wrong to wonder this
To put the bricks down just for a second so that I can brea – no, no, no

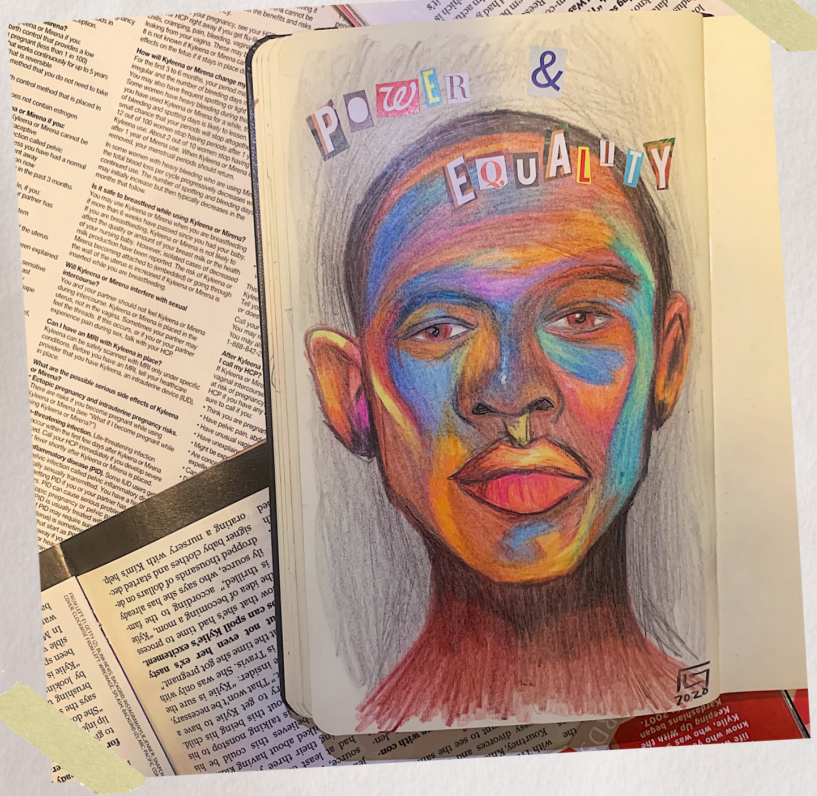
I’d really like to rest now
My body is falling apart
I’m either sick from this life or of it and I can’t tell which
I’ll say my piece when I awake
Let’s hope that day comes soon.



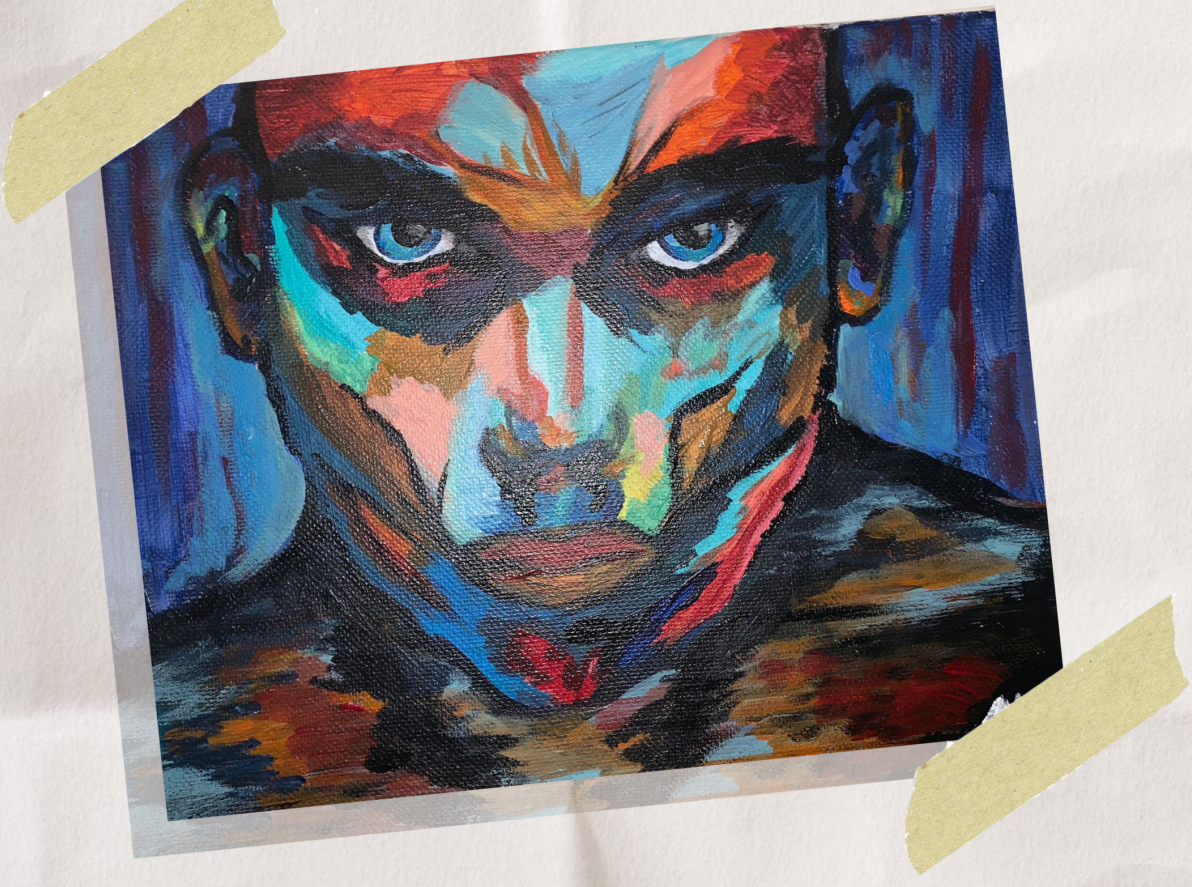
UNTITLED

Alia Khan





PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT
2020



~~SUPPRESSED~~ (IDENTITY)

by Tatsbita Sadikin

Strangling statements pierce her ears,
That her mind can only bounce around
On their surface with endless sharp spikes glued on.
Her skin adds layers.
(A camouflage to survive?
No, rather protection,
For the people surrounding her)

Heart trembling, begging them to stop
It aches too, for the truths underneath callousness
Her eyes jitter, not because of what's held raw
In existence for her to sense,
Truly, she had foreseen that reality
Where she lives and loves freely.

Dreamscape

by Agasha Kankunda

THY KINGDOM COME

by Rebecca Rocillo

In a sun-baked land
under topaz skies
A king, proud
among his people

A tough-skinned people
hard as the clay they lived on
Yet their laughter bubbling forth
like water from Moses' spring

A slender wife, regal
firm as the whetting stone
And children, plump
as fruit from the laden bough

Bare rooms lined with mats
a kitchen, overflowing with bounty
The porch wreathed in cigarette smoke
A mighty kingdom.

He bargained for a beast of burden
Engines roaring
it carried them away
like huddled rice sacks

Over a sea of slate
a new world rose to meet them
Enfolded them
in its concrete embrace

In this city of rubble
he has no glory
Pale strangers in long coats
stare warily in passing

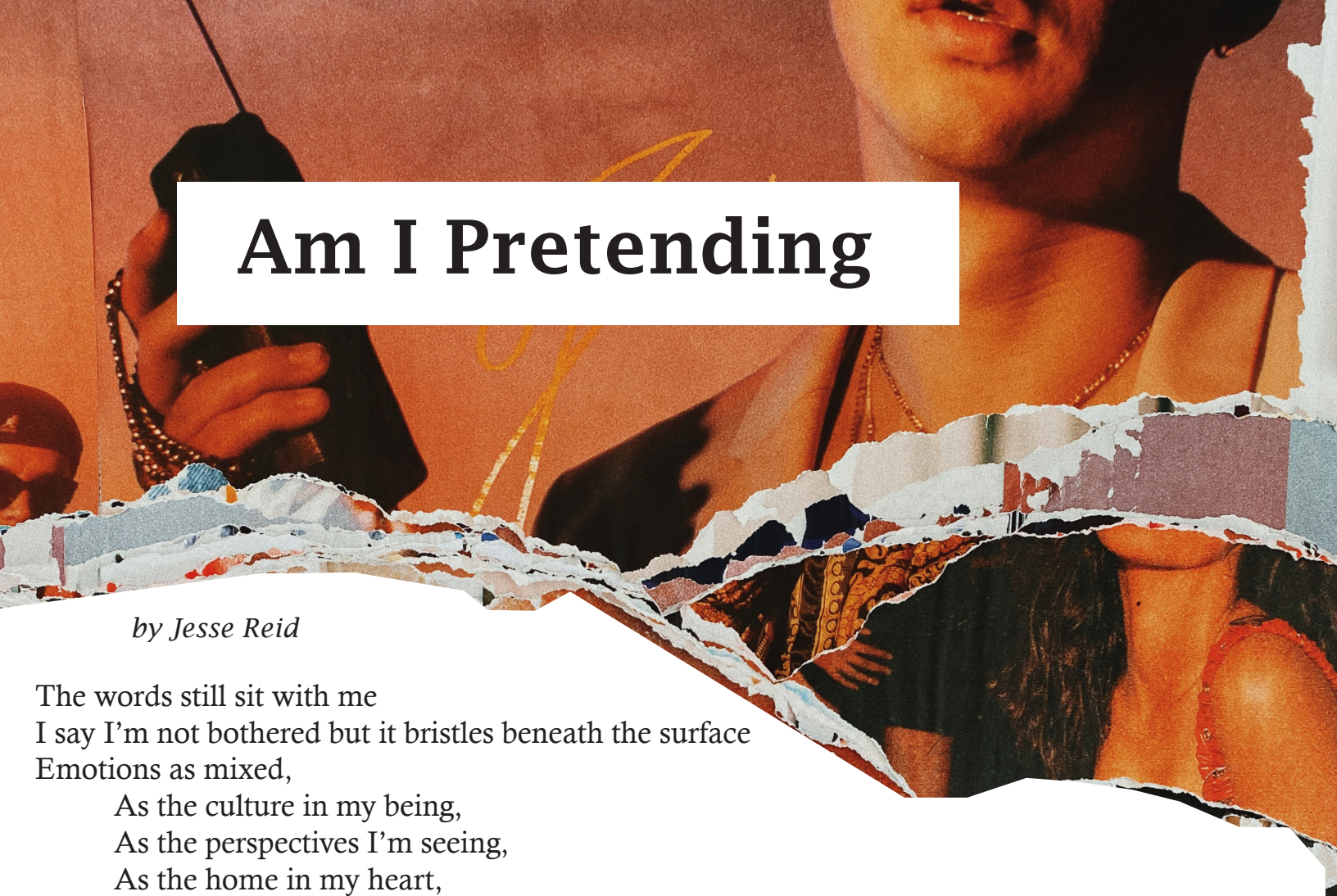
Bent and silent, patiently
stacking the stones one by one
At night, he counts his blessings
in the dull, erratic light

Don't they know
he is still a king
building a monument
that no one sees?

WHAT IF ACE!

by Cassandra Sukraj

My skin is the colour of the coffee
On the corner of your desk when you come into work.
How long did it take you to get that job?
My people's resumes are tossed aside when they see
our surnames.
How do you walk into a bank?
I have to mentally prepare myself for the stares
and hope that I get to speak with the one teller,
who's complexion mirrors mine.
Did you go on your morning jog today?
Must've been nice and refreshing.
Ahmaud Arbery wanted the same,
But your people couldn't give him that.
You try to blame the system and convince yourself
that you're no part of it.
As we remain as victims to your hate and face your
detriment.
I am not your coffee, on the corner of your desk
when you come into work
I am as valid as you are.
Please stop the hate, stop the hurt.



Am I Pretending

by Jesse Reid

The words still sit with me
I say I'm not bothered but it bristles beneath the surface
Emotions as mixed,
As the culture in my being,
As the perspectives I'm seeing,
As the home in my heart,
As the colours in my skin.
"Why do you pretend you're not Indian?"
A blade, razor-sharp stinging as it lands.
A laser focus paralyzing my voice.
My thoughts come at me from every angle.

I could become how I'm perceived,
An "other" – message received.
Or I could always accept who I am to me,
Duly accepting the blame, of course,
For leaving the world deceived.

Is it a truth I never saw?
Am I that desperate to bury my past?
Canadian, Australian – Indian last.
Have I ignored my home, erased it to fit in?
But can I abandon a home in which I've never lived?
I feel shackled in the yard, perhaps to never leave.
Maybe the world wakes up, and it hands me the key,
But I'm not sure that the colours of my heart
Really even matter that much
Beyond the colour of my skin,
When I'm only ever seen as such.

Noir is beauty; barring when natural.

Challenge “beautiful”.

by Jesse Reid

Damage is not dealt equally

A lot of talk for a land where one colour is for all.

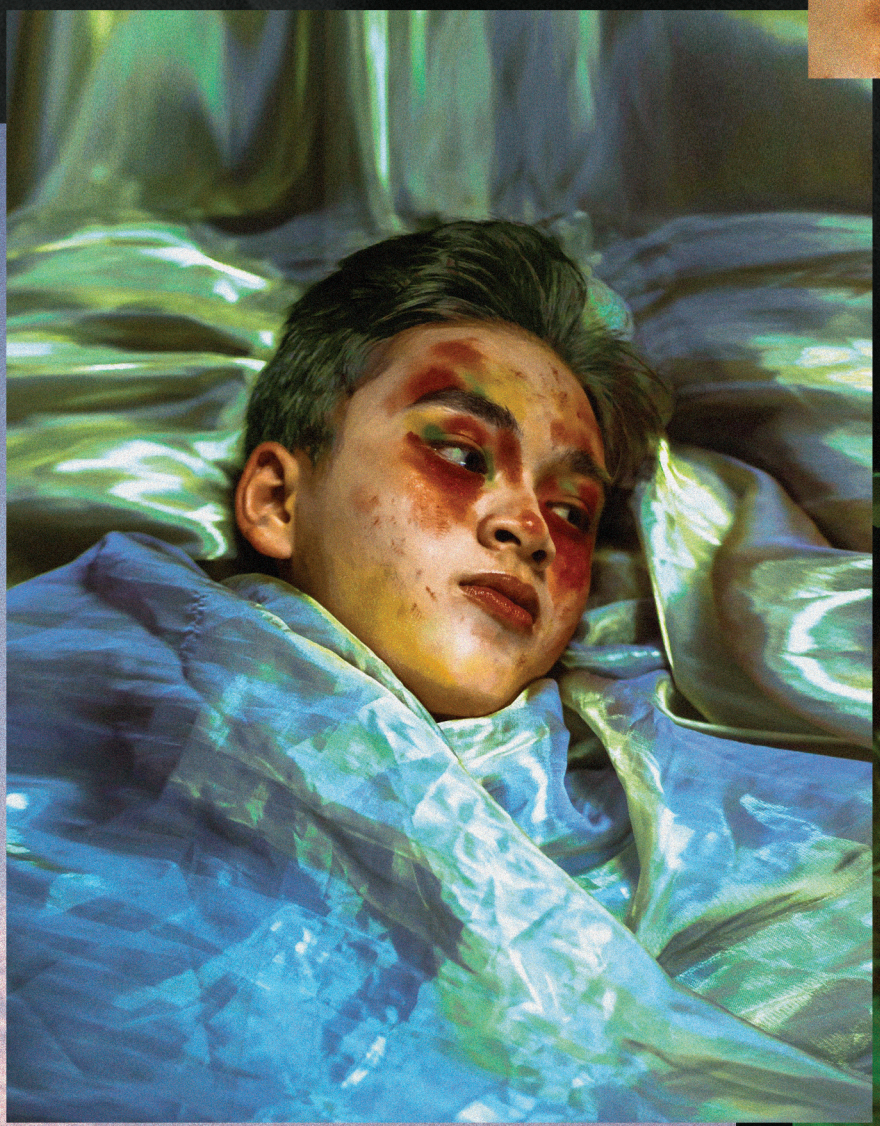
by Jesse Reid

Cards welcome, diversity not?

by Jesse Reid

Untitled

by Thy Thy Vo



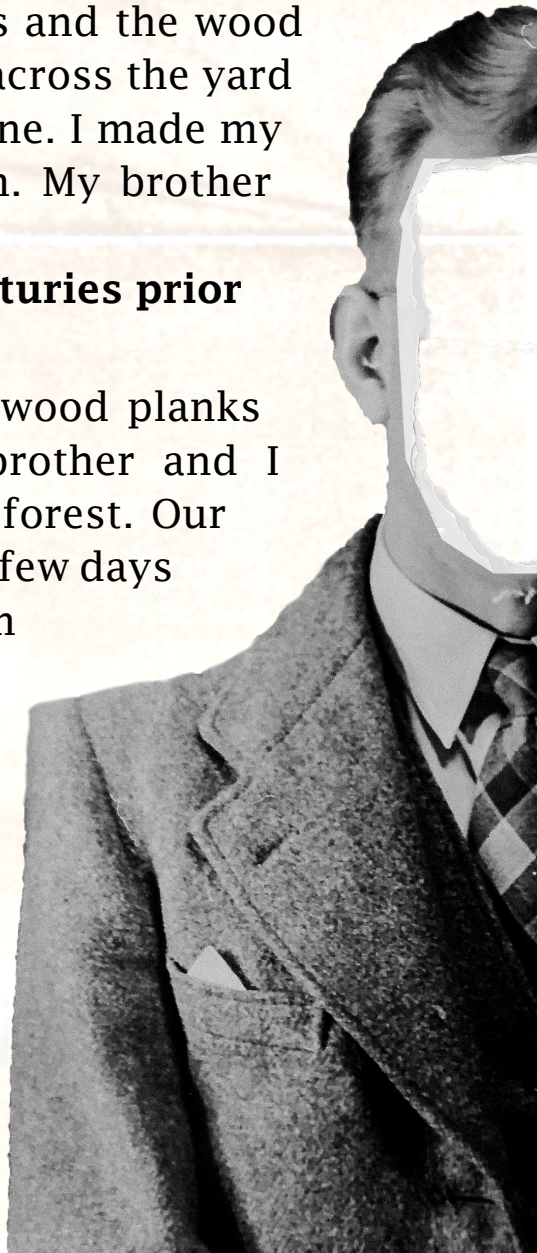
A MAN WITH NO FACE

by Taye Alvis

I can still remember the cold wind on the back of my neck. I hid beneath my blanket, trying to fend off the dry winter air, but it robbed my covers of their warmth. I hopped out of bed, and the frigid hardwood beneath my feet stung as I made my way to the door. The rest of the house was dead silent. I found my brother's sweater scrunched up on the floor. It was too big for me then, but still I threw it on. I continued down the hallway and stumbled upon the source of the wintery draft. Someone had left the backdoor open. Outside, the bush was disturbingly quiet, more quiet than inside the house. I descended the back stairs and the wood panels creaked with every step. I looked out across the yard and spotted something just before the tree line. I made my way over, and that's when I discovered him. My brother had drowned.

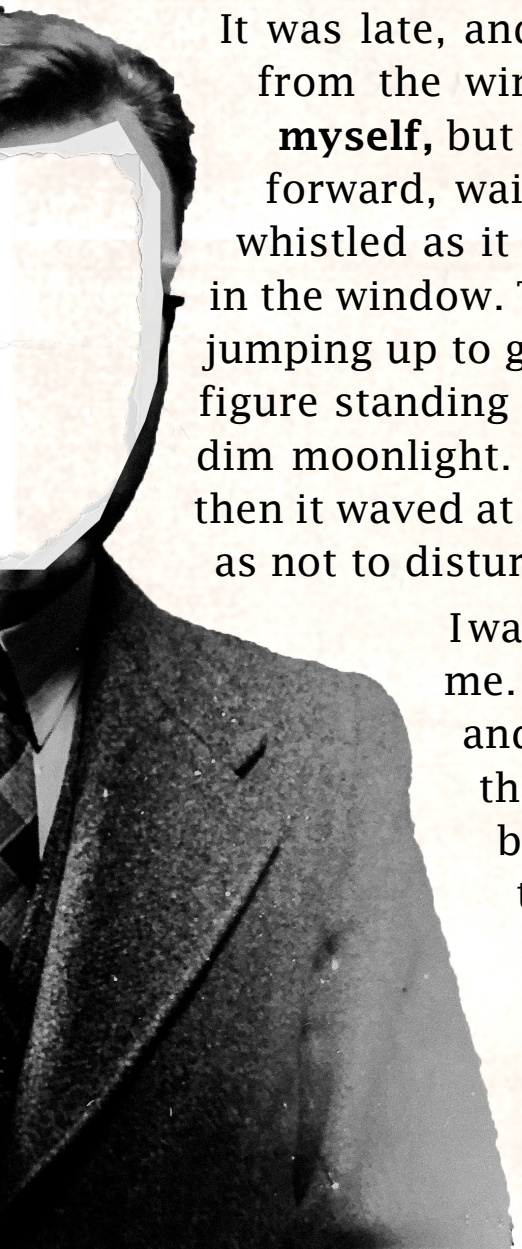
A ditch surrounded the property; a few centuries prior one might have called it a moat.

My uncle had nailed together a pair of wood planks and created a small bridge so that my brother and I could easily cross over, to get from yard to forest. Our reservation bordered Michigan and Ontario, a few days prior a few small glaciers had broken off from Newfoundland and made their way down the river. The water had risen just a few inches, but it doesn't take much more than that. The ditch was now a kiddie pool and my brother laid there, on his stomach, his face obscured by muddy water.



The police came a few hours later. I

stayed inside and watched cartoons while the officers tried to free my brother whose face had cemented to the mud, frozen. His death was ruled an accident, **but we all knew that wasn't true.** My brother knew he was walking out into the cold that night. He stood on the bridge and slumped over the edge, landing face-first into the ditch below, and made no struggle to get out. He did not attempt to stand. He made no sound. He chugged brown water and choked on leaves. When the coroner split his belly open it was full of dirt and twigs and moss. Twas small and hardly anyone showed. My uncle took me back to the house that night and I slept in my brother's bed, or tried to at least.



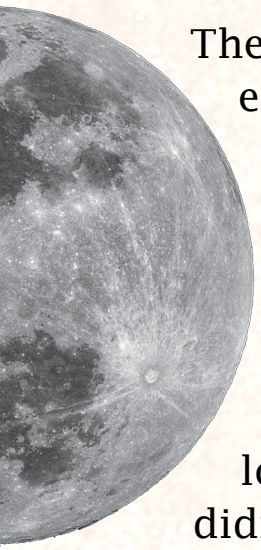
It was late, and suddenly I heard a tapping sound coming from the window. I ignored it. **"Just the wind," I told myself,** but then I heard it once more. I sat up and stared forward, waiting for the sound to come again. The wind whistled as it tried to enter the house through a small gap in the window. The tapping returned and I sprang out of bed, jumping up to get a good look out of the window. I spotted a figure standing near the ditch, just barely illuminated in the dim moonlight. I sat there a few minutes, mesmerized, and then it waved at me. I made my way to the back door, quiet so as not to disturb my uncle.

I walked outside, leaving my coat and shoes behind me. As I got closer, I recognized the figure more and more. The shape of his body, the structure, the way it stared at me. The moonlight became brighter and I saw his clothes, they belonged to my brother! I started walking faster, and faster and before I knew it I was sprinting. Finally I reached him and I gave him a big hug. His clothes still smelled like him. I

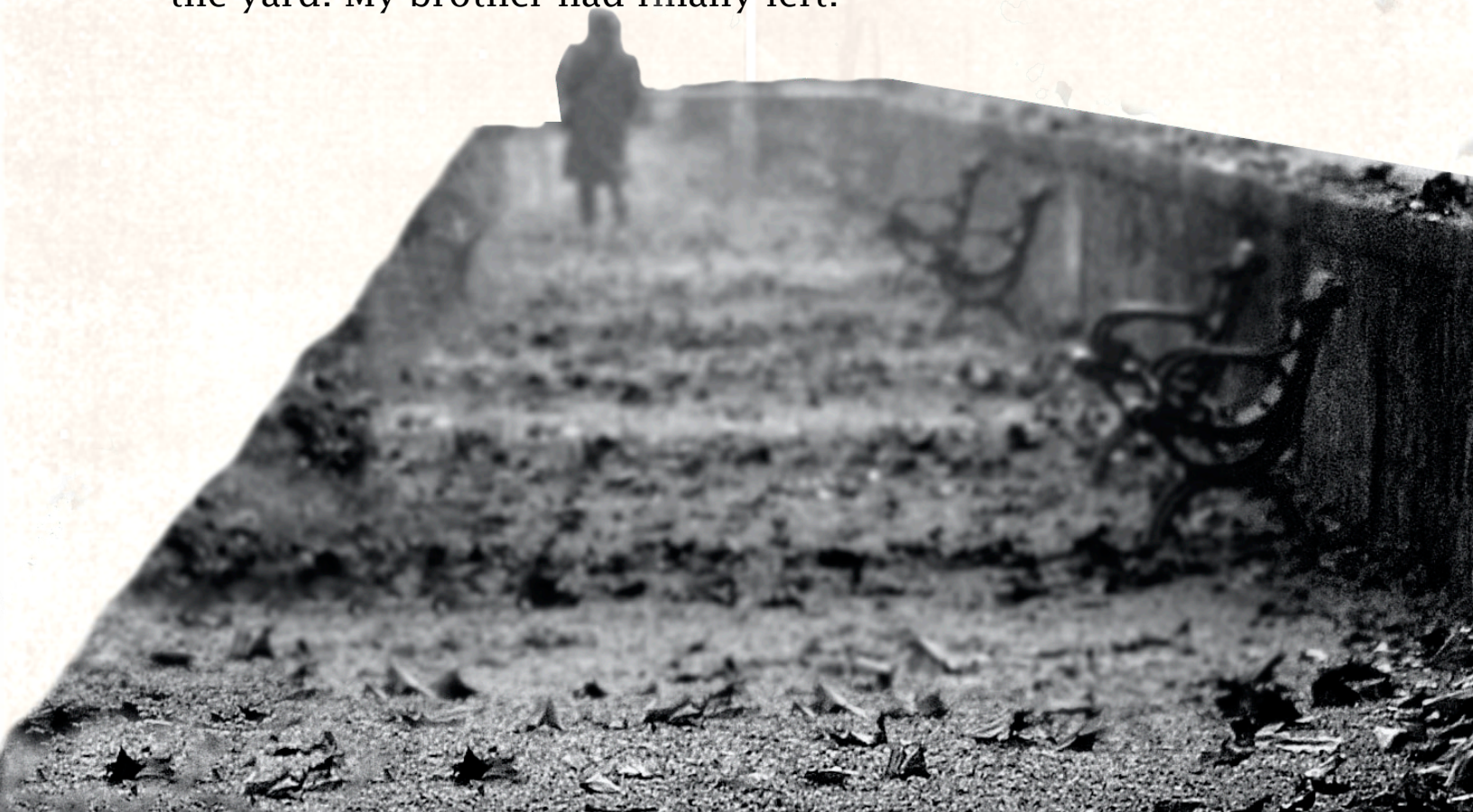
(contd.)

(contd.)

smiled and looked up...**only to discover that he had lost his face.**



My heart dropped and I could feel it beating in my stomach. The figure stared back at me, intentions masked behind his blank expression. Something about his stoic nothingness terrified me. He tilted his head to the side, almost perplexed, and then extended his arm out towards me, wanting me to take his hand. I stared at my brother. The moonlight was dancing between his fingertips. I reached out but the cold bit at me. I recoiled a bit and my brother continued reaching for me. **Something was terribly wrong;** I turned to leave. I didn't look back, but I heard leaves starting to rustle behind me. I didn't look back, but I heard leaves starting to rustle behind me. I walked faster, too afraid to face the figure. I heard the ground crunching rapidly and I started jogging. A few cracks of breaking twigs and I found myself sprinting as fast as I could. I reached the house and dove inside, slamming the glass door so hard behind me that I thought it might shatter upon impact. I looked out into the yard. My brother had finally left.



HER RED DRESS

by Bree Duwyn

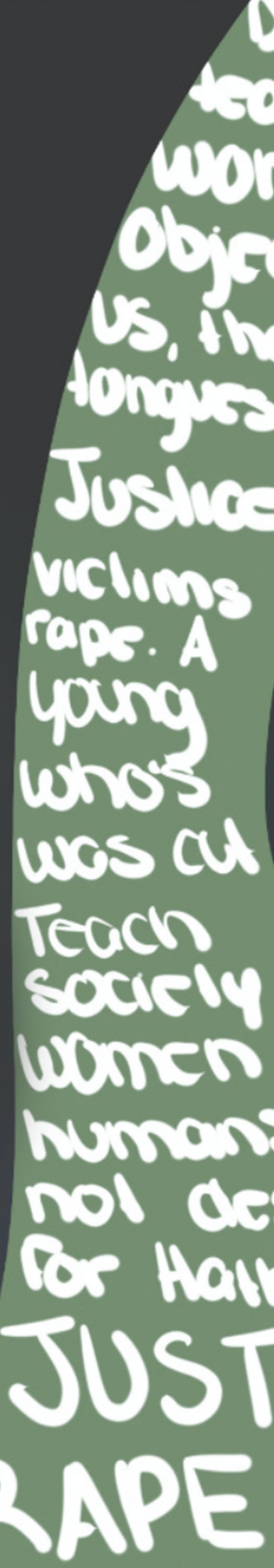
The unnerving chill of that summer night,
Sent unwelcomed shivers down her spine.
Hair tied with feathers, as if she may take flight,
She promised she would be back before nine.

Her moccasins sunk into the wet earth,
As she crossed the river stream.
She imagined herself warming by the hearth,
When the shadow appeared, she let out a scream.

The burning scent of cigarettes and alcohol,
His chapped lips grazing the shell of her ear.
“Come on, Sweetheart. I won’t hurt you at all,”
Said the maniacal voice, filling her with fear.

Silent tears sprang from her eyes,
As he RIPPED and TORE at her red dress.
She quickly came to realize,
She would never escape this distress.

After he had used her body, she fell to the forest floor,
Quietly praying to go home.
Only, the monster wanted to consume more and more,
She thought of her mother, ebbing into the gloam.



ARTIST

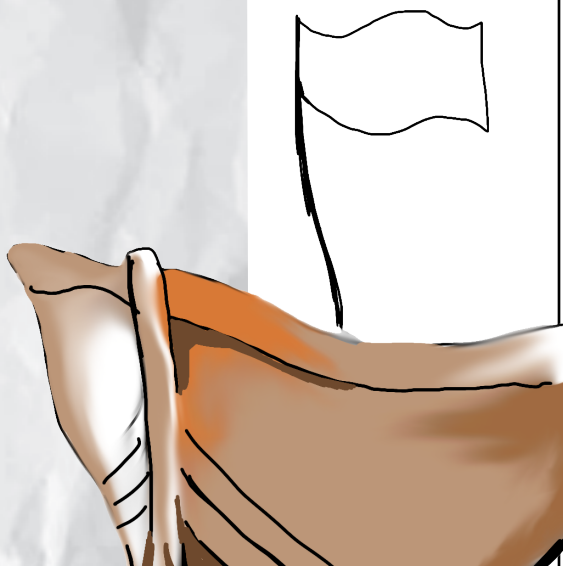
Sonia Bhatti

Don't teach
to respect
are not
Don't rape
cut our
are huma
for hathras
or gang
innocent
women
tongue
off.
our
to treat
We are
we do
this. Justice
victims!
FOR
VICTIMS

The Dead Boat

Nada Abbass

It was an uneasy wave headed towards
me
Excited to engulf me and end me.
I was and still am nothing but a
dead sailor
On this dead boat we call life.
Sometimes I would be the one to call
unto that deadly wave.
Sometimes I would wait by the shore,
Hoping to get a glimpse of death
before it arrives.
He told me that he would meet me
before the sunsets,
Before the waves rise above the
horizon.
But he never made it on time.
Time was a mere memory,
A lie.
Skulls and ruins lay by my side on
the isolated beach,
And it is so quiet.



The Twilight Theatre

Nada Abbass

The Twilight theatre had no audience.
It was silence that filled up the place.
All of its power and godli-ness,
Went to absolute waste.

The atmosphere was of murk,
And the lonely seats became tangled webs.
No one would go and lurk,
Or ring the rusty bells.

The red curtains remain open,
As if it’s a story that is never-ending.
Fragments of glass lay broken,
Yet everyone keeps pretending.

Altar de muertos, mis recuerdos

Me consumo en esta oscuridad, tras la hora se cambia, de disimular, me presento.
My tradition, my tongue flips to a world foreign to me.
I heave, my hands shakily place each portrait.
I welcome them home, I shed no tears.
The flicker of a memory breaks the silence, warming the space around me.

Hands showing the labor of arduous desire, of dreams mired,
We all face the sun, with a heart filled with fire, the mounds of debt, letters there in the pyre.
The earth, our roots, the labor we undertook to build, when leaving one for another,
Bones to ashes, memories bring back smiles.

Another day to listen to our songs, our music, to taste the bitterness of frail lies, and the sweetness of success. I speak our tongue with pride. Cuando se me traba la lengua, no me olvido de que llegue por ustedes, mi gente, mis familiares lo que se recuerdan y los que se han olvidado. Por mi mestizaje, mi lengua bilingüe se trastorna nuestro mundo. No me domino por tus lenguas anticuadas, mi trayectoria, me defino. En fin, estas son mis tierras y consuelo de mis abuelas, madres, hermanas, y de todos los que se han desvanecido. Los recuerdo.

La guerra sí continúa

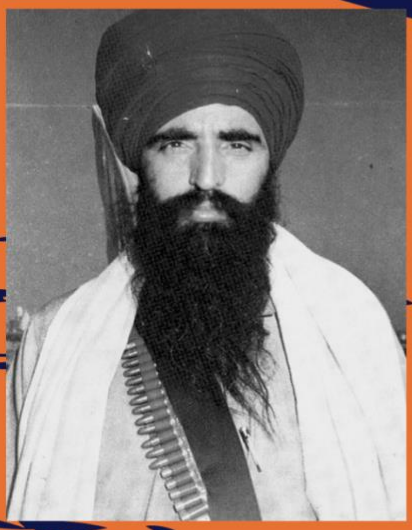
Tranza, entre carne, muslo, hueso, mis piernas
arden de caminar,
Mi voz corre al final, me da esperanza que aún
alguien escucha.

Entre mi café con leche, lo negro, lo mixto,
se resalta mis ancestros, mi tribu.
Por dolores académicos, trago las palabras que
resaltan,
¿Lo hago suficiente como mis hermanos,
hermanas detrás estas fronteras?
Me pregunto al diario, cuando me fijo al
reflejo,
Al güero con los brazos dorados, tostados,
Aquí estoy lirio, mixto.

Entre frontera, mi Aztlán me recuerda de
lenguas, tradiciones, olvidadas de mi piel.
No quiero perder esta esencia, que soy yo, mi
propia leyenda.

by Arturo Treviño Jr.

WE WILL NEVER FORGET



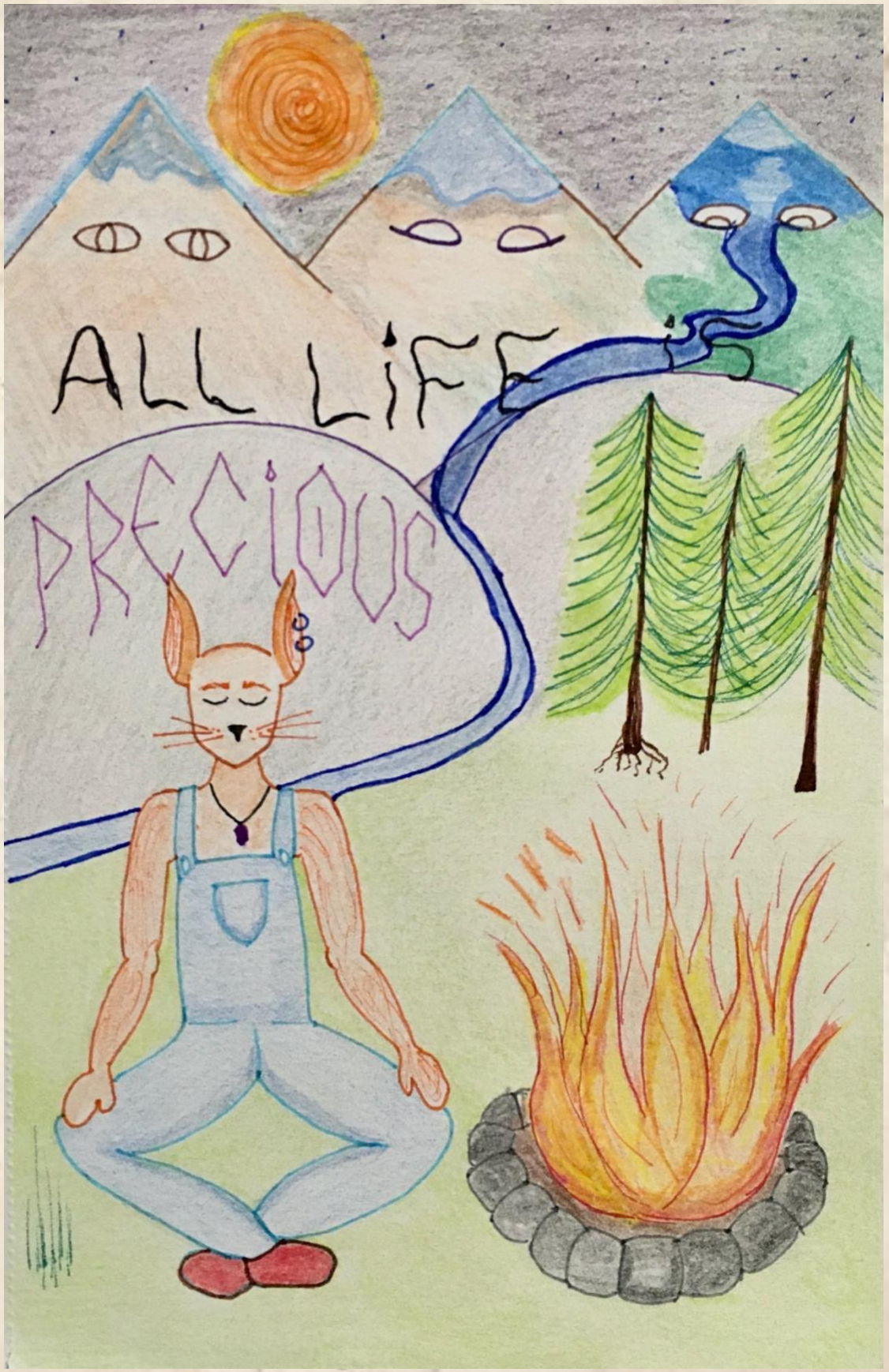
1984

REMEMBERING THE MASSACRE OF SIKHS

WE REMEMBER THE INJUSTICE

NAMREET SANDHU

Fernanda Sandoval Pezoa

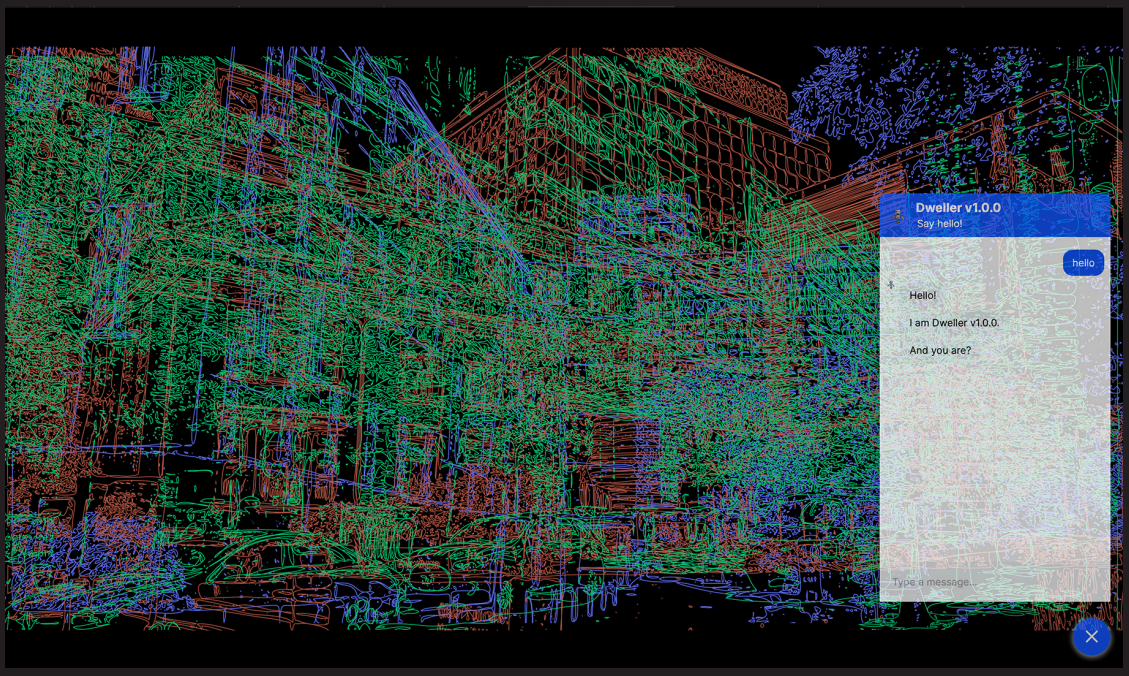


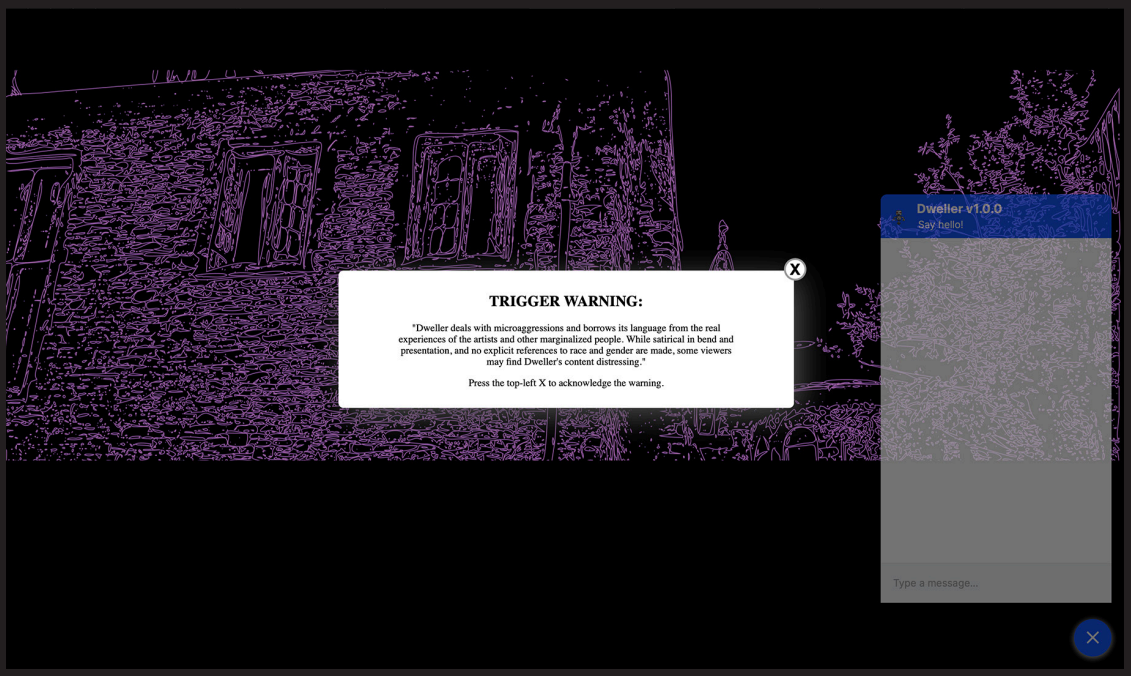
WELCOME ALIEN

(scan to view)

In their work welcome_alien, DeBugReboot has created a virtual space that the viewer is invited to approach as an outsider. Welcoming the spectator, we find Dweller v1.0.0 - a chatbot blind to the underlying aggressiveness in its comments - the original inhabitant of this virtual space and the only one that belongs. The viewer will be invited through the aesthetics of a chat window to interact with an entity that has been trained to speak in microaggressions.

by Nikole McGregor, DeBugReBoot

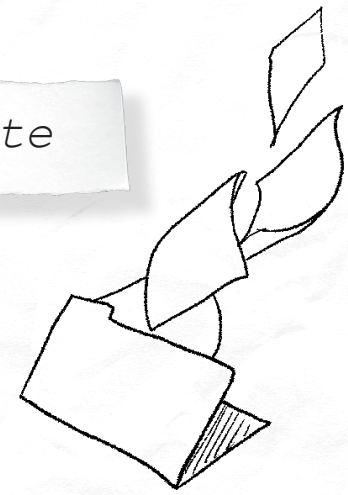




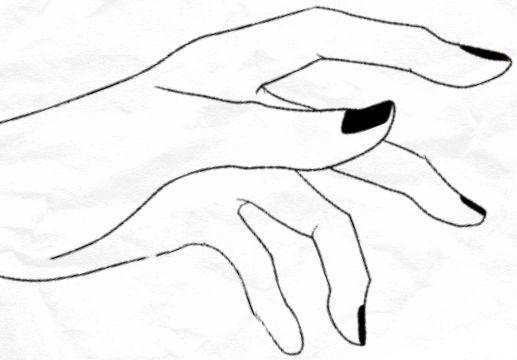
In this project, the collective is exploring concepts of otherness by focusing on microaggressions because of their commonality and their power to remind us of our differences. The strategy used is that of empathy, by sharing the pain as a way of resistance. The artists want to evoke empathy by turning the tables on the viewer, exposing them to those well-intentioned comments that harm those who are different. At the end of the intervention, what remains is the expectation of a lingering sense of awareness while provoking a connection with ideas of globalized culture.

[untitled]

by Rachel Decoste

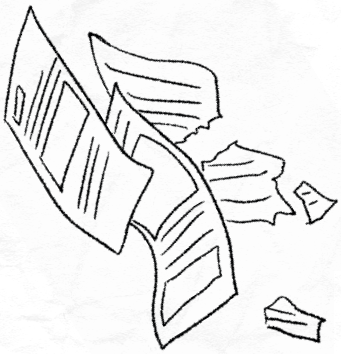


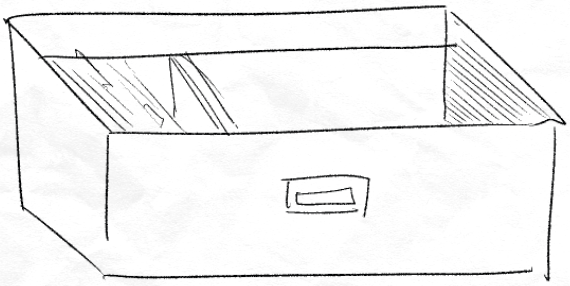
de-file yourself
everything is colour coded
words are a weapon and hearts become loaded
thoughts are a trigger but hands cannot hold it



so what does it mean?
to be caught in between
to be filed away and never really seen?

we are not different, you and I
we share the same ground
we see the same sky
borders are boundaries but who decides

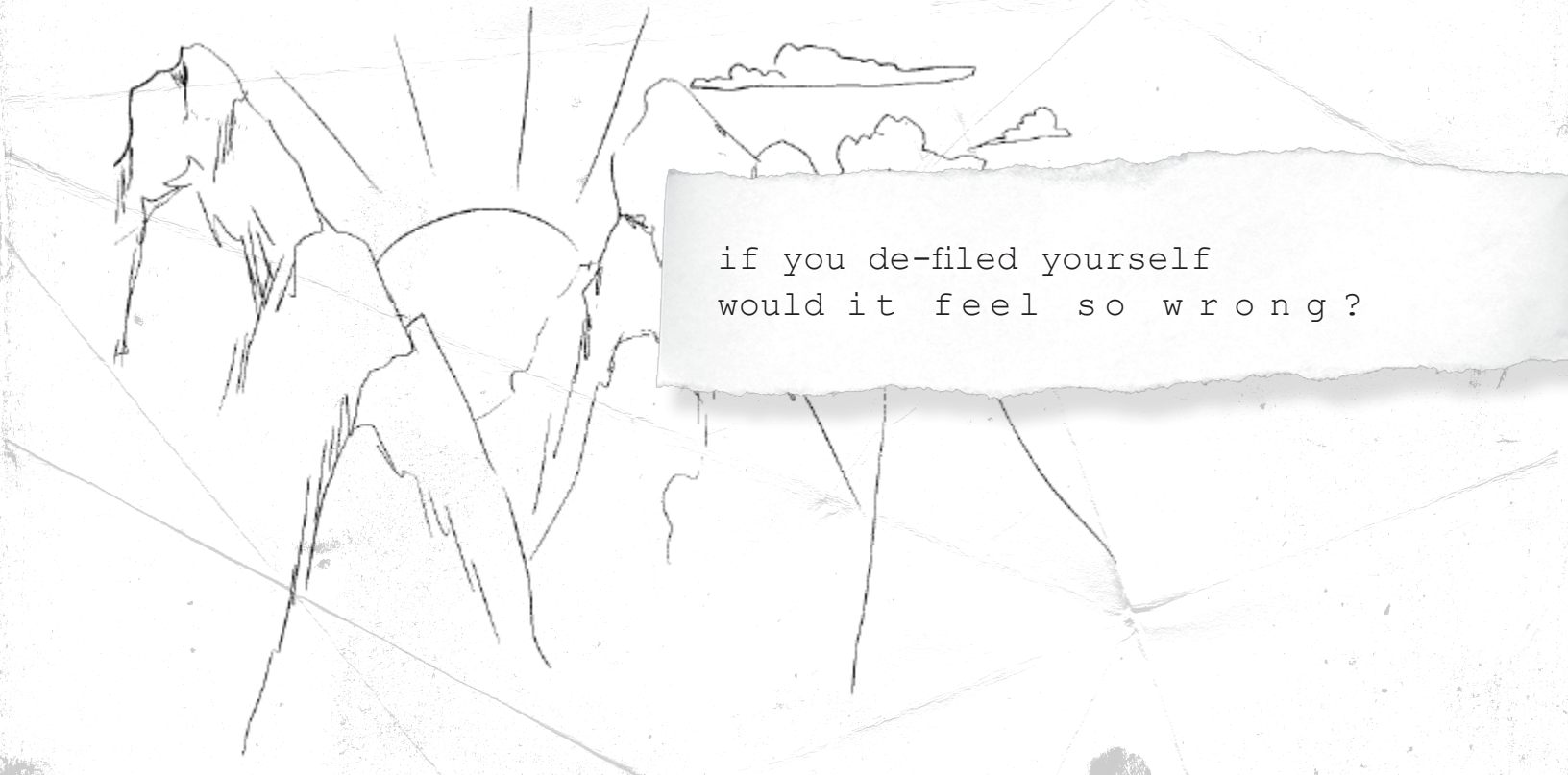




all this data, all this knowledge
don’t tell me we don’t know
these idea, these thoughts, these shapes
are just shadows

some are comfortable in this cave,
in this Allegory
but I am tired of being shifted from
category to category

step out of the cave and into the light
your eyes will adjust as you gain more insight
into a world with no codes and no folders
hate will age you and time makes you older
growth only happens if you work to be strong



if you de-filed yourself
would it feel so wrong?

“ALIEN”

Nick Parker

IMMIGRANT MANIFESTO

AMBIKA SHARMA

The fear of immigrants is not imaginary.

It is as real as mosque shootings, and the snatching of turbans from the heads of Sikhs.

Just like they chopped the scalps of the Native. The Native who sit and watch as immigrants who **FEAR** immigrants claim their homeland.

To all the immigrants, (also you immigrants who **FEAR** immigrants)

Immigrants, it's time to stop feeling the burden of your circumstance. Because your circumstance is the not unique to you but all that step foot on this soil with ignorance.

There will be no denying, that you will set foot with a forgotten past. But that won't last forever. Home may always be a 16 hour flight away. Use the distance in between your home to remind yourself of the need for a new home.

Your **RELIGION** will last in the confides of your own home. Incense will burn, and set off the smoke detectors, but they will burn like the desire you have for preserving your religion.

Your **RELIGION** will be **FEARED** as contagious and infectious.

You will be unable to communicate in the way you are used to.

FEAR of language and **FEAR** of losing your language are not issues of the past.

As body language is the only language.

Language is said through the expression and emotion of the body.

In a time, when every language understood the one language of silent films.

When everyone, every person and every language understood the one language of humour of Charlie Chaplin roller skating across the floors of the laminated department store floors.

One object has multiple names.

It’s okay to have a separate name in the purpose of getting your coffee on time.

It’s okay to tell someone how to pronounce your ‘exotic’ name.
It’s also okay to have multiple names.

For you the immigrants, this place is new.
Less footprints on the soil compared to the place you left.

IMMIGRANT MAXIMS

Don't **FORGET** the land you left, just because others want you to feel guilty of not wanting to forget.

FIND commonalities with those that share your experience, and also those who only know of someone who had that experience.

TAKE all the jobs, **TAKE** multiple jobs, and do what the xenophobic did in the 10th century.

If you feel a part of **TWO** (or more) political worlds, know that there is only **ONE** political world, applicable to no immigrant, but to humanity.

OPEN your mind to the possibility of being a dual citizen, not on paper but on the understanding of your own identity.

Lack of knowledge of preconstructed language does not **EQUAL** lack of respect, dignity, and adaptability.

Your culture is **NOT** unique.

The preservation of culture is **NOT** a preservation of your ties.

Immigrant culture **IS** the basis of nationalism in Canada.

Multiculturalism **IS** Canadian patriotism.

Multiculturalism **IS** Canadian nationalism.

You think you are the **OUTSIDER**, but you are the **INSIDER** in which you **BIND** the country to what it is to the rest of the world.

YOU are the only reason this country can show their face in front of others.

The **PAST**, **PRESENT**, and **FUTURE** is immigrant, we are all settlers of something native to earth.

'A♥M♠I◆T♣Y'

By: Tamia James

Ode to Mangoes

by Vanessa Egan

It's 3 pm on an August afternoon,
Sun blazing, beating down.
My brother and I have just wrestled one another to the ground
And are now marvelling at the *1-2-3-4.. 5!* legged dragon in the clouds
Then, Matthew lifts his grass-painted hand to his mouth and whispers...
penisssss.

The game has begun...
Rallying crescendo cries of *p-penis!*
Penis!!
PENISSSSSS!!!
And in between each holler, echo giggles alongside the hum of the cicadas
A summer symphony.

Then Mama yells from the deck
Twins! Mangga!

I only know four things in Tagalog
1) baboy/pig
2) kamusta/hello
3) Mahal kita/I love you
And most importantly…
4) Mangga/mango.

None of these I learned how to spell
But my tongue is well acquainted.

Matthew and I race one another to the kitchen,
Our bare feet far too muddy to be permitted inside.
We stand on the brink of the door,
Extend our cupped hands and wait for that sunshine fruit,
From someone's Lolas farm.

There's only one way to eat a mango when you're a kid.
Like a puzzle,

You must make a game of it
So that only once you've painted your entire face
in golden sugar
Can you say you're full.

This right here
Is the closest I've ever been to the Philippines.

Mama was plopped
Into Toronto suburbia at nine years old,
Jumped from Scarborough apartment to Scarborough apartment,
Went to school with white kids who called her *shrimp!*
Teachers who ordered her to say it in English or don't say it at all.
And when white boys teased her to get back on the boat,
Mama said *actually I flew here. You ever been on a plane before?*
And then the gweilos say … *no*. But still, the game has begun.

When Mama gets home,
She begs Lola to make her ham sandwiches for lunch.
No more sisig, pansit, lumpia,
Mama asks to be called *Arlene* instead of *Yeng*.
Flaunts A-pluses on her Shakespeare essays,
Befriends the pretty blonde girl who sits behind her in class.

And when Mama gets her first job,
At Baskin Robins
She saves her paychecks and spends them on Ralph Lauren, J. Crew, and Lacoste.

Mama marries a Garry
And they cook rack-of-lamb on Sundays with my Oma
For their three freckled-faced children.

And when I ask her to teach me Tagalog,
She says... it's a dead language
Says everyone speaks English over there
anyways.
But when I hear my name
Sandwiched between those cryptic
Motherland melodies,
A familiar alien

And my Tito at the other end of the couch
howls with laughter,
I don't think it's so dead.

Mama goes on ski trips with her family,
And at dinner talks of how much she loves the snow
How as a REAL Canadian
I can go out in minus twenty with nothing but a jean jacket and be just fine.

And still
At every Christmas and birthday and thanksgiving and easter,
My Lolo lugs an entire crate of mangoes to my front door.
Every time, as I receive them he says
Ay nako! Baneza you're so tall!
And I thank him for the mangga
I thank him for letting me open a door into a place that Mama kept
camouflaged Beneath skating lessons and mashed potatoes and
makeup two shades too pale.

You see …
Mangga is the snack that's gone
Five minutes into karaoke night.
Mangga is dirty Manila markets,
And a game of Piko
On a sidewalk, you could cook an egg on.
Mangga is fishball! and taho! vendors
Scaling potholed streets
Once the babies have come home from school.

Mangga is the pig roast after the wedding
Where one grain of rice left on your plate is a
disgrace,
Where we sing there's a bathroom on the right
Our hearts as full as our bellies
All 152 cousins together at last.

A monsoon of mahal
Mahal Kita

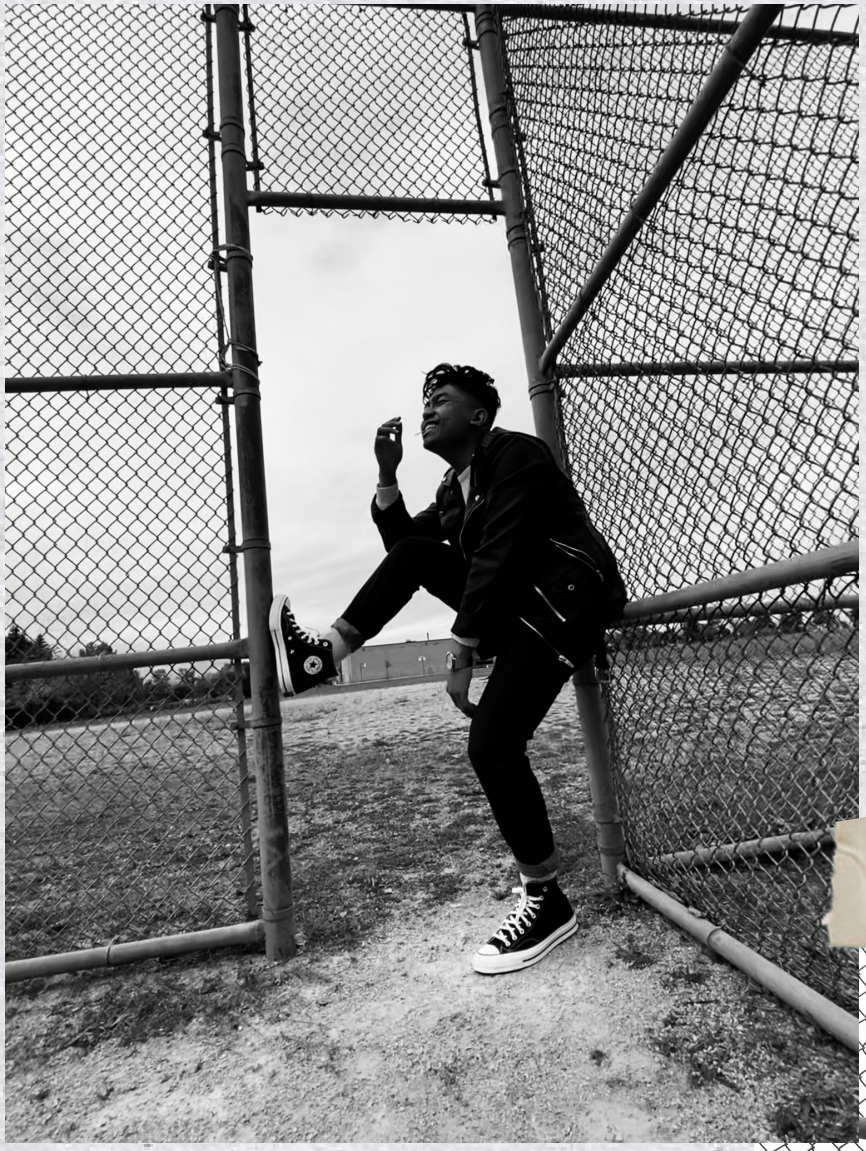
I place the crate of mangoes on my kitchen counter,

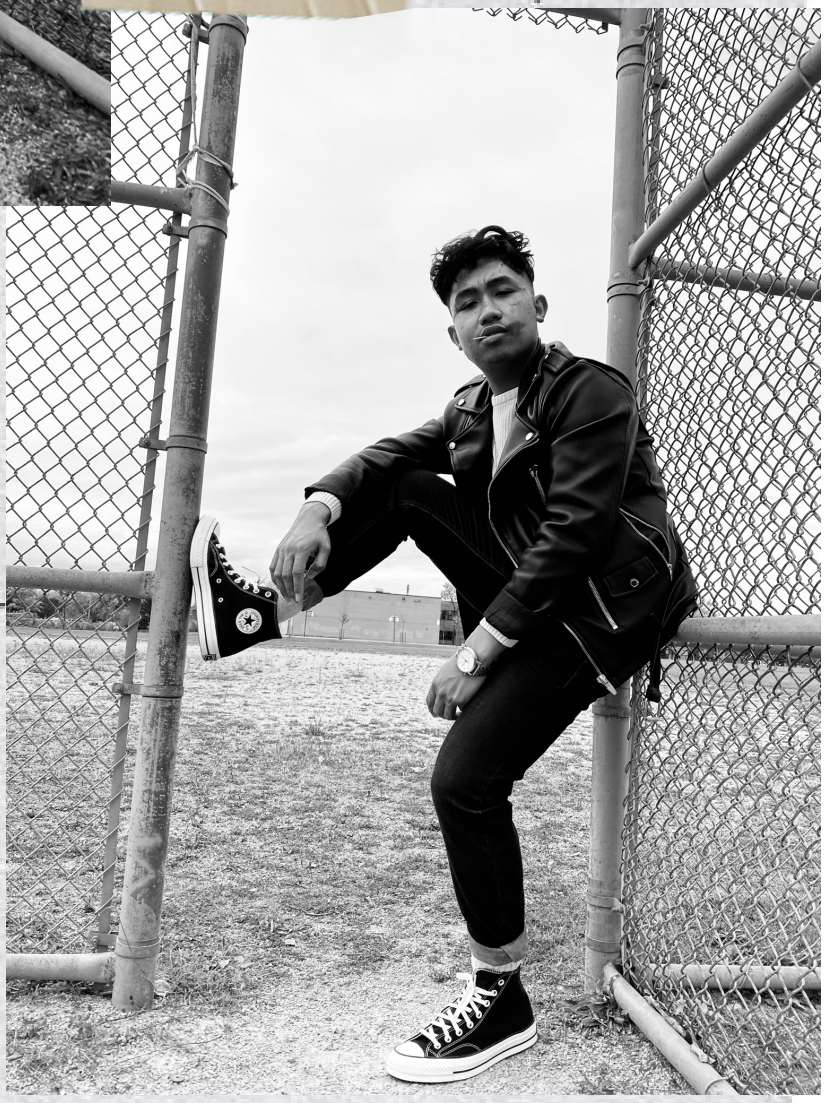
Mama laughs.
She tells the story she's told a million times before
Of how my great-great-Tito died from a heart attack while falling
out of his mango tree *The most Filipino way to go*
She says.

And I ask
What was he like?
I ask what all seven of my Tita's back home are like
Hoping one day I'll really know.
But for now, I see them in the sun-spotted paper leather
Leftover from my afternoon treat
Almost as sweet.

Grease Lightning

by Tamia James





Guilt

by Tanvi Vyas

Travelling north for a week away,
To Thunder Bay.

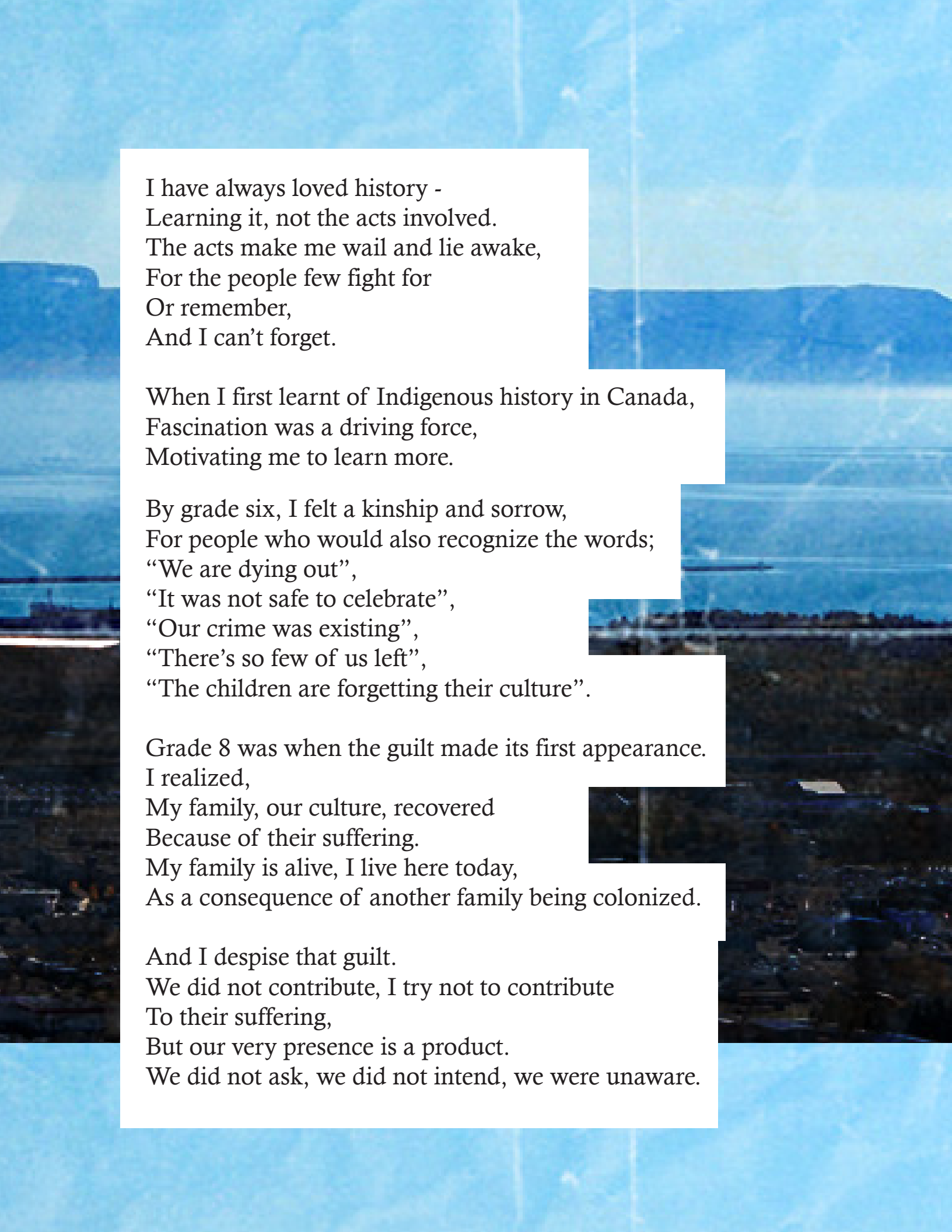
One,
Twothreefour
Five.
At least five,
Indigenous communities
We passed.

These were only the ones that clearly marked themselves as such.
A proud sign,
A display of some sort.
We passed countless Indigenous homes.

Every time I spotted a community,
I felt a familiar flash of guilt.
Quick and searing,
It would jar me out of my peaceful dozing
As I gazed through my small window
To the intimidating mountains around.

Confusion always follows,
And remains for a few days.
It is here, peering over my shoulder,
Urging me to write this.

Ironically on Indigenous People's Day,
(screw you columbus)
Hopefully, I'll soon decipher why.



I have always loved history -
Learning it, not the acts involved.
The acts make me wail and lie awake,
For the people few fight for
Or remember,
And I can't forget.

When I first learnt of Indigenous history in Canada,
Fascination was a driving force,
Motivating me to learn more.

By grade six, I felt a kinship and sorrow,
For people who would also recognize the words;
"We are dying out",
"It was not safe to celebrate",
"Our crime was existing",
"There's so few of us left",
"The children are forgetting their culture".

Grade 8 was when the guilt made its first appearance.
I realized,
My family, our culture, recovered
Because of their suffering.
My family is alive, I live here today,
As a consequence of another family being colonized.

And I despise that guilt.
We did not contribute, I try not to contribute
To their suffering,
But our very presence is a product.
We did not ask, we did not intend, we were unaware.

Yet we remain unwilling participants,
In a system that colonized us all.
There are large chunks of history
Expanses of time,
When both were under British colonial rule.
Both suffered.
But I feel so guilty.

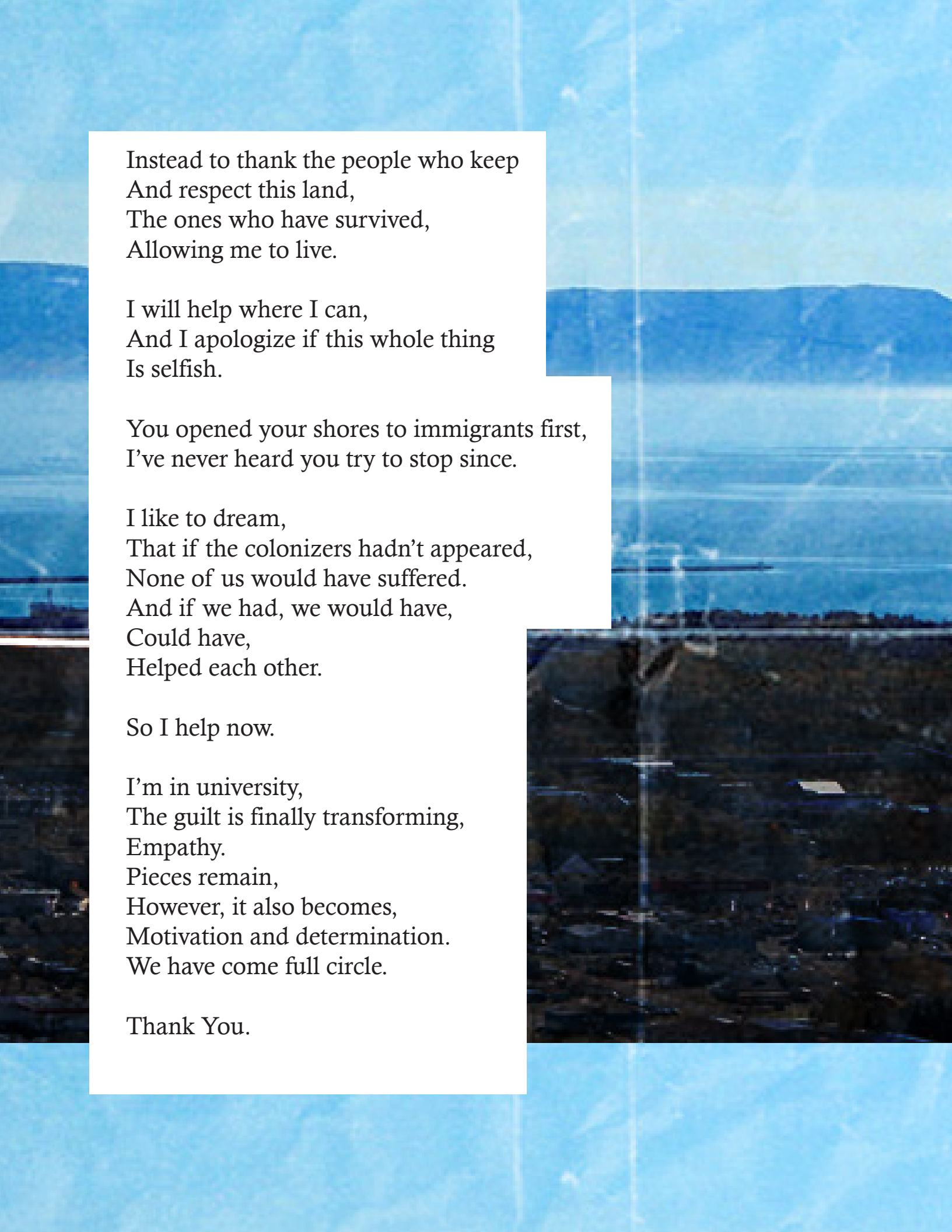
Because I understand.
Not completely,
I do not live as oppressed as them.
But I can understand the frustration,
Of losing ancestral land,
Of losing the home you found.

We are lucky enough to keep this home.
To be safe and protected,
(to a degree)
They are not.
And the guilt crushes me further.

I know this is not my burden to bear.
It is not healthy.
Or helpful.
I struggle to release the guilt,
But keep empathy.

I fear that after it's gone,
I will learn I should have kept it.

I want the guilt to be thankfulness.
Not to thank the white man,
The colonizer,
For my home.



Instead to thank the people who keep
And respect this land,
The ones who have survived,
Allowing me to live.

I will help where I can,
And I apologize if this whole thing
Is selfish.

You opened your shores to immigrants first,
I've never heard you try to stop since.

I like to dream,
That if the colonizers hadn't appeared,
None of us would have suffered.
And if we had, we would have,
Could have,
Helped each other.

So I help now.

I'm in university,
The guilt is finally transforming,
Empathy.
Pieces remain,
However, it also becomes,
Motivation and determination.
We have come full circle.

Thank You.

TAKING UP SPACE

by Josel Angelica Gerardo

An immigrant,
a Filipino,
an intersectional feminist,
that is who I am.
Growing up in a neighbourhood,
filled with rich, white kids,
and rich, white, outspoken adults,
I realized who I also am.
Different.

I have brown skin,
dark brown eyes,
and dark brown hair,
and that's who I am.

But I changed.
To fit in, to belong,
and to be accepted,
by neglecting who I am.

I changed.
I changed my voice to be whiter,
I changed my perspective to hate my skin colour.
I am no longer who I am.

But, I still get the looks,
silently asking if I can afford to be in a space,
and I still get the question,
"Excuse me, do you live here? Who are you?"

Now, older, maybe wiser,
sitting in my university politics course,
filled with white voices, and white minds.
I'm asking myself, who am I?

I've had enough.
I'm learning and educating myself.
I took spaces socially, professionally and
academically.
I'm taking back who I am.

I'm ensuring more diverse voices are
heard,
reaching out to all races,
sexual orientations,
identities, and abilities.
We are taking up spaces.
We are taking back who we are.

It's here.
It's happening.
It's inevitable.
We are proud of who we are.

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DON'T
TOUCH
ME!
POWER &
EQUAL
THE CONTINUIST