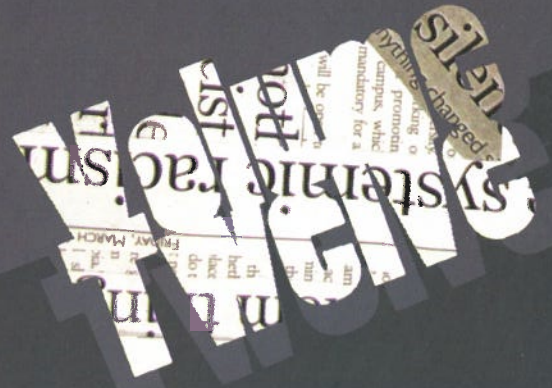


SCARS AND TRIUMPHS



VOLUME 12



an anti-racist review 2011



MANIFESTO

CULTURESHOCK is an anti-racist publication that strives to provide a forum of artistic expression for those who have been historically, and are currently, marginalized.

CULTURESHOCK is a space for voices that are systematically excluded in the editorial processes of other media and publications, which are dominated by white voices.

CULTURESHOCK seeks to give a space to people who have been rendered voiceless and feel invisible, allowing them to express their voices in whichever style and medium they choose.

CULTURESHOCK goal is to expand the singular notion of culture to include those who feel like their existence is an impossibility here at Queen's in the culture of whiteness.

CULTURESHOCK is working hard for change.

COLLECTIVE

Megan Femi-Cole is brown eyed, always learning, and thankful for community

Andrew Ha has a funny last name. Also, is proud of his Korean one: Andrew's Korean: 하예랑

Krystal Paraboo is a History and Art History student at Queen's University who other than dreaming of having Drake's babies, is impatiently waiting for the world to be colour blind.

Praveen Thind is majoring in Sociology at Queen's University.

Elamin Abdelmahmoud is just gonna take a minute and let it breeze.

Kavita Bissoondial is finally letting herself heal from the years of trauma incurred at Queen's, understanding that not only is it okay to be angry, but necessary, in order to survive.

Editorial Board: Megan Femi-Cole / Andrew Ha / Krystal Paraboo / Praveen Thind / Elamin Abdelmahmoud / Kavita Bissoondial

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Editor's Note

CYZ and MA talk diversity

AMS executive candidates discuss diversity on campus and their plans for the future

Another racist incident

Another racist incident

Another racist incident

Another racist incident

Another racist incident

As I write this editor's note, I sit in my fourth year DEVS seminar, trying to speak about my erasure, silencing and invisibility in this very class. As I speak, I feel able to breathe again, instead of having to tip toe around my own classroom as I have done for so long. For months I have been silent. I have held back my tongue, unable to speak to my oppressors who surround me. My peers whose words have cut lashes into my very being, dismiss my brownness as easily as they forget their whiteness while professors ignore my presence and continue to profess their commitment to feminist and other "progressive" politics as they allow racist remarks to go uncontested.

After five years, I am exhausted. As I know you are too.

My time at Queen's has been a tiresome journey that I could never have anticipated. It's one that I am still struggling in, often barely keeping my head above water, drowning in the sea of whiteness that surrounds

me. Through this, CultureSHOCK! has served as a life raft, pulling me out of the depths of pain, self-hatred, anger and sadness, giving me the strength to float momentarily on the collective experiences of my peers.

It is in fact a place in which I have been extremely fortunate to find my voice in the work of others when I had no idea how to articulate myself. It is where I have found a sense of community when I thought I was isolated and alone on this campus.

It is my hope that it can do the same for others, that it is able to give you energy and strength, reawaken your passions and rejuvenate your-self.

Thanks so much to everyone who has been involved with this edition. Dan from Allan Graphics, you have been so supportive and a great publisher. Safiah & Daniella, I don't think anyone will be able to

understand the sacrifices you have made in order to better this campus, but know that your endless work is so appreciated and you are very loved.

There are so many reasons why I am embarrassed to be a Queen's student and will FOREVER be ashamed to be a Queen's graduate. I am however grateful to this place for making me understand the importance of community. Thanks to everyone at QCRED, Levana, Four Directions and OPIRG for enacting and teaching me again and again what community is and for saving my life repeatedly.

As Alice Walker said, "It is, in the end, the saving of lives that we writers are about...We do it because we care...We care because we know this: The life we save is our own".

Kavita Bissoondial

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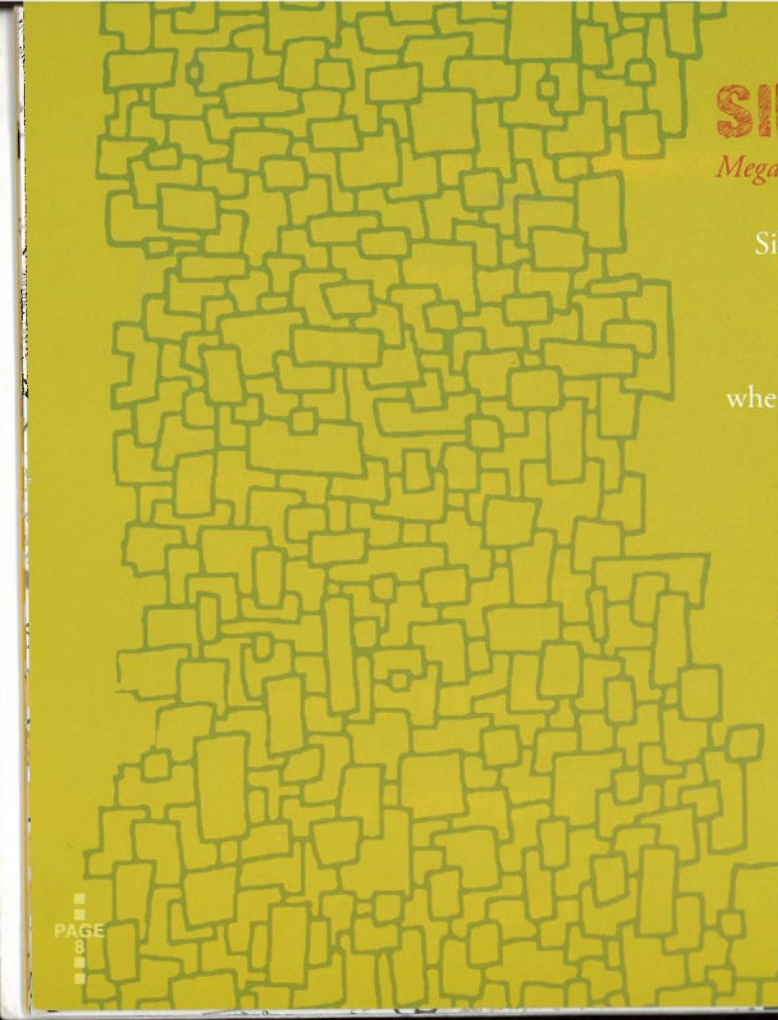
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SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Megan Femi-Cole

Silence is golden, except in moments like this when it seems to be
bitter

Making me recall those days under a hot African sun
when my grandmother would force that malaria medicine down my
throat.

How the distinctive aftertaste would follow,
How I would always swallow,

eyes closed, fists clenched, as if doing battle with the taste
Those days so far removed from this white snow, this ivory
tower.

Silence is golden so I sit there silently as you say, "I'm
not saying slavery was right but it was totally justified,
economically at least"

A casual flip of your hair, swig of your coffee as if there was no weight behind your words

The thought just as fleeting as deciding which pair of lululemon sweat pants you would wear that day.

My mind is reeling with images of slave ships, shackles, people –my people- dehumanized, reduced to pounds of flesh all in the name of empire.

Shipped off to Virginia and the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations but never having the luxury to taste the sweetness of the luxury their callous hands produced,
No taste except the gall of being other and less than.

Women with bodies like mine, hips like mine, lips like mine becoming sexual prey,
Denied agency over their lives and bodies because it was 'economically justified'.
Those words ring in my ear until a tap on the table lets me know I'm thinking too much again...

You offer a smile-easy, even warm and ask "Wanna grab lunch"
"No" I reply, "I've got to head back to Stauffer"
I have no where to go but my mouth is still bitter.
I'm questioning whether there was cowardice in my silence,
I'm wondering if our friendship is at all justified.

BITCH PLEASE

Shiza Malik

You see hungry eyes, unwashed faces,
I remember a brother's smile, fields of emerald and gold.
You sympathize,
I can't swallow my guilt.
You skip slides, sip your coffee,
I toss in the heat of a June night.
You see a 'fragile state' marked in red,
I see borders drawn with blood.
You toss around names,
"Developing"
"Third world"
"Global South"
I think "home".
Your clock says 8:40 am,
I see another night falling,
over my four million, under canvas roofs.

YOU ARE PERUVIAN? OH EM GEE! I WENT TO PERU LAST SUMMER ON THIS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Anonymous

Don't talk to me.

You might think you are complimenting me by saying that my country is beautiful.

You might think I have no problem with you putting all those pictures of Peruvian children and women on your Facebook.

Exoticizing them.

Exoticizing me.

All the product of your fucking privileged gaze.

I don't want to know about your projects in Peru.

Fuck your projects. We don't need them.

It angers me that you had the ability to go to my country

And do some fucked up, white saviour, missionary work,

When I haven't been able to go back because all of my family's savings were eaten up by the Canadian government/economy when we moved.

And don't fucking say I'm being unfair when I call you out.

Your tourism sickens me.

It colonizes me.

It dehumanizes me.

You don't give a shit about peoples' lives.

You just want to have some summer fun.

Wanna learn about my culture, you say?

GO LEARN ABOUT YOUR PRIVILEGE FIRST

THERE'S MORE
THAN ONE WAY
TO HEAL

Dana Wesley

PEOPLE

Sheena Resplandor

In this town,
we are like a multi-coloured
display rainbow
traveled on boats, planes and feet
tired and hopeful
for a place to call
home.

Mostly brown bodies
charred and scarred
from wars
past and present
future uncertain
lingering between
colour, too much
money, too white

Beautiful bodies
1 to 3 generations
eyes
hair
blood
passed on
stories
not
told

to keep quiet
we left those behind

our hearts are overseas
our hearts walk on the streets
too often they are crushed
too often they are ignored

they have no place here
we clamour away
fighting for a seat
some space
a voice

We are people
just trying to forget
just trying to be
people

SHOPPER'S SCENE

Anoodth Naushan

The cashier at the Shoppers Drug Mart recognizes my plight. I offer coins, a bill and a lottery ticket wanting to comfort her, barely stifling a desire to shout something White. Something that would affirm my belonging, but I am repeatedly foiled in my attempts to pass. The five-dollar bill curves against the counter like Muslims in prayer. The coins jingle too loud and slap the white counter with a force like bullets expelled from a gun cradled in brown Arab hands. The lottery ticket counts failure with numbers too high to make sense. I am too strange to make sense of and I am too oppressed to have sense. "The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women."¹ Yes, it is often through the language of human rights and gender equality that the project of empire is undertaken. I await the words that will drop like bombs. Bombs falling in cadence like a thousand kisses."²

What do we do while we wait for bombs, promised and prepared?

How do we ready ourselves for exile?

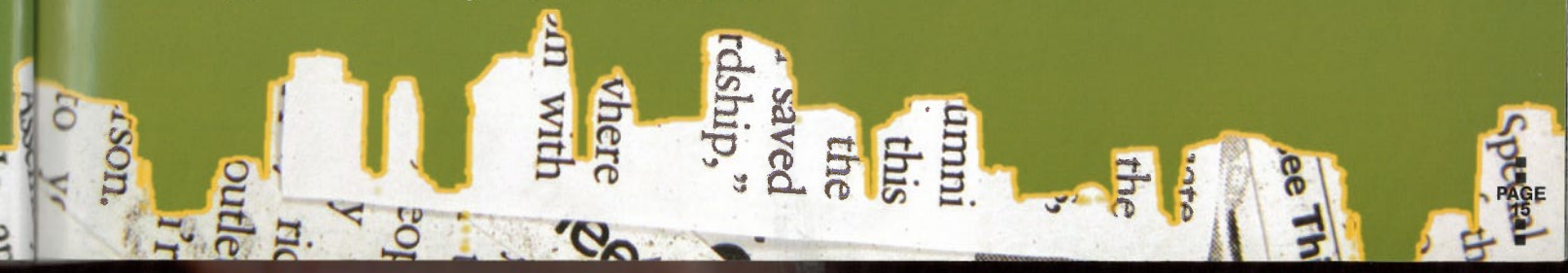
Do we pack pieces of lovers, spouses and children? Or do we carry the urns holding ashes of our mothers? Do we fill our locket with lineage, or do we hide soil so that when it rests against our heart, we can imagine it is still ours? What about the things we cannot hold?

Don't think about this. Help gather jugs, silverware, toys,

clothing, food, prayer books, scraps of poetry, the recipes we meant to try, numb How can we ever pack anything if not everything?

No where laces into now here. "You people have such restrictive dress for women," she says shifting uncomfortably on her heels. "You're in Canada now; women have rights. You don't have to wear that thing on your head." The other customers nod, some solemnly, some earnestly. Encouraged, the cashier pats my hand and continues: "You must be suffocating under there. You know, you can't let your father or your brothers or tradition dictate what you wear and how you live." More nods of approval. My hijab forced on me because nobody would choose to be disabled inclines me to silence; hijab crippling, lips silencing, crippling silence, lip synching and I am sinking in this assault. I want to wage a mutiny/g with words. Rip apart the narrative that will only acknowledge difference on promotional material. But how do you express a sorrow that words seem to defy? How do you get at something neither of your two languages can express? Anger gives way to breaking exhaustion.

Home of my mother stroking my hair, gentle voice lulling me to sleep in our new apartment in Etobicoke
Home of my father who is so tired of being foreign, of trying so hard to breathe.
Home of my great-grandfather tilling the land so that his children will know history, bread and future.
Home of the mountains and sea and banyan trees.
Home surviving, persisting, resisting, '93, '00 and now 2011.



I reach for my receipt, conscious of the eyes that assess my assimilability. "And your traditions," she says delivering a familiar punch line, "you should know that the stoning of women and honor killings...that's not allowed in Canada. Women have rights here." Thank you kind white woman whose ignorance, oppression and righteousness masquerades as compassion, as modernity, as benevolent cultural instruction. Thank you white woman trying to save me from the tyranny of my faith so that I can be "neatly chained to a...thong?"³ I stride toward the exit. I want words in revolt. I want words as acts of witness and confrontation; words that will acknowledge traumatic histories and presents, undermine familiar symbolically charged stereotypes and representations in ways that allow for recoding and reimagining, and envision a day when the discourse and the realities of the racialized person moves beyond surviving to actually thriving. I want....I want to create resistance poems that will affirm existence in an environment marked by systematic erasure. But to those back home waiting for a state in a state of delirium, a state of transcendence I have to tell of life in Canada. I have to tell those who are waiting [they're used to waiting] have to smile and tell them that life here is good, Alhamdulillah. Have to reassure them because they are dying

The more I add the sum of the living against the dead, the more I seem to vanish in the balance. I need words in revolt because it is our poems that dream us safe and alive.

¹ Laura Bush, "Radio Address" 17 November 2001

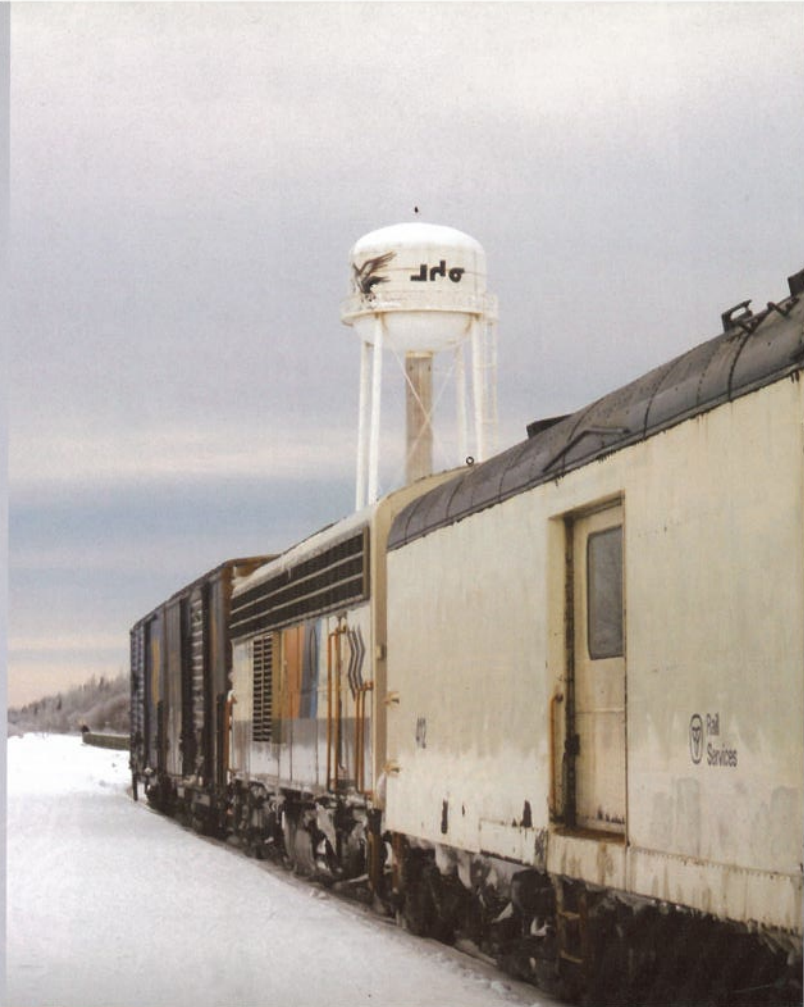
² Rawi Hage, *DeNiro's Game* (House of Anansi Press, 2006)

³ Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, "A Day in the Life"

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MOOSONEE WATER TOWER

Dana Wesley



thoughts on the classroom.

Safiah Chowdhury

• sometimes, turning out is the only mechanism you survived in a discussion-based setting, instead of leaving (which comes to own penalties)

• hesitate to say real thoughts on a matter bc of how ppl characterize you and assume you to be ID/ have limited scope of understanding material.

• hesitate to admit knowledge abt an aspect relating to far year abt being characterized as an expert on that area.

“There's the other camp”

• a larger class setting, if you belong to a minority group, ppl notice if you know ppl notice your absence, impending your engagement to class.

• when something abt ppl abt colour or smthg you obviously are is spoken abt, ppl glance atcha expect a reaction so gotta be more cognizant of body lang. and pretend to be nonchalant when really you're not.

• you never ~~know~~ quite know how to react to another person as your 'minority' identity who says something you either disagree with or that speaks on behalf of you.

• sometimes, you can't participate in the discussion bc you disagree with its very premise.

NOTES FROM ALUM

Mohamed Awad

I spent ten months at Queen's. That's nothing. So this isn't about me. This is about you: you who've been there for years, standing strong and proud, fighting for your rights and the rights of others, not compromising, getting scarred but knowing damn well that you are leaving a mark and changing the course of the ship, even if just one inch at a time.

I am thankful for my time at Queen's. Yes, I am, because in the sea of masses I was blessed to find those who truly inspired me with their intelligence, sincerity,

and courage. They showed me that there is one line of defence we have that no one can take away from us: standing in solidarity with each other, side by side, shoulder to shoulder.

I salute the heroes who continue to fight for justice on behalf of the rest of us. Know that down the road your accomplishments will be taken for granted or tokenized like many trailblazers before you, but I relay to you today: I am humbled by your strength, I learned so much from you, and will always carry your spirit with me. We are sisters and brothers in humanity, and our strength is in our solidarity.



FETISH FOR AND FROM

Anonymous

"Sorry, but I only like sophisticated European women."

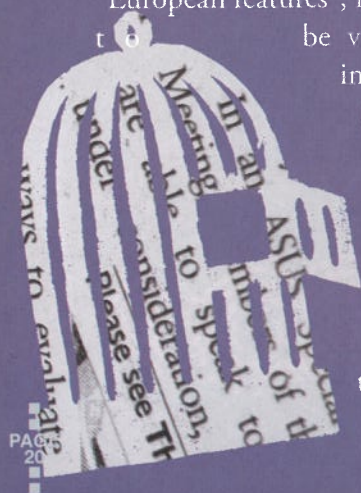
Of course, my first response was to reflect upon the colour of my skin and internalize the racist undertones of the statement. Just as I would do in my youth, I would be ashamed of my ethnicity and race; because of the inferiority of my skin-tone and the lack of "European features", my value as a human being ought to be viewed as subpar. I would look

in the mirror dishonoured by the flatness of my face, the absence of definition, the almond-shape of my eyes, my olive and tanned complexion, and the height I have been endowed with. Then, I would be reminded of societal conceptions of beauty, the images I can never imitate.

On the cover of every magazine, a beautiful, tall and slender white woman, usually with long blonde hair, straight or curly, falling slightly above her large breasts would stand proudly, showing her gorgeously white, perfect teeth. She is supposedly elegant and classy – European qualities that women of colour do not have. Instead, we are portrayed as barbaric, traditional and envious of European superiority.

This ideal of beauty has been argued as "only a preference" or "innately attractive" to those who tell women that they do not fit in the category of the sophisticated European. For a long while, I was duped by this explanation, that everyone just has certain features they are attracted to and that I was overly emotionally because I fall for men that are only attracted to sophisticated Europeans. But is this as simple as preferences? This moment is the point where I began questioning and reflecting upon my internalized racism.

How can we isolate the constant bombardment of ideals



of beauty on TV, at schools, bus stop advertisements, billboards and store windows from our own personal notions of what is beautiful? Look at the instances of plastic surgeries in Southeast Asia to allow women to mimic the features of white women. The most common surgery is the surgery to create the double eyelid which is considered to be more attractive than the single eyelid. Other surgeries include shaping the facial structure to give more definition to the cheekbones, because the undefined non-white face is not desirable. Noses are sharpened to be more angular and long. After critical assessment, I discovered the source of my internalized racism.

When we grow up in a society that target children at a young age conceptions of beauty, our preferences and ideas of what is attractive and not will inevitably be altered. I was immersed in a mass media society that teaches me to be ashamed of the colour of my skin, and that my own appearance will never be beautiful. And this is racist. I am to be unhappy that my beauty

does not conform to the norm of beauty – whiteness. The shame I felt and the inadequacy experienced were products of racist conceptions of what is beautiful.

From these conceptions, fetishes are created. We are told that the only beauty is whiteness; anything but whiteness is exotic; and we may develop fetishes from non-whiteness. Similarly, those who are attracted to women of colour only, such as catching “yellow fever” have fetishes for the Orient. And indeed, I pointed out a form of racism that not many dare to discuss or venture. Yet, as a person growing out of the shell as a youth of colour being ashamed of her skin every day of her life, I must critically assess and realize the racist elements of these fetishes. And ultimately, I am ashamed no more.

LE BONHEUR N'EST PAS AILLEURS

Aminta Dicko

(Happiness is not elsewhere. This short story excerpt is about an illegal immigrant being sent back to his home country after being discovered. This story exposes his taught, feelings and inner-monologue with himself about a life marked by colonialism, racism, inequality and individualism. Often history is forgotten and this story is here to remind us the history behind today's inequalities and the psychological challenges faced by millions of people in the world currently risking their lives at the quest of happiness.)

« Mesdames et messieurs, bienvenue à bord du vol Air France 799 à destination de Bamako-Sénou, nous vous rappelons que ce vol est non fumeur... Ladies and gentlemen... »

Loin de moi cette voix du néant ; féminine mais sans émotions.

Mes yeux, grands ouverts ne voient plus, vos silhouettes

flottent dans les allées du vol numéro 799 à destination de Bamako telles de sinistres vapeurs du verbe.

Loin de moi la vie !

Le bruit de vos pas, le son de vos voix, vos odeurs, témoins insolents de vos existences semblent me narguer; ils tournent autour de moi sans jamais m'atteindre !

La vie nous sépare; elle déploie un long rideau d'indifférences qui empêchent nos souffles de communiquer. Cinq ans que le diable m'écrase de tout son mal ; cinq ans que le soleil n'éclaire pas mes pas, que je m'égare dans le dédale marécageux de mon esprit.

Je suis la tourmente.

Les grosses larmes grises qui coulent de part et d'autre de mes narines dilatées ne sont pas miennes, puis ce que je

suis hermétique à présent.

Rien ne m'appartient plus sur cette terre, alors laissez moi
ma misère, puis ce que vous avez pris
ma dignité.

Si vous saviez à quel point j'envie votre insouciance !

Votre souci majeur est de savoir l'heure exacte où les
repas seront servis, braves vivants !

Remplissez vos pensées et trinquez à la vie qui aurait du
être mienne !

Tu pense que j'aurais du comme d'autres hurler à la mort
et me tordre de douleur tel un mouton de Tabaski, alors
une poignée de fils de Marianne, indignés et concernés
auraient brandis des pancartes et protesté, l'avion n'aurait
pas décollé !

Où aurais-je du comme beaucoup menacer une hôtesse
de l'exécuter une fois au pays, car la traîtresse m'aurait
vendue ?

Mais qu'y aurais je gagné, à part un voyage nocturne sans
témoins, dans un minuscule appareil, il n'y aurais alors
qu'eux et moi ?

Non, vois-tu, je préfère encore voyager au milieu de vous,
soyez fiers alors d'être les témoins insoculaires de l'amnésie
des hommes face au passé qui resurgit, ce fantôme à la
peau trop noire qui rappelle que l'histoire nous lie à
jamais.

Je suis de ces miséreux que la miséricorde divine a
oubliés, un de ces damnés qui risquent leur souffle pour
une existence sans dignité.

Ayez honte et levez vos verres à la mémoire des assoiffés
et des pouilleux que le Sahara a engloutis au petit soir.
Vous les oublierez bien vite.

Eux mêmes s'oublient ; les jours de marche, la langue
pendante, et où la soif est notre seule
compagne nous font régresser, mais nous marchons
puisque qu'il le faut.



event is scheduled for the 10th of
October. The students have
the student council and staff

Students say they
a historical affair

the school has decided
to hold the event on the 10th of October.

[REDACTED]

for the school's sports day
at the school hall.

appeared indigenous imagery

the school's sports day
at the school hall.

[REDACTED]

the school's sports day
at the school hall.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO ALIENATE YOUR READERS

Selena Zhang

The academic institution has taught me that in order to gain credibility, I must rid my words of their sentimentalism. If my emotions cannot be peer-reviewed, they do not belong on the page. Recently, one of my papers was returned to me with a note scrawled on the back: I have an uncomfortable sense that your anger is front and centre. Be careful not to alienate your readers. The sharpness of the professor's words caught me off-guard. In response, I cleaned up my writing meticulously and sterilised my words. But with these dulled blades, so easily skimmed over and forgotten – what impact can I make?

Compare this with the Zapatistas' First Declaration de la Realidad, and the words of its brave spokesperson, Subcomandante Marcos. There is nothing peer-reviewed or sterile here. It tugs at the common fire of humanity, calling out to the peoples of the world to take part in an 'International of Hope'. Each, in their own place, stands up. Each resists his or her own oppressions, shouting ¡Basta [Enough]! As fate would have it, I encounter this text immediately

following the purge of my writing. My eyes on their words, I immediately think of you.

You: mis compañeros, mis queridos amigos. During those long days working together in the fields and those nights in the bunkhouse we shared, we told each other about our lives and histories. Amidst the farmer's cries of "Más rápido, más rápido," we nudged one another's elbows and shared winks of secret defiance. You pretended to understand my jokes, and I pretended to like the Banda music you played from your cell phone. I have not forgotten.

.... In place of humanity, they offer us a stock market index. In place of dignity, they offer us the globalization of misery. In place of hope, they offer us emptiness. In place of life, they offer us an International of Terror (Marcos 1996:43).

The glowing images on our ratty television depicted rolling fields of dewy vegetables and smiling White families working on the same land we slaved over... The Foodland Ontario campaign is not what we know of agriculture. It is part of the lie of Neoliberalism. In order to keep the flailing agricultural industry afloat, the Canadian government annually imports almost 20,000 bodies from Mexico and the Caribbean to work on Ontario's farms. Every time I see these commercials, I wonder whether you are only a few meters out of the frame. Bodies herded like cattle for eight months of the year, I wonder: my friends, where are they hiding you now?

At the end of the season I am hungry to arm myself with "the facts". So that they will believe me, I take the institution's advice. I remain

objective. I cite all my points. I take every opportunity to speak to my peers about what is happening in our own backyard. With every word I utter, your faces are imprinted in my mind. Surely, when people find out about this, I think, they have to give a damn.

But what I get in return is apathy. One girl shrugs her shoulders at me. "Why should I care? They are choosing to come to my country." She does not recognise herself in the faces I describe. My words are cold, when they should be bleeding.

It is with disgust that I acknowledge: these impersonal studies with which I am armed are nothing but plastic bread knives. Who made the decision that ideas emerging from the spirit do not belong in academia? I have been trained to accept the defeat of my friends, the continual stripping of their humanity. Peer-reviewed journal articles on "unfree labour" can only admit injustice with a whisper – otherwise, they are not objective enough to be published. We are told the issue is too complex to tackle on our own. Leave it up to the UFCW or the NGOs; the government will ultimately make the right decision. Someone else is fighting a battle that has already been lost.

My dear friend Jose, I see your face in this text. The eldest in a family of six, you left school at fourteen when your father died. When I met you, you were forty.

You told me you did not want your children to grow up without a father like you had, but the choice between leaving them and letting them go hungry was no choice at all. "They call this modern war "globalization," it assassinates and forgets" (Marcos 1996).

¡Basta! I want to hope for more than what they are offering you: a minimum wage and twelve-hour workdays, your body treated like a machine with an adjustable speed dial. Mario, you made me promise not to tell the farmer that you needed to see an optometrist because the pesticides that took the vision from your left eye so many years ago were now making things worse. You didn't want to be seen as a "problem". Miguel, I'm sorry I couldn't do more for you when he put you on a plane halfway through the season, refusing to believe that your daily vomiting was from the chemicals that you were so inadequately trained to use. After spending the season putting rubber

bands around asparagus bunches, I am sick of the smell; it will always remind me of the interventions I could have made, but didn't.

¡Basta! "Hope is the rebelliousness that rejects conformism and defeat" (Marcos 1996). More and more, I am realising that I have received no response from my peers because I am not demanding one. Like the journal articles that support my arguments, I have been speaking in a whisper. Be careful not to alienate your readers. And so, I tiptoe when I should be stomping.

¡Basta! Since the 1990s, the unions have been demanding your rights and their right to represent you. In 2006, after decades of exclusion, you are finally written into the Ontario Health and Safety Act. The government responds to the complaints filed against it by giving you the right associate, but it continues to deny you the ability to unionize, strike, and

collectively speak out against exploitation. It's been thirty-seven years. These channels aren't working.

¡Basta! No more leaving it up to someone else. Fear is a sharpened blade, held tight against the migrant worker's throat. The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program feeds on the fear of repatriation, the fear that sons and daughters will go to school hungry, or else not go at all.

And I am expected to combat this with bread knives?

¡Ya Basta! The inhumanity of globalisation has made you "devalued currency, always worth less and less, the currency of [your] blood turning a profit" (Marcos 2001:111). In failing to respond to the injustice in its own backyard, the Canadian public is erecting a fence around you. The Constitution promises the people in this country freedom. There is nothing free about the labour you are submitted to. There is nothing free about being told that you are less than human because you do not qualify for our Charter.

¡Ya Basta! I refuse to leave my heart out of the equation, for that is what gives me hope, the most powerful weapon against complacency. The institution has made me mute, but I refuse to be silenced. "Now, who will be able to tell us that dreaming is lovely but futile? Now, who will be able to argue that dreams, however many dreamers, cannot become a reality?" (Marcos 2001: 108)

And so, to that professor who warned me of my sentimentalism, and indeed to the institution which validates the sterilization of my words, I will not concede any longer. I hope my anger is front and centre. I hope it does make you uncomfortable, because that is better than the injustice of making you feel nothing at all. At the heart of discomfort is the knowledge that something is wrong. Writing with conviction, with all those subjective emotions that I've spent years so carefully avoiding, my imagination is being liberated from its intellectual prison. It awakens a dormant hope for a better future. ¡Ya Basta! Enough is enough! That battle cry is a weapon, a sledgehammer that can teach our institutionalised minds to break down the wall of passive complacency. All we have to do is let it.

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GEEMAN
ON THE
ALBANY
RIVER

Dana Wesley

MY SISTERS MY SOUL MY HEART

Dana Wesley

My sisters, my soul, my heart,
We are mothers, aunts, and grandmothers.
We are connected in spirit, in mind,
Even though we sing differently
The songs of our distant ancestors,

They look on us standing proudly,
Knowing that we are strong women,
And that all of our voices are beautiful.

My sisters, my soul, my heart,
We are mothers, aunts, and grandmothers.
We share this journey, our journey.
We walk alongside one another,

Remembering that the path we walk
Will not always lead us where we want,
But that there will always be another hand
To guide us if we lose our balance.

My sisters, my soul, my heart,
We are mothers, aunts, and grandmothers.
Though we might be from different nations,
the blood that runs through our veins is one.
So we sit together in circles of seven,
Speaking stories of truth to the next,
Guiding with gentle hands and laughter,
Another generation of strong indigenous women.



PROUD

Flip

I keep losing my Pride.

I had it when my partner kissed me for the first time
And when my parents hugged her when they met.

But then I couldn't find it.

I might have lost it amidst the staring at the ice cream shop
When I couldn't decide between a sundae or a milkshake

Between judgments on my skin or my relationship.

I had it when we danced in the middle of the street
The paper-mache head of Harper just ahead of us.

But I lost it somewhere
between riot police and illegal detainments
Between fear and uncontrollable anger.

I swear I had it when I packed my bag
Ear plugs, water bottle, bandana, Pride.

But then they searched me
And I couldn't find it anymore.

I had it when I marched
from Nathan Phillips Square to Queen's Park
Queer women marching side by side
chanting, singing, dancing
We walked in the sweltering heat of the summer
But I knew my Pride wouldn't melt.
It's stronger than that.

And I had it the night we danced.
With hip hop and dancehall blasting from speakers
Musical reminders of my teenage years
Sexy queers, dancing all up on each other.
I had it on the way to the march
Until we passed by the group waving flags of Israel
And Islamophobic signs
It reminds me of the way that my sexuality is used
As a barometer for progress
And I've lost my Pride again.

Then I remember places that don't celebrate with parades
But accept love and sex in the various ways it manifests.
No doubt, they will seem backward, ignorant, enemies of queers.
While our nation is complicit in the war that indiscriminately
murders people, including those we want to "liberate".
So I sit, reading anti-capitalist, Palestine solidarity, free speech signs
And I find that Pride again.
That Pride steeped in politics.
That Pride that wants to queer the government.
Even more, the one that wants to fuck the government.
With thigh high boots
Flogger in one hand
Dildo in the other.

BREAK ME DOWN

Maame D.

To love always she taught me to
Pain she said was in joy
Look ahead for the days of fulfillment when
doomsday prophets bow their heads in shame
They can take some but certainly not all
My child you shall overcome
Fragile memories frame my mind, they pass yet their
power engulfs the silhouette of this body to stillness
My mind cannot fathom
Was blackness the darkness my mother gave me?
The ignorance that made others belittle me?
My tongue rolls without pause between the sequential
Ws
Who? When? Why? What?
Choked by words unspoken, I quiver at my own fears

and answers I may never know
Fears that I may never measure up to that blackness or
her blackness or his blackness
Feelings held up like a pool of water behind a dam
Stagnant and immobile
Frustrations that a lifetime may never accomplish in
overcoming
But how did I become what I became and what will I
become if.....
If moods swing in my face and behind me like a cold
steel pendulum
And.....the sun never sets, and anger, sadness and
sorrows swell my heart into a prey
Prey for the spirits that break, dehumanize and
humiliate me
Silence becomes my shield

RACISM IS

Anonymous

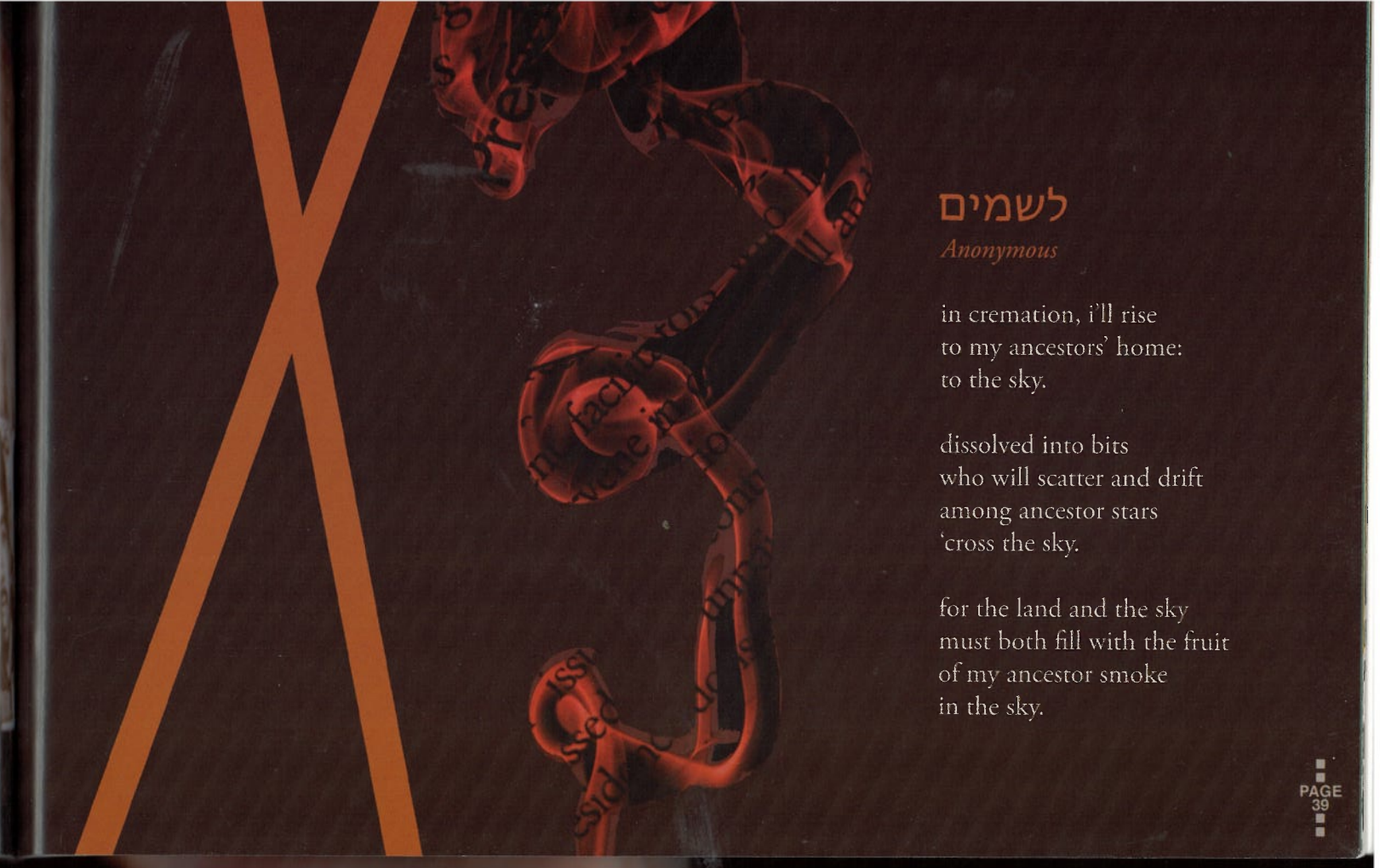
For all we claim to know, we know not of one another.
Unlike the harmony nature has created for us.
Crooked hearts are dominated by egocentricity.
Kaleidoscopic views of life are reveled as whole.
Even though the sum of its' parts are most important.
Defy misconceptions, damn the schemas that sway the pure.
Upheaval starts with hearts and minds of the oppressed.
Purge the hostile ideologies that implicitly seep.

Racism on Campus



OSCAR GRANT

Kavita B



לשמים

Anonymous

in cremation, i'll rise
to my ancestors' home:
to the sky.

dissolved into bits
who will scatter and drift
among ancestor stars
'cross the sky.

for the land and the sky
must both fill with the fruit
of my ancestor smoke
in the sky.

students
Muslim

"It was part of hating myself,"
she said. "That's internalized racism
... not wanting to be part of your
culture because you're embarrassed.
... You have no idea how it
affects you."

THIS PIECE IS FOR YOU WHITE ALLIES

Anonymous

This piece is for you, white "allies"

The ones who need to prove 24/7 that you are not racist.

The ones who are educated on anti-racism and other anti-oppression work. The ones who know it's not ok to self-identify as an ally, but who take up so much space being around you is suffocating. This piece is for you. Yes, you. The ones who don't miss an opportunity to talk to me about racist or sexist shit. The ones who really overdo the loud and indignant "That's so fucked up." Don't you realize you are already loud enough?! Even when you don't talk, you're yelling. And racism, sexism and other forms of oppression are not just discussion topics for me, they are my life. And fuck you, that's not all I can talk about! But when I come to you to talk about these things, you speak the most and you speak the loudest, and the worst is that you try to explain to me my lived experiences, quoting the work of some academics you know. Do you see how you are exercising your privilege here?

And you are not the type I would get easily angry at. You are the "cool" kind. The kind that openly denounces oppression. The kind that knows the talk. But that is all you do. You talk and talk. Your commitment to anti-oppression is from the lips out. You know what to say and when to say it. You know that

you need to challenge your privilege, you know that you benefit from power structures, you know the big words: heteronormativity, positionality, intersectionality, blah blah blah. And this is why it is so hard to keep you accountable, because of the power relations that you maintain when you interact with me, and because of how you are constructed as an “ally” due to your (superficial) identity politics.

It is also hard to keep you accountable because you denounce racism so openly, doing what I would like to see every white person do. But denouncing racism is NOT destroying privilege. Openly and adamantly denouncing racism is yet another form of exercising privilege, as it is A LOT easier and safer for a white person to do this than for me or any other person of colour to. This talk needs to come with the walk. And the talk needs to also be done with full consciousness of how your white identity, white folk, is shaping the way in which you can say things and I can't. When you keep bringing up racist issues and “inform” me about them, you are just trying to overcompensate for your disgusting white privilege. You feel guilty that you have it and you use every word that comes out of your mouth strategically, for people of colour and people doing anti-racist work to acknowledge you as an ally. FUCK THAT. Anti-oppression work is not just denouncing oppression. It is actively trying to get rid of and not use your privilege, on which my oppression is based.

When I first started thinking about racism and colonialism and how these two have shaped who I am, how I think, and how I live my life,

I was thankful to have so many white folks around me “challenging” these structures and “helping” me in my struggle. I did not realize that this was me uncritically thinking of “allyhood” and participating in power structures that subjugated me to the point that I felt the need to be grateful, as if I owed something to these white people for the work (or just the talk) that they were doing.

But I don't owe you even thinking that you are cool for doing (or saying) things that are your responsibility to do. You are not doing me a favour. You are doing what you better fucking do because all the privileges that you have are based on my disadvantage.

So yes, this piece is for you. For the ones who put yourselves in the teaching position when you know SHIT. The ones who try to overcompensate for your white and male guilt by announcing it to the world that you are not racist or sexist, with your empty FB statuses in which you get angry, or with the discussions you start EVERY time someone in the “anti-oppression community” talks to you. But your anti-racist, anti-sexist (verbal) initiatives are about me following your lead. FUCK THAT. You follow my lead.

So no, I won't thank you for your “work”. I won't label you as “cool” because you give a shit about what happens to me. I won't thank you for having (but not acting upon) your (racist) anti-racist politics. You are not doing me a favour. You owe this to me. All I “owe” you, is this piece.

There are students out there who want the opportunity for that dialogue. People on campus are not sure if they're allowed to ask these questions. We need a systematic approach so we can combat these issues at all times. You shouldn't

But the

the ult to th n
6 • QUEENS

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2008

'This is
'I really don't

TRICOLOUR

Anoodth Naushan

Blue, yellow, red.

I'm told that these are primary colours, colours that can be mixed to form all colour

A variance of colour.

Queen's calls this a diversity of colour, (much like the faces they paste on their welcome to queen's brochure) Some call it a tapestry of colour, primary colours that are all colour.

Primary colours, but primarily, errr... only on the surface.

Look deeper, just a little deeper.

Yesterday, I'm asked: where are you from. Toronto I say. No, where are you really from?

The day before that I'm tokenized. Tokenized because you like to prove you're "cultured" and have non-white friends. And tokenized because my Devs class thinks I can speak on behalf of all people of colour. A Rosetta stone of sorts because I can converse in the colonial language and sit with them in a university classroom, the sole "brown person," the sole "woman," the sole "Muslim," expected to speak about the experiences of my entire race and religion.

The day before that someone tell the class a story about a white friend who dressed in blackface for Halloween, and everybody thinks a skinny white kid dressed as Oprah is sooo funny. Even if the prof didn't laugh, his silence spoke volumes.

It goes on and on and on.

Personal experiences displaced and delegitimized because of primary colours.

You "bleed tricolor." Some of us just bleed.

The tricolor is not all colour, just three static colours that will never mesh and never blend. Colours that fabricate a narrative of inclusivity. "Inclusive" colours that silence critique of the messed-up things that happen on this campus.

Three colours with long histories of exclusion and appropriation.

Three colours that are violent.

The tricolor is not all colour and this campus cannot rightfully claim this representation

NEWS
ot 'us' versus 'them'
l that it is a random thing'

BER 14, 2008

NOTES FROM ALUM

Raza Syed

Surround yourself with resistance. In those classes where you are targeted as the 'angry minority or tokenized for your 'coloured' experience; on those nights where you feel unsafe amidst angry racist drunks or are exotified for your looks; on a campus where racism goes unpunished, when it is recognized at all; when relationships around you start to fracture because of your traumatic experiences or their outright denial by your peers; surround yourself with resistance.

If ever you find yourself alone, away from friends and allied hands, lean on bell hooks and read some Dionne Brand. If you ever find yourself lacking in community, YouTube yourself some DefPoetry. 'Fuck you' is articulate enough when you're too mad to think, and the school newspapers won't print what you wrote. Remember: books and poetry are resistance; and writing too. But a fist in the air, in a pinch, will do.

Thanks to you. You who have picked up this publication to engage with us. You who have shared your-selves with us. You who have written, designed and imagined a better world. You who have produced beautiful work in order to survive.

In so doing you are not only helping others survive but also to heal from the traumas of this school. The difficulty of writing cannot be understated, especially for those of us whose speech is marked by our skin, for whom the act of speaking on this campus is in itself political and places us in danger. But we speak and write time and time again, not because we are brave or strong, but because we must in order to survive.

This book is a celebration of you.

"I write for those women who do not speak, for those who do not have a voice because they were so terrified, because we are taught to respect fear more than ourselves. We've been taught that silence would save us, but it won't."

Audre Lorde

Thank You.

THE PASSION FOR FREEDOM IS STRONGER THAN ALL PRISONS