

FALL 2021

SECOND DOSE

A FEMINIST CALL FOR ANYTHING

FIGS

Feminist Intersectional Solidarity
Group (formerly CWAG)





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Navigating the Transition to Online Classes:
Experience of a Low-Income Private School-
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Love Letters to Myself- Leah I. Coppella

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Tu tiens mon coeur- Calysta Meletis-McDowell

My little kali- Shruti Kalyanaraman

Women's Wardrobe June 2021- Linda
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In-progress sunflower mosaic, aka mood-
stabilizer, parents' greenhouse, T'Sou-ke
Nation territory: Sooke- Rosemary Collard

The Abortion Herb Cart- Landon Newton

Freedom and Justice- Lila Mansour

Crazy colouring to manage pandemic stress-
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Soy Loco por Ti America- Maria Luiza Belo

Multispecies encounter in New Brighton Park,
Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh
territories: Vancouver- Rosemary Collard

Defend joy, organize rage: an embroidery
pattern (and a spell)- Vivian D. Rodríguez
Rocha

low tide- Rae Jewett

Do Not Say You Know Me- Lisa Sandlos

Agotada/sunflowers- Nasya Razavi

Ravens Never Forget, Willow Tree, A Gentle
Way- Tara Joly

Navigating endometriosis during a pandemic-
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Remember Summer Fires- Zoë Meletis

"It is the Norm...": Gender and Western
Epistemologies in Malawi- Mary Spear

Remember in March when they said 2 weeks...
- Melissa Conte & Grace Adeniyi-Ogunyankin

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THEMES

PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

There's no longer a clear separation between production and social reproduction, and perhaps there never was. Our bodies are enmeshed in relations of work, home, and market, circling around.

This is a never-ending cycle of work, life's work. How can you write about life's work, while also trying so hard to keep it all together?

Papers to read, diapers to change, emails to respond, bodies to care for, and expectations for more. Too many tabs open, too much caffeine...

Life's work is happening all at once, in the same place, at the same time (both virtual and in-person). This effort is not new; it has just been exacerbated by the pandemic, working from home/not being able to work from home, increasing need for care labour, and normalizing productivity in sickness and death.

In the midst of these multiple crises of COVID-19, care, and capitalism, the treadmills keep running. Precariously employed, we are stretching ourselves too thin, as we navigate workplace crises on our own. Even still, we can't help but feel guilty, thinking that we should be doing more, better, faster...yearning for the unreachable.

If only we could close those damn tabs. Please, close your tabs. Love you.

Love you.

Reproductive rights; freedom of movement and thought; struggles of the most marginalized; strategically inequitable distributions of goods and power; privilege; bodies caught in political wars; gendered distributions of labour; gendered impacts of policies and programs; the inaccessibility and inhumanity of academia; health, care work and wellness.

These are themes that many of us interact with daily in our academic work, home lives, and activist or advocacy roles.

But—the current COVID-19 era, wherever this zine reaches you, has certainly shone a light on all of this in many ways that we might not have expected, wanted, or welcomed. And

now what? We keep on-- trying to make sense of


new/worsened/heightened versions of things we knew

before. But we persist (RIP RBG). We find hope, light, and voices that lift us up.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOLIDARITY

BODIES IN PAIN, ANGER, TRAUMA, AND STRUGGLE

Our bodies are hurting. COVID-19 has intensified how we experience ourselves in place and in bodies. This theme speaks to those who are angry, who are in pain, who are struggling. We hope that the intersectional stories of individual bodies can bring us together to grieve in ways that unite us.



Small beauties might feel trivial, frivolous, during a time of such suffering. But the smallness of everyday magic can give us hope. Our relationship with little luxuries and everyday beauty has changed. Meals on the road, which might have been a nuisance before, now hold a special significance after a year of no travel (Rae Jewett's photograph of someone eating with a massive spoon out the back of a van is evidence of this). Take Judyannet Muchiri's musings on her 'commute book', a tiny indulgence of reading and people watching. Margaret Walton-Robert's colouring book and Rosemary Collard's photograph of an in-progress sunflower mosaic in T'Sou-ke Nation territory represent pretty moments of reflection and Shruti Kalyanaraman's bewitching artwork is deep with hopeful purples and shimmering with magical realism. Sometimes it feels good to recognize the magic in our reality.

**SMALL BEAUTIES AND
THE EVERYDAY**

How do we cope with change when change is the only constant? A toddler's tantrums remind us that transitions can be hard. Not quite here, not quite there yet. Forcing us to find new footing, those in-between places where the ground keeps shifting underneath us can be unsettling, aggravating, or exciting and transformational. Where am I? Oh yes, nowhere, and everywhere all at once. In the future, each of us will look back at the pandemic differently. Whether it was an experience of discombobulation, a time of being stuck in a never-ending Groundhog Day-like routine of Zoom meetings, a time of devastating loss and grieving, or a positive shift towards reclaiming stronger bodily, family or community connections, the musings and memories; images and imaginings in Second Dose are a testament that life in the time of Covid-19 has been transitional for everyone.

**TRANSITIONS,
DISCOMBOBULATIONS
AND TRANSFORMATIONS**

We hope that you will find some small joys and community here... but we also stand with you as you look to the future with hope of meeting again.

JOY







EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

We struggled to write this intro as we were/are all feeling some version of “low energy”/slogging through/still trying to catch up on things from before the COVID-19 era. We are also dealing with connections to multiple overlapping crises, from micro to macro levels. New trials are piled up on top of all the regular daily challenges of juggling income-generating work, unpaid caregiving labour and service work, furthering our education and credentials, applying for funding and employment, exercising (?), sleeping (?) and generally trying to be good partners, mothers, daughters, co-workers, friends or community members while staying true to our values, to ourselves and to whatever projects make our hearts sing in life.

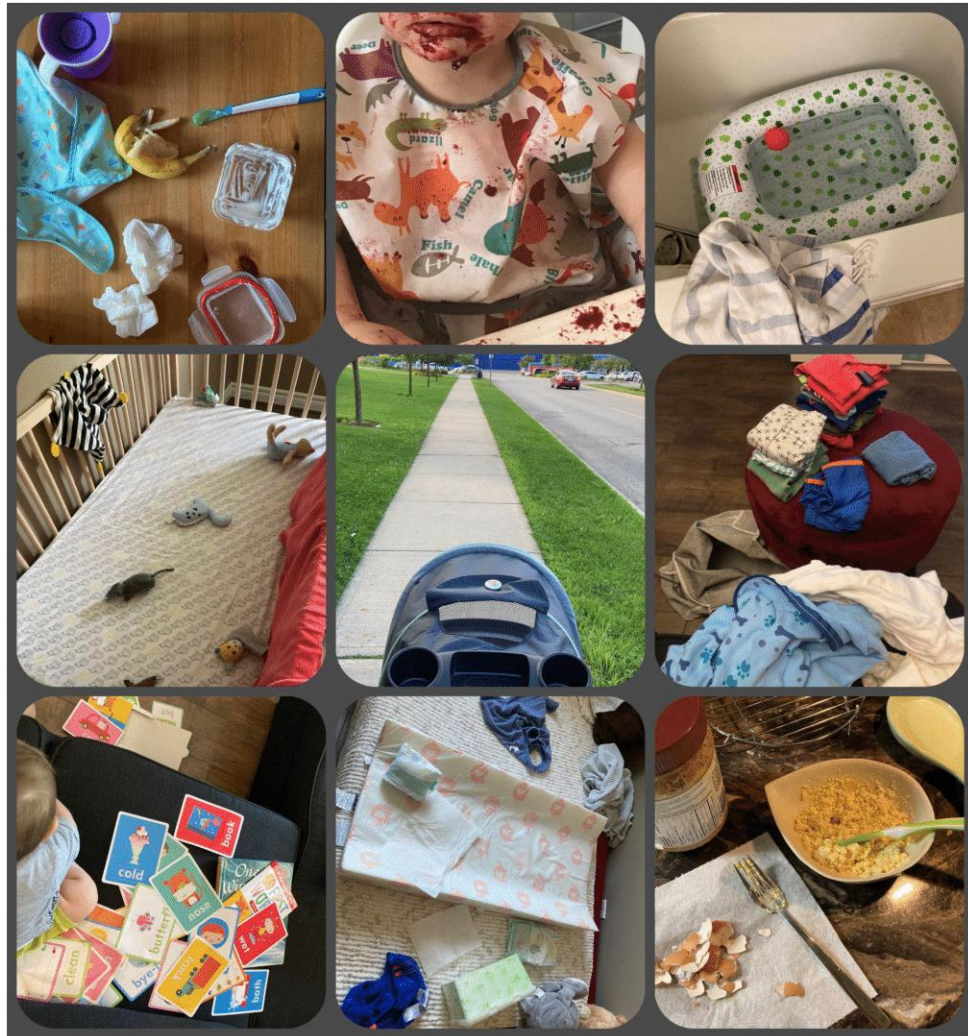
AND YET we remain under continuous pressure to succeed/publish/generate outputs in the neo-liberal heteropatriarchal white supremacist academy. So-- here are the colourful responses to the second FIGS Call for Anything. Thanks to all who had energy to submit, and to those who contemplated it, even for a moment. We can certainly relate to having to delete/ignore/let something slip by, especially now. It's an odd time where things are extremely dynamic but also very much the same, day after day... In that spirit, we thought we'd try a second zine since we heard that our first zine last fall had impacted you in some of the ways we hoped that it would, bringing a bit of community, connection, and levity. We hope you find something within the pages of this 2nd zine that resonates with you.

May this second dose bring a bit of FIGS feminist solidarity to you, wherever you are and whatever you are facing. Afterall, it is important to keep up with regular boosters of feminist solidarity! A warm thank you to all of the contributors and readers this year and last. Thank you to our past editors for their guidance and support (Ileana I. Diaz, Asmita Bhutani, Laurence Simard-Gagnon). Thanks also to the Canadian Association of Geographers for partial funding.

In feminist solidarity from the
zine editors,
Maria Luiza Belo
Leah I. Coppella
Alkim Karaağaç
Zoë Meletis
Nasya Razavi
Lisa Sandlos



WHO'S IN CHARGE?



The labour toll of child care is mostly invisible in cute baby images and parent-baby selfies, which have been the summary of my phone's picture content for a long time. So, I'm sharing this collage instead. It's what I call "mom's body cam". They are snapshots of random moments in my everyday work of caring for my infant. One cares for what one loves. That's fundamentally true, yet incomplete if we keep disregarding **care** as/is labour. Child care is labour-intensive, it is demanding, it is mentally, emotionally, and physically hard on bodies. This is the hardest job I've ever undertaken in life so far. I'm not trained for it, I have no supervision, no HR to consult, no insurance, no benefits, no actual pay, I have no idea what my hourly worth of labour is anymore in this 7/24 shift. There's nothing new about what I'm saying here, yes, I'm venting... But it has to be said again and again. We don't question, enough, the valuelessness yet indispensability of care work. Care work done by us, by others, often by women, majority racialized bodies. However, we don't have enough time to question as we care for people who need our undivided attention and presence.

Navigating the Transition to Online Classes: Experience of a Low-Income Private School

The Covid-19 pandemic pushed the world to work its way out through an unwavering series of events. With almost every country in the world imposing stringent lockdowns, offices, markets, and institutions being physically shut and working their way out using digital modes of communication and technology. It almost seemed that even though the world had halted in movement, work had kept on moving smoothly.

Almost all sectors in our economy went ahead with taking up their work online or started to invest and develop methodologies to work in an uncertain situation they were suddenly forced into. The education sector was not left out, and the acclimatization was followed by schools as well. The majority of schools were in the middle of conducting or finishing up their final exams, and sudden shutdown meant cancelling the exams altogether and promoting students to the next class. Parent Teachers Meetings (PTM) were cancelled, and there was no communication as teachers had no updates from the schools on what was to be done further.

The pragmatic approach adopted was to switch to online teaching, and this shift to online classes was a smooth transition for the high-income private schools that were wholly equipped with required resources. But for most low-income private and government schools, this transition was anything but a smooth process as neither the teachers nor the students were well equipped with resources. This decision of online teaching did not take into consideration the students' demographic background and the readiness of the teachers who were supposed to navigate this shift.

Initially, as there was no proper guideline released either by the school or the government, the teachers had no idea about how to proceed. In April, when teachers secretly came to school during a strict lockdown, they finalized the books for the new academic session, gathered phone numbers of parents from school records, and created a WhatsApp group to communicate with them. However, not everyone was accessible on WhatsApp. In a class of 40, there were only 6-7 students who were available on WhatsApp, and the rest were supposed to be contacted via phone calls.

To begin with, teachers just started by sending videos to students of their teachings from their previous classes. They created handmade worksheets, sent them to students, and encouraged them to send them back the answers.

It was only by July-August that the school provided more clarity to the teachers on what was expected of them and defined their roles and responsibilities for conducting the online classes. The majority of students were well connected with teachers over WhatsApp by now, and the school functioned for six days a week with one day assigned to each subject. The teaching content was in the form of 2-3 videos made by the teachers themselves, which were then uploaded to the class WhatsApp group.

It meant that one teacher could send videos once a week for one specific subject. The videos, not more than 6-10 minutes long, had to be made concept-specific. Chapters were to be covered and completed along with exercises and homework. One chapter had to be divided into multiple parts, and videos were created as per the division. Teachers read the chapters word to word in one video and explained the same in another video. Worksheets were being provided to the students, and youtube videos were downloaded and then sent across.

The teachers struggled a lot while creating videos as they were not equipped with proper training and resources. Teachers had to re-do their videos multiple times as working from home meant constant background noises, unwanted interruptions, and no medium to facilitate adequate lighting and sound. For each video, proper pronunciation had to be taken into account, adding more explanation time in videos. An added challenge for the teachers was to make sure that the teaching content they shared should reach the students. Here parents played a vital role as they were the first-hand viewers of the work shared by them, leading to more accountability. As most of the students attending school were first or second generation learners, the teaching content had to be made keeping parents as well in mind.

Sending these videos out to students required additional data packs and frequent mobile recharges that were borne by individual teachers themselves. The frequent creation of multiple videos would often lead to a

shortage in phone space, making it arduous to keep a track of previously sent videos. With no external storage available, many teachers ended up deleting content that they thought they won't require further.

Apart from the omnipresent challenges, subject teachers had difficulties of their own. Language teachers had to be apt with their pronunciation along with teaching grammar. Science and mathematics teachers focused more on taking up specific concepts. However, explaining complex topics, definitions, and diagrams in a 5-minute video was extremely difficult.

Several apps like Diksha, e-Pathshala were created by the government to encourage learning amongst students from homes. These apps included the whole set of NCERT books, worksheets, and exercises that both students and teachers could take up. However, accessing these applications was not feasible for parents as they could not navigate them. Even if the children tried to navigate, it led to increased screen time, which was stress-inducing for the parents.

Whatsapp being the medium for conducting classes makes it difficult for the teachers to examine if the students are actually grasping and punctiliously following the concepts shared with them. The onus of teaching and sending back the homework answers to teachers is on the parents, who take their own time to get around, mostly at night, making teachers answerable at odd hours.

With no proper feedback providing mechanism in place, there is no way to figure out if the work being sent back for correction is being done by the student or their elder sibling or by the parents themselves.

Teachers fear that with no regular practice, the students will forget previously taught concepts and practices, which is problematic in the long run as teachers will invest more time into revising those concepts rather than working on the present academic system when the students are back in schools.

Note: The article is based on a low budget private school and its teachers' experiences in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India. Both the school and teachers did not wish to be named. The events date back to the onset of Covid-19 pandemic 2020. Presently 2021, the school is shut down due to no funds and non-payment of fees by parents who have lost their livelihoods and modes of income.



A week this summer

Thursday – I decide to make a meal. I haven't cooked in a while. Sadly, I have come to accept that I no longer enjoy cooking as I once did. I make a lentil and spinach dish which I serve with pita and avocado. Surprisingly it is good. I like a midnight snack, so late in the night I have a cookie that I picked up at the coffee shop in the morning. Shortly after I am so nauseated and dizzy. I am not saying I got sick from my meal, but I am also not saying I didn't. Strange.

Friday – *Strange Weather in Tokyo*. That's the book I am reading now. It is my commute book – although there's hardly any commute these days. I love a good hour on the road. I can eavesdrop on people's convos, watch the world go by, plan all the things I gotta do, and read. Although I am not feeling the best, I am heading to the bank today to run a quick errand. Then I will get a coffee and head home. I pass by a bookstore and tell myself to walk away. We both know what happens. I then get home and take it easy. I text my friend M to cancel our hike. Hate to do it but I just can't do a hike today.

Saturday – I have now developed a nasty headache. I am really mad because the weekends are my workdays. And by workdays, I mean my writing days. I block them to write my thesis chapters. I lay in bed all day drifting in and out of sleep. When I can't sleep, I listen to a podcast about a Brazilian artist who makes familiar things unfamiliar. Fascinating! My entire being is obsessed with knowing the unknown. I wanna know what happens tomorrow, the next day, ten years down the line. Every time I learn something new, I am simultaneously thrilled and shocked at all the things out there that I still don't know. Like did you know until 2013 it was illegal for women to wear trousers in France?

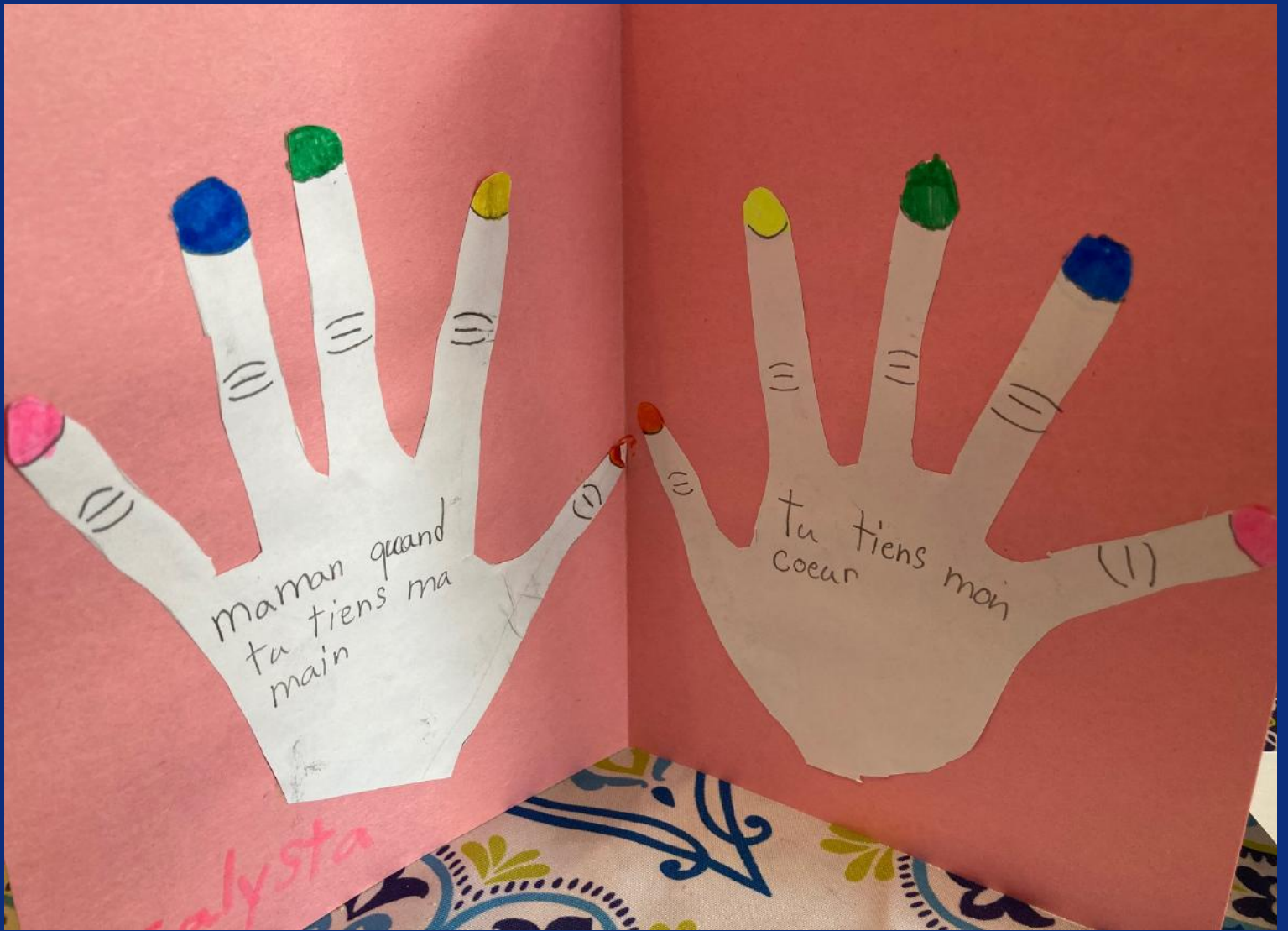
Sunday - Another day in bed sick. god! At this point I will never finish my thesis. Will I have to quit grad school and life and move to an undisclosed location to open a liquor store slash bookstore?

Monday – Thankfully I am feeling much better. Ugh, now to catch up. I make yet another to do list, brew a pot of coffee and get right into it. I spend most of the day working on my desk – which I love. The work not the desk. I manage to do lots, but I am still blue because I am so behind on my writing. My friend J sends

me a selfie with a random quote hashtagged UnrelatedPhotoQuote and makes me laugh so hard. That gesture alone makes my day. So grateful for friends like J.

Tuesday – I wake up to one of those emails. You know the one. I am aggravated. People will wake up early in the morning and ruin your day, man! I want to make space for this anger! I want to sit for a minute with it, you know. But I don't have a minute. Instead, I make myself breathe – I straight up do breathing exercises as I walk down to get a coffee. Then I come back and get to work. Later on, my friend C emails with some kind words that remind me the world is still a beautiful place.

Wednesday – My work week starts today. Not writing (although this is my everyday every time job), but my day job. Which means that the day is packed with meetings and emails and more meetings. The modern-day gig life, everybody.



maman quand
tu tiens ma
main

tu tiens mon
coeur



My little kali

My dear little Kali,
As I nurse you,
I wish so much more than milk for you.
I wish resilience for you,
For this is not the only pandemic that haunts me and you.
As I nurse you,
I fervently hope for you,
A safe bubble with a beautiful hue,
That shields you from evil afar and few.
As I nurse you,
I hear them say my milk is not enough for you,
Amidst their efforts to doubt my care and effort for you,
That I am not good enough for you,
Let them not get to me and you.
As I nurse you,
I want to give more than love to you.
Take courage to stand up against those that shackle you,
Take strength to fight those who belittle my love for you.
And then some empathy to feel others' love for you,

My Little Kali,
As I nurse you,
I will embrace Kali for you!
I promise to give my everything to you.
My tired body will work extra hard for you,
My wounded heart will heal itself for you.
My dying spirit will rise like a phoenix every morning for you.





Syria will be free

Muslim lives matter

Free Palestine

#MMIW
BLM

FREE WOMEN'S FREEDOM

Black lives matter

Indigenous lives matter

Every child matters

Be the change
 All yship
 Empowered
 Choice
 Together
 Unstoppable
 Women's voices matter
 Healing
 Strong
 Love
 Liberty
 Equal
 Resilient
 Fighters
 Warriors
 Equity
 Justice
 LibM

orce. New York.
New York.

New York.

ork.
ork.



(HT) to check

Soy Loco Por Ti America

Oh, the insolence to claim America for yourselves.

It only dawned on me once I moved here. I must have heard it before, though. How you say 'In *America* this', 'In *America* that' like it's a country and not a *continent*.

The rest of us have to settle for the dangling qualifier, as if we were nothing other than the extension of the original America.

And I, that have never seen myself as anything Latin, am suddenly classified as *Latin-American*.

Oh how you love us around here.
To put on a good show.
To give you
our music,
our food,
our cultures
that you believe are all the same.

I guess you keep finding ways to
discover us.
Novel and seemingly harmless arrangements in which you
extract our souls
and incorporate it in the
real America.

The edges of your lines were carved so vigorously
that US became an acronym for
engulfment
assimilation
incorporation.

America Inc.

Created and maintained by the invisible hand that throws
our bodies into coveted dumpsters,
then cleans the stains
bloodstains tearstains
of our ancestors
with the sparkling liquid of our headwaters.

No, I did not think I shared any commonality with
Bolivia or
Argentina or
Mexico
before I came here.

But *America* has made me a regionalist.

It has showed me that history binds me
to my Spanish-speaking neighbors
with oxidized chains
whiter I like it or not.

Because after the Europeans took our gold
and our natives,
after they displaced
an entire continent
to serve their greed,
murdering and raping and ravaging,
some Men in the North made sure to preserve continuity,
built a Dream out of vacant lies
and charge us still
in the installments you name Debt.

Oh the audacity.
To pick our brains for thought
and our berries for sustenance
when our people are left stranded,
flesh to flies,
veins bleeding dry
in the arid season of (under)Development.

What progress is this you promise
that makes us seem short-legged for never being able to arrive?

For greatness seems to find only those standing in the high
planks
and by this I mean the faces
carved in the mounts of Fathers.

But the face of land is seamless
and if this is true
then no likes of walls you build

will ever suffice to keep us
away.

We come
heads torsos strapped
in barbed wire
our losses cloaks
protecting us
our stories shields
while we avalanche you down

The ground beneath soaking our wounds clean

We chant sorceries
in all of the languages you
broke

this is the language of the oppressor

Adrienne writes
screams
wails

yet I need it to talk to you

So we scream
wail
write

writhed



Defend joy, organize rage: an embroidery pattern (and a spell)

Lately, I have been reading a lot about the history of embroidery and fabric for my dissertation. Did you know that for millennia, across all cultures who developed the textile form, it has been primarily women doing the spinning of yarn and weaving of cloth? According to Barber (1994) the reason for this division of labor has to do with its compatibility with child rearing, specifically breastfeeding for a period of several years. She says, "if the productive labor of women is not to be lost to the society during the childbearing years, the jobs regularly assigned to women must be carefully chosen to be 'compatible with simultaneous child watching'" (29). And here Barber is talking about the first twenty thousand years of human history, but not much has changed. In most cultures today, when textiles are made by hand, they are woven by women.

Cloth has long served women to keep their stories safe and to record their presence in history, even if that function of cloth is so lost to its everyday uses that we hardly ever give it a second thought. Through patterns, colors and symbols, textiles communicate, challenge, charm and protect (Parker 2010). During the military dictatorship, Chilean women used scraps of fabric from clothing that belonged to their loved ones—who had been forcefully disappeared or murdered for political reasons—to produce Arpilleras (Agosín 2008). These are pictographic textiles that tell the story of the violence they and their family members experienced under Pinochet's dictatorship. In Mexico, today, feminist collectives like *Bordamos feminicidios* gather in public spaces to embroider cloth handkerchiefs with the stories of women who have been victims of femicide, the killing of women and girls on account of their gender. According to recent UN data 11 women are killed daily in Mexico under conditions of rampant impunity. Publicly embroidering their stories thus takes the form of both counter archive and protest in the face of the state-sponsored misogyny.

Like many feminists around my age in Mexico, I grew up wanting nothing to do with any kind of labor that would remotely instill in me any sense of domesticity. But now I see embroidery through new eyes. This pattern translates roughly as "defend joy, organize rage." I do not know the origins of this saying, but feminist activists in Mexico have adopted it as a motto of resistance. I created this embroidery pattern as a reminder that we need to be able remain soft in the face of all that harms us, but we also need to take action,

to channel our frustration towards creating other possible worlds. Embroidery emerged early on as a way to strengthen weakened fabric (Huss 2010). May this pattern be a charm against misogynist violence, may it be a call for resistance, may it be a record of our time in this world, and may it be a welcome distraction that can be put away and taken back up in no time when children, pets, and partners need us (or when we need them). But mostly, may it help just a tiny bit to mend our broken fabric in these trying times.

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Defend + organize

- No stitch
- DMC 973
- DMC 554
- DMC 029
- DMC 209
- DMC 3755
- DMC 3346
- DMC 826
- DMC 310
- DMC 3804



low tide

Space: Ruby Beach, Olympic National Park. Traditional territory of the S'Klallam, Klallam, Makah, Quileute and Chimakum, Hoh, Queets and Quinault, Upper Chehalis, and Skokomish peoples.

Medium: Black and White film, Ilford XP2 400, 1972 Canon AE1.

Taken August 2017.

I defended my masters in GIS in June, Maja defended in July. I rented an apartment in Squamish, BC for the summer before we both started our Geography PhDs that fall. My heart was broken with the decision to leave western Canada and drive back east, leaving behind the magic and adventure I had just recently discovered. Maja studies satellite imagery/disasters and myself, rural health services. We needed a break from academics but our interests intersected nicely with a deep love of driving around the rural pacific northwest. We sat on Kitsilano Beach and Maja looked up campsites while I finished making a few contracted maps to make some cash for our trip. The next day we left Vancouver to cross into the USA and took highway 5 south towards Seattle. We left late in the day and the sunset greeted us as we crossed the bridge through Tacoma into Olympic National Park. Last minute planning left us hopeful to get a first-come-first-served site in the Hoh rainforest – we were lucky. A 6am wake up call, Maja said there was no time to make coffee. We drove around the peninsula towards the westerly beaches passing grass fields, freshwater lakes, snow capped peaks, and finally, we arrived at the pacific ocean. I spent the drive thinking about how far Toronto was from these places; it would be so hard to get back here once I start my PhD. I could be myself out here and going back to where I grew up, as someone else, terrified me. We got out of the car and walked down to the beach. We arrived at the exact time and place where the moon and tidal force allowed us to walk out onto the ocean floor. Salty air, soft pillowy sand, sea cucumbers, starfish, shells, crabs. We explored for hours. Back at the parking lot we ate whatever food we had in the car and finally made coffee. We started our drive towards the Port Angeles ferries. Maja held her typical silence in my passenger seat. I waited for my thoughts to turn back to heartbreak to leave the west. They didn't come. How could I feel anything but grateful for this decision I made that brought me to this time and place, at low tide, with Maja.









Do not say you know Me

Do not say you know Me.
You see me as you want to
Use me for your purposes
Disregard my inner life
Miss the qualities that make me, Me.

You think I wait for your glance, your
touch
But I am a flower, blooming and
becoming
I am a mountain rising to meet the
sky
Existing quite apart from you.

So do not say you know Me, but

Stop. Open your eyes and see the
arc of my thoughts
Listen and hear the bubbling of my
creativity
Smell the sweet scent of my
inspiration
Only then will you know me as Me.

But do not say you know Me in my
entirety
This moment is only a small
fragment

Of the wholeness that I flow toward
Even as you witness me with fresh
eyes
And drink Me in as a sip of cool,
clear water
I am expanding, evolving,
transcending your expectations.

If you want to know Me
You must be present for my
becoming
Not just when it suits you
But when the sun hits my rim and I
glisten in the light
When long shadows fall, and I
slumber
And when time works its
imperceptible alchemy
Of change.

Do not say you know Me now
Only say you will be a witness
To my unfolding
And in this you may begin to undo
What you think you know
Instead uncovering, unfurling,
unleashing, understanding
A deep river of knowing
The Other.



Ravens Never Forget

April 26, 2019

The morning after you assault me
you tell us that you found a dead
raven on your patio
They laugh
Elders I trust
tease you
say it was a good omen.
joke:

 your Indian name is Dead
Crow.
I smile along
even laugh
not showing how
my guts
my heart, intestines are
turning inside out and
spilling on the floor.

Ravens never forget.

Willow Tree

May 14, 2019

I haven't visited you in a while
but I knew you were growing

Yet still you are unexpected
emergent
green leaves and blossoms
giving existence to bees
 offering yourself and receiving
in return

You who embody my healing
embracing me, holding my body in
moments of brokenness
piecing me together

teaching me with your steadiness,
silence, steadfast becoming
your movement in the wind
 calling me to breathe

Today you show the life within you,
sprung out for the world to see
to support other beings
unashamed, proud,
strong

Today you catch my tears in a
moment of
emergent joy.

A Gentle Way

Dec 30 2019

"We want Tara
she has a gentle way
of being, communicating.
Elders will open up to her in
interviews."

How these simple words
from a woman I admire
 for her ferocity, honesty,
bravery,
wash over me
like a warm wave of honey.

I am Seen
authentically

I am Accepted
completely.

Navigating endometriosis healthcare during a pandemic

A 6am wakeup call, for a 30 minute walk to the walk-in clinic so I can see a doctor.

My head spinning with a rehearsal of what I will say to the doctor to make them hear me and help me. It takes the average person 8 years to be diagnosed with endometriosis, and even with a diagnosis, I never know if my pain will be believed and my worries will be listened to.

My stomach turning with nerves and with the feeling of taking my medication (that has induced menopause as a 20-something) on an empty stomach. My abdomen and pelvis cramping with pain that I have become all too used to. My heart hurting with the unknowns ahead of me.

Will I ever feel better?

Will I be able to have children one day?

Will the pain ever stop?

Approaching the clinic, 6:30am for an 8:00am open time, pleased with myself for being the first one there, my heart drops once again, and tears well in my eyes. A sign in the window greets me, in bold, red letters.

STOP

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS IN PLACE

Walk-in clinic closed, appointments only

Now what?

I don't have a family doctor.

I can't go to the emergency room because I will be turned away after inevitable rounds of bloodwork that deem "there is nothing wrong with you"

So now, I wait for a 2 minute phone appointment with a doctor who does not know me. Does not believe a woman so young can have endometriosis. Does not have any solutions other than pumping me full of hormones or getting pregnant to "cure it" if I even can be pregnant.

Yes, COVID-19 is an emergency that warrants the attention of doctors and health care professionals. However, I fear many people living in chronic pain have slipped through the cracks, slipped into mental health emergencies, and no longer have a clear path forward.

Remember when summer fires
meant this



and not this ???



"It is the Norm...": Gender and Western Epistemologies in Malawi

In my first week in Malawi, I wrote in my journal the following: "Malawi is a patriarchal country where gender roles are very traditional... culturally, it is the norm for women to defer to men". Factually, this entire statement is untrue. Malawi is not a traditionally patriarchal country and pre-colonialism, it was matriarchal. I also did not know if it was a norm for women to defer to men; I based this on the limited interactions I witnessed at a business training seminar I attended during my first week. Which is to say, I wrote this statement without actually considering it. In my first week in Malawi, I learned how to say hello and thank you in Chichewa, how to use the local bus system, and I formed a stereotype that probably would have remained true to me unless my academic supervisor hadn't diplomatically asked, "is that the norm?". Malawi was my first time in Africa, it was my first experience working in a real, professional setting, my first time working abroad, and my first time doing any non-profit work. There are many potential reasons that my indiscretion could be attributed to. But the issue isn't just that I formed an inaccurate statement; the problem is that I was confident in doing so. Prior to coming to Malawi, I was studying, writing, researching, and learning about global north and global south inequalities, global politics, development, colonialism, racism, and a myriad of other topics designed to interrogate western discourse. Despite this, one of my first 'truths' I constructed about Malawi was sustained by racist imagery perpetuated in western discourse: that African women are subservient, gender roles are oppressive, and they have always been so. If I was so well educated, then why did I subconsciously revert to reality building in this way? Why did the word 'Africa' only conjure images of mud-huts and women with babies strapped to their hips? I had taken many courses on orientalism, neocolonialism, and colonial imagery, and I knew the purpose these images served in maintaining power hierarchies. Even so, I had no other images to replace them with. I could pat myself on the back for knowing that Africa is not a country, but before my internship I could not locate Malawi on a map. I was, and continue to be, immersed in western knowledge production and the subsequent 'truths' that accompany this.

This is an excerpt from a longer submission

"Remember in March when they said 2 weeks..."

The second FIGS "call for anything" excited us because we've been looking for an opportunity to publish together - forever! The FIGS call for submission came after the two of us spent 16 months procrastinating a co-publication and trying to navigate a global pandemic. During our (virtual) brainstorming session, it was clear that we wanted to write a creative piece - one that was personal, but we also decided that some of our conversations should be off limits (#nofilter #TMI). As Melissa began to read our 'no share' conversation list: "sex, nudes, breastfeeding, shitty lovers, obgyn visits...", Grace blurted out that the way Melissa was reading reflected how our conversations were often fragmented and all over the place. ***Light bulb! Light bulb!*** (Work with us here...). We simultaneously had the idea to use our WhatsApp conversations as our submission (well, selections of them 🤔) to showcase what catching up and staying connected looks like for two disgruntled and exhausted academics. This moment of inspiration brought us joy, there was an affective component to it, and it reminded us what it felt like to be excited about a project. What we present illustrates how friendship, emotional support, feminist care, humor, pain, struggle, beauty, and

joy unfold in real and fragmented moments in time.

[2020-03-11, 4:21 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Hey how r ya? U have family in Italy? Hear it's been hit pretty badly with coronavirus

[2020-03-11, 5:13 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Hey! I'm OK. We have some family in Italy but haven't heard anything scary from them yet. Thanks for checking in.

How are you doing??

[2020-03-11, 5:13 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Okay good. On my to Ottawa right now

I'm feeling kinda sick 🤒

[2020-03-11, 5:23 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Oh no! Cold? Why are you going to Ottawa?

[2020-03-11, 5:23 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Dunno. Throat feeling funky. And I'm exhausted. Feel a lil weak

African studies 10 years and Pius's one year

[2020-03-11, 5:23 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Omg it's been a year??? Holy shit

[2020-03-11, 5:24 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Yesterday

[2020-03-11, 5:24 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Warm water and honey right away

And get some oregano oil

[2020-03-16, 10:36 a.m.] Grace Adeniyi: So what u up to?

[2020-03-16, 10:37 a.m.] Melissa Conte: Just doing some work you???

[2020-03-16, 10:37 a.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Same

[2020-03-16, 10:40 a.m.] Melissa Conte: What is your son up to? How is he keeping entertained??

[2020-03-16, 10:47 a.m.] Grace Adeniyi: I just had to listen to him sing a song very loudly...one he was making up as he went along...now thankfully, he's learning stuff about bones on his tablet

[2020-03-16, 10:55 a.m.] Melissa Conte: HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHHA. Do you think the song was record deal worthy?

[2020-03-16, 11:01 a.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Lol nah. But if he turns out like his dad, for sure in the future. So here's hoping Ayo turns out like his dad singing wise and not me. He has a good voice though...so there's hope

[2020-03-16, 11:03 a.m.] Melissa Conte: Omg. Can you imagine? Then you can be his momager?

Or his back up dancer lol. I've seen those moves!

[2020-03-16, 11:05 a.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Lol back up dancer @50. Who am I, JLo¹??!

[2020-03-16, 11:05 a.m.] Melissa Conte: Yes. Remember we talked about being just like her???

[2020-03-16, 11:05 a.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Lol yah...and how is that going?!!

[2020-03-22, 10:28 a.m.] Melissa Conte: How are you???

[2020-03-22, 12:09 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: I'm okay. Went out scavenging for curry forgot to buy it...in case the lockdown gets real real

[2020-03-22, 12:11 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Yeah. That is something that needs to be on hand.

[2020-03-22, 12:13 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Yah will have to ration what I have

[2020-04-18, 2:10 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: I.

[2020-04-18, 2:10 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Am.

[2020-04-18, 2:10 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Pregnant.

[2020-04-18, 2:12 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Still top secret.

¹ We are referring here to our obsession with JLo and her 2020 Superbowl performance.

[2020-04-18, 2:17 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Ahhhhhhhhhh! such great news!

When did you find out?

[2020-04-18, 2:32 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: April 7th

[2020-04-18, 2:36 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Oh wow so very new information. Lol

[2020-04-18, 2:37 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Lol yep

[2020-04-18, 2:40 p.m.] Melissa Conte: I guess all those memes about quarantine babies are true lol

[2020-04-18, 2:42 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Hahaha. I guess I'll never live it down

[2020-05-21, 11:02 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Did I ever tell you I played tackle football 🏈

[2020-05-21, 11:02 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Ok sports queen!

Omg how am I just learning this?

[2020-04-21, 11:02 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: And was a baller

And almost a track star

[2020-04-21, 11:02 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Grace the football star and basketball star!

[2020-04-21, 11:02 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Lol 🏈

Gurl I was faaaast. I'm showing off. But yah man I was. I miss those days.

Lol informal football with the boys. No football for us gurls. Lol played in uni with the Boyz too for fun



[2020-05-21, 11:53 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Why have you never humble bragged about this before?

[2020-06-27, 8:16 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Hi babes!!!!!! How are you???????

[2020-06-27, 8:17 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: What's up with all the exclamation points

[2020-06-27, 8:17 p.m.] Melissa Conte: I just miss you!!!!

[2020-06-27, 8:17 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Why r u excited

[2020-06-27, 8:17 p.m.] Melissa Conte: And I was happy to hear from you. Is that OK? Or nah??

[2020-07-17, 1:26 p.m.] Melissa Conte: Omg Grace I was watching a video of these two dudes handing out free masks to people in California (I think?) or maybe Florida. It was fucked. The States are gonna be the reason this never ends.

[2020-07-17, 1:26 p.m.] Grace Adeniyi: Yah they r a hot mess. How they became leaders of the "free world" is beyond me

[2020-07-17, 1:27 p.m.] Melissa Conte: I'm not trying to be like "oh



You're not a wave, you're a part of the ocean.
Mitch Albom

You're not a wave, you'
Mitch Albom



REFLECT & ADD YOUR OWN SUBMISSION BELOW

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FEMINIST RESOURCES

FemGeog “Pushing Boundaries” Multisite Hybrid Conference-
<https://femgeogconference.weebly.com/> ... June 15-17, 2022

Critical Resistance- <http://criticalresistance.org/> ... grassroots organization building a movement to abolish the prison industrial complex. Their abolitionist strategy is to 1) dismantle 2) change 3) build.

Black Women Radicals- shorturl.at/evxGO ... Black Women Radicals made a Black Feminist Perspective on COVID-19 reading list

FRIDA- <https://youngfeministfund.org/about-us/> ... supports, resources and funds for young feminist organizers

Gender and Development Network- <https://gadnetwork.org/gadn-resources/feminist-responses-to-covid-19> ... feminist responses to COVID-19

2021 Red Paper, Cash Back- <https://cashback.yellowheadinstitute.org> ... this project looks at how the dispossession of Indigenous lands nearly destroyed Indigenous economies. Cash Back is about restitution from the perspective of stolen wealth.

Pronouncing student names-
<https://twitter.com/LeadingELLS/status/1422238341584535559?s=20>

Feminist Killjoys- <https://feministkilljoys.com/>

International Association for Feminist Economics Course Syllabus Catalog- <http://www.iaffe.org/pages/resources/syllabus/>

Inspiring Women Among Us- www.iwau.ca ... free/public series of events will run Nov. 17-24th including anti-oppression training, speakers like Billy-Ray Belcourt, and more. Schedule, posters, and details will appear in weeks before event

