



kate

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The articles and opinions contained within this magazine are not necessarily those of the staff, AUSA or printers.

Who is she? {About Kate}

Since 2007, Kate magazine has been published annually by the Auckland University Students' Association (AUSA). As a student-published and student-written magazine, Kate exists to raise awareness of women's issues, experiences and interests. Kate Mag pays tribute to Kate Sheppard, the most prominent member of New Zealand Women's Suffrage and the adored face on New Zealand's \$10 note; and Kate Edger, the first woman in New Zealand to gain a university degree and the first woman in the British Empire to earn a BA.

Editor: Emma Rogers

Layout: Nick Withers

2020 has been a decade already, and it's only September.

Emma Rogers, AUSA Acting President

Over the last few years, I have always enjoyed picking up a copy of Kate in September to read about the trials and tribulations of women in our university community. Toying with the risk of losing Kate Mag for 2020 due to the absence of a Women's Rights Officer on the AUSA team, I happily volunteered to dutifully collect stories, poetry, prose, and art to fill the pages you see before you. Then Covid happened.

Over a matter of what now seems like days, the country went into level 4 lockdown, our social lives shifted online, and we very quickly found our way around Zoom to keep up with classes. We were pushed into what felt like the most disconnected way to live, spending most of our time inside our homes with little to no contact with others from outside our "bubbles". This wasn't easy for many – people dealt with significant mental health issues, there was widespread confusion, overwhelm, and people were worried about what was happening. Everyone has their own stories of what happened next, and what is still happening as a result of Covid but one thing that stuck with me was the idea that

we pivoted to preserve our personal connections, very quickly.

The 2020 theme for Kate is fitting and, at a time of ultimate disconnection, is needed. Celebrating connections not only looks at the way we switched to Friday night drinks via zoom or calling your grandma twice a week because you couldn't visit but also the connection you have to your community during crisis and the importance of a stable wifi connection.

My year so far has revolved around ensuring I am well connected, which included finding new ways to stay close to people, at a distance. What that looked like in my role at AUSA is listening to student needs and helping them find support where possible. It also looked like communicating to the university the stories we were hearing from students and ensuring we were representing their voices. Turning to zoom, I have been able to hear from students who are incredibly driven and passionate and student leaders who are pivoting to the online space without compromising the quality of work they do for students. I tautoko the hard

work of our Student Council members and other student leaders to support students, especially now.

Among these passionate student leaders are my two good friends, who I am lucky enough to work with every day, Anamika Harirajh and Emily McDonald. Kate is about celebrating the achievements of women and while there are many, many people behind the scenes supporting myself and the AUSA team these two women played a pivotal role during covid and beyond.

Emily worked around the clock to transform her role of Engagement Vice-President, a position that brings you political debates, free exams seminars and many other in-person events into something that could be workable online and still reach students. Being one of the most hardworking and ambitious people I know, she seems to do this with ease while also juggling uni work and other work commitments.

Anamika, our welfare Vice President for 2020 and our incoming President elected for 2021, can not only hustle together students to vote her into office in one of the busiest times of the semester but can also do so while turning around hundreds of hardship grants for our students and scoring a solution to period poverty. It has been an absolute pleasure to work alongside her, seeing how much she cares for students and supporting them. These women are going far in life, and I can't wait to see what they do next.

During the first lockdown, I was also working in a "non-contact" role at a covid testing station. I was lucky enough to work in an all-female team of doctors, nurses and operations staff who worked their arses off to

get hundreds of people through our testing station. One of the nurses was my mother, a strong, take-no-shit woman with a nurses heart. If there is any woman who has had an impact on my life, it's her. Working alongside my brilliant mother while she stuck swabs up noses and calmed down the most alarmed people in a situation we couldn't control is something I will never forget. Every day she reminds me to be a strong role model and help when I can, just through her existence.

In my personal life, I was focused on checking in on my friends and coming up with new ways to do at-home pub quizzes or zest up our zoom catch ups with twilight themed virtual backgrounds. It was also clearing my calendar at 1 pm every day, so I could watch the update from the Prime Minister. A strong female leader who has dealt not only with a global pandemic but also with some of the most devastating events Aotearoa has seen.

This pandemic, among many other things, is an exercise in good leadership and our human ability to shift to a digital world. While this issue of Kate doesn't just deal with covid-19, it's impossible to be unaffected by it. Nor should it be, considering the role of strong female leaders in our community, our country and around the globe.

This year, in the spirit of celebrating connections, I asked all contributors to write a very brief introduction to their piece or a short "about me". These are connected to their work and will give you a little inside to the women behind the words. Enjoy.

Please note: Some submissions deal with sensitive topics.



I was lucky enough to work in an all-female team of doctors, nurses and operations staff who worked their arses off to get hundreds of people through our testing station.

From the Vice-Chancellor

Dawn Freshwater

When I started at the University of Auckland in March this year, I became the fourth woman Vice-Chancellor among our eight New Zealand universities. And, if we are looking at gender equity on a statistical basis we'd have to say that that's not a bad place to be.

Of course, New Zealand has an outstanding record of firsts where women are concerned; I see significant and ongoing progress across all sectors in gender issues. And while I believe the bigger picture is inclusive leadership, not just gender, I am absolutely committed to keep addressing any imbalance wherever I can use my influence and role to do so.

As a newcomer to this country, I have been looking at the history of women I have recently learned about. From the strong leadership roles played by Wāhine Toa from the earliest days of Māori society to 19th Century women suffragettes – both Māori and Pākehā – who worked to ensure women in this country were the first to get the vote. And individuals like Kate Edgar – New Zealand's first female university graduate in 1877, Bessie Te Wenerau Grace, the first Māori woman university graduate in 1926, and more recently our alumnae KDee-Aimiti Ma'ia'i who last year become the first Pasifika woman to receive a prestigious scholarship to Oxford University.

We all build upon their experiences and legacies.

In my role as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Auckland I have very ambitious ideas about what universities can achieve. Education changed my life – and it also changed my family's life as a result of changing mine. I was the first in my family to go to university and this led not only to improved opportunities for my family, but ultimately for my daughter and grandchildren and the people we connect to.

Like KDee, I know the challenges of leaving education for family reasons and returning to it at a later date. I'm sure that she, like me, is particularly grateful for the mentors and education leaders who provided the support to help us, in our own ways, achieve.

It can be difficult for an individual to carry their own sense of con-

fidence or their own awareness of their capability and the opportunities before them. They (we), need the support of our whānau and friends, community leaders, mentors and the institutions we learn within.

I know the university sector, and under my watch, this university in particular, has a responsibility to make opportunities that I benefitted from and people like Kate Edgar and Te Wenerau Grace fought to achieve, available to women and men, Pākehā, Māori, Pacific people, immigrants and refugees, school leavers and mature students. The outcomes will stretch far beyond individual students to advance our communities and enhance our global contribution.

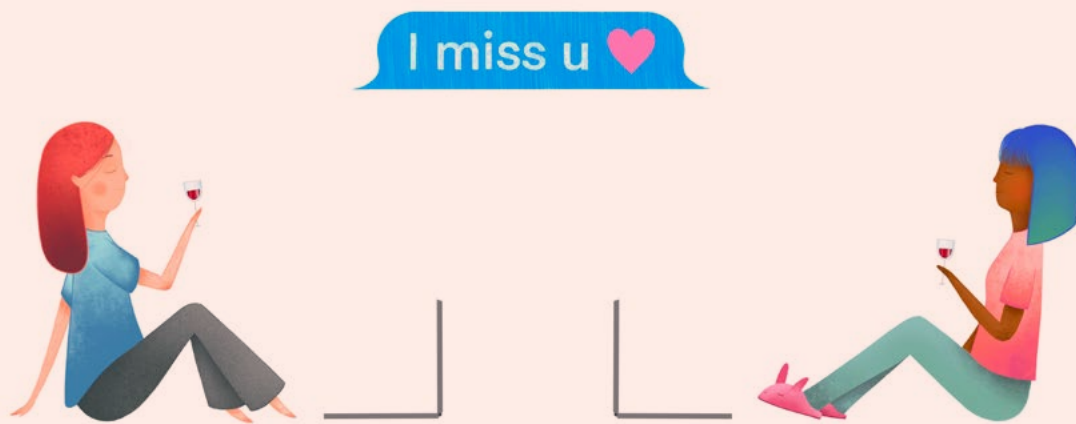
Completing this piece in the lead up to Māori language week, I have been particularly taken with this whakataukī.

It highlights to me that for all of us, the the way we succeed and develop is through the strength and support of our networks, connections, and communities.

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi /With your basket and my basket the people will thrive

Dawn Freshwater
Vice-Chancellor





Covid, Connectivity, and Comparison: Women on social media.

Marika England

In the midst of the world altering Covid-19 pandemic human connectivity in the online realm has increased exponentially. In a time already so deeply influenced by the rise of the online sphere, Covid-19 has brought to the forefront the relationships we have with the internet and its various platforms. In particular, social media's claim to connectivity has tightened its grasp on our relationships, both with each other and ourselves. Our increased

online connectivity, in the absence of physical social opportunity has created an unexpected by-product of toxic comparative behaviours across social media platforms.

For New Zealand, the exposure of our modified online behaviour was revealed by the isolating conditions of level four lockdown. Given the lack of authentic observation of the daily routines of those around us, the tendency to exaggerate productivity and

success on social media was undeniably heightened. Social media became flooded with a series of challenges, trends, and tips for turning lockdown into the ideal opportunity for self-improvement. Baking, cooking, workouts, and crafts were only beginning, the activities were endless.

All who dared to participate in Covid-era connectivity found their platforms saturated with suggestions on how to become the versions of ourselves. For women, the already vastly exaggerated sense of achievement performed on social media was not only intensified, but due to the need for online connectivity it quickly became inescapable. This display of personal success has the tendency to encourage comparison, how does our own way of responding to the challenging lockdown conditions compare to the social media performances of others?

When we struggled to get up and dressed because it felt pointless. When we couldn't find the motivation to cook a proper meal because that's all we had done for the past week. When working out was energy we couldn't spare after our battles with zoom, social media acted as a constant reminder of our perceived failures.

In reality, the number of those who used lockdown as a self-improvement journey was a minority. Most of us simply worked to continue doing the tasks that an average day demands. We completed our work, both professional and student, we cooked when necessary, we kept ourselves and our spaces clean. Many women found themselves in sole charge of their children, denied the relief of a school day where children were cared for. Women juggled, as they often do, a multiplicity of roles.

The maintenance of a relatively normal daily schedule under the conditions of lockdown is objectively a success, yet the nature of social media caused many to feel inferior and unproductive. In comparing ourselves to performances of personal growth and general over-achievement so often depicted on social media, we fail to recognize the triumphs that define our daily lives. To work, to parent, to do what is needed of us, is enough. Being a woman should not be a lifestyle choice, our successes are not defined in relation to the perceived success of others. During a time of such

dependence on internet connectivity it is important to reconfigure our expectations of both ourselves and others to somewhat reflect the reality that social media fails to show us.

The consideration of social media's fragmented relationship with the truth also applies to our physical sense of self and self-esteem. When human interaction and the general daily observation of the people around us is removed, we are left more exposed to the appearance of people as it is depicted on the internet. Whether it be an innate desire to communicate with each other, or general nosiness, social media is an ideal form of connectivity. However, an issue arises when we are confined to the social media sphere for the representation of all people.

Across social media, angles, lighting, filters, and editing construct bodies in a way that is neither accurate nor achievable for most. While it is entirely fair to want to present the most flattering versions of ourselves, to become immersed in the media as if it is reality leaves many risking a fractured sense of self and the pursuit of an unfair physical goal. If the ideals we observe on social media are themselves a facade, comparing ourselves to the beauty of those we see online can only be negative.

While the effects of social media on self-esteem and our tendency to

compare ourselves to women online has been widely discussed, in the context of lockdown our dependency on online forms of social connection exaggerated the issue. Comparing ourselves to the apparent productivity and beauty standards displayed by many on social media is detrimental to the effectiveness and legitimacy of the standards we create for ourselves. In the face of unattainable goals, the threat of personal failure is a constant looming threat.

While we have celebrated (justifiably) the blessing of online connectivity under the conditions of lockdown, it is important to consider the underlying issues that plague the online sphere. When isolated to our personal bubbles, both physical and online, it is crucial to remind ourselves of the reality at hand. Don't believe everything you see, and certainly don't use comparison to generate unfounded self-criticism under already challenging circumstances.

When isolated to our personal bubbles, both physical and online, it is crucial to remind ourselves of the reality at hand.

Marika England - Marika is a second year Global Studies and Arts student. For her, this piece is an opportunity to begin to participate in what is a complicated discussion around our online world and its very real consequences, especially in such unprecedented times.

A Review of Friendship: An Open Letter.

Louise Barnes

The plight of female friendships is complex. Over the course of a lifetime, relationships are created between women that can be described as strong, but also turbulent. There are expectations from one another; honesty, support, and the so-called girl-code that act as a guideline for all to follow. I thought I had it mastered. I was proud of my ability to not be the cause of any tears of sadness, but rather the one to wipe them away. I believed my friendships had warranted the term of 'together forever', but perhaps not.

This year has been turbulent, much reflective of my relationships. After twenty-one years I faced my first conflict which erupted under our noses, me causing to push blame onto others as my frustration was bubbling within. I felt like I had been doing too much. Too much when my efforts didn't even warrant a simple "how are you?" in return. Too much, that my integrity was compromised as I saw them leaving me behind, deciding that I was not worthy of their inside jokes. In response, I began to push them away.

It is important to note that this was around the time that particular trends on social media were circling. It was calling on those to question who your true friends were and to create a divide between those who were worthy of you and those who weren't. For this, you needed to look in towards the mirror, unpinned with the sole intent of dissecting your own self-worth. It leads questions; Did I deserve to be on the outskirts looking in? Alone.

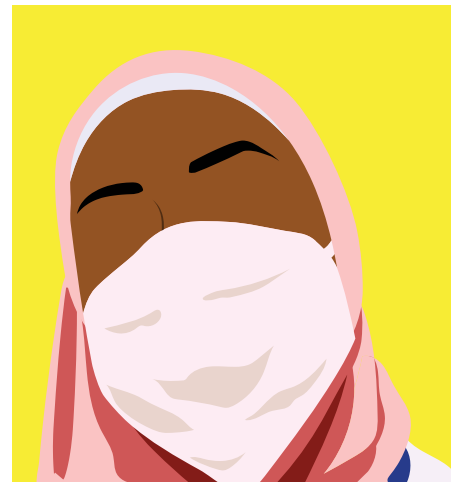
No. No one deserves that. It was the realisation that I am not perfect, but neither are they. We made mistakes, we react from emotion and thought without regard for compassion of the other. We threw the guidelines out the window when it came to unconditional love and support due to a dissonance between ourselves. But this did not last forever. Finally, after months of minimal contact, we reached out to each other and put our hearts on the table. It was clear we had painted each other the villain in our own movie without regard for personal character. Quite frankly, it was a relief to hear. It was as minimal as listening and understanding that was required in order to realign our divide.

At this age, this is normal. Life gets in the way of personal ignorance, where the failure to recognise our own blame slowly fractures the structure in which we build our relationships. This is to say, we become so invested in our own becoming of life, that selfishness remains a natural state as part of human nature. We forget what it means to reach out to others and the importance of empathy toward one's situation. Quite simply, It is a minor gesture that mends the fractures bit by bit, relieving issues of doubt, insecurities and loneliness. Life is not a competition. Instead it's a network of connections that links ourselves to another, overcoming tumultuous paths onto roads of strength, together.

After all, female relationships are complex, unpredictable and turbulent, but necessary. It is a responsibility that may not always be upheld, but always remembered for not what has been lost, but rather what you have gained. As for the kind of friend you should be, well, that's up for you to decide.

Louise Barnes - "Inspired by personal strife. This letter reflects thought processes that I believe everybody goes through at some point in their lives. It encapsulates the complexity of changing relationships, and acts as a gentle reminder that we are only human."

Eric Jang (Art on right Page) - Last May, the global network of the Black Lives Matter movement prompted me to create this digital illustration of the female African diaspora in UoA and beyond. The portrait version of my imagined twelve mask-wearing female characters, therefore, make the celebration of the African diaspora powerful for Kate Magazine 2020.E



Fears, Family, and Food

Gay Marie Francisco

Like most people, I never imagined that I would live through a pandemic. I have to admit that until now everything seems surreal. I still wake up asking myself if everything was just a bad dream. Each day, when I open my eyes, I stare at the ceiling and remind myself that there is little I can do about the reality of this difficult situation. I am helpless like most and I don't want to be helpless. I am the kind of person who tries to take control of everything in my life. I hate change of plans. I despise unmet goals. But what can I do?

Then there's family. In my case, we're miles apart. My mother and my sister's family are in the United States. My brother and his family are with my relatives in the Philippines. I'm in Aotearoa, not needing to use a face mask, still able to enjoy the outdoors and have some kind of normalcy in my life. I was still able to submit a chapter of my thesis to my supervisors in the middle of the lockdown. In the greater scheme of things, I am doing really well. Do I worry about my family? Every day. My mother is healthy but she is part of the at-risk age group and experts are saying that the US is not exactly managing this pandemic situation the way it should be. The Philippine situation is another story. As of June 9, there are more than 22,000 covid-19 cases in the country, with more than 500 new cases.

But we love food. If there's any silver lining in all of these, it's that this pandemic seems to have brought us closer as a family, not physically but through technology. Our family chat group (composed of my mom, brother, sister, uncles, aunts, cousins, niece) is always abuzz with activity. We rarely talk about covid-19 though. We mainly talk about food. We share photos of what we cooked

for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Filipinos bond over food. That's just how we are. We comment on the food that we miss eating such as mangoes and cashew fruits which I can never have here in New Zealand. Apologies, but the mangoes being sold here in New Zealand are no match to Philippine mangoes. You have to visit the Philippines and have a taste of our mangoes to understand what I mean (maybe after the pandemic). I share photos of scones, feijoa, Whittaker's dark chocolate, and Hokey Pokey ice cream. They ask me to describe the taste. Do scones taste like *pan de sal* (Filipino breakfast bread)? Do feijoas taste like guavas?

My cousin who is a doctor said that she hangs out in the family chat group because of the food. She said that most of her other conversations are about covid-19 and she just needs a break from that. Some might say that we are not taking this pandemic seriously. I say, we are, but we're not allowing it to take control of our lives more than it already has. If talking about what I had for breakfast would bring me closer to an auntie who is almost 5,000 miles away from me, I would talk about breakfast-- the details, even how bitter or sweet I decided to make my hot chocolate this morning. I would ask her to talk about salted fish and fried rice and whether she had cooked or raw tomatoes with it.

It's difficult to build memories together in this madness. Perhaps our food conversations (and obsession) is our way to do that. We don't know what tomorrow brings but we already know what we'll cook for dinner. I'll prepare some chicken adobo (chicken cooked in vinegar, soy sauce, and garlic) because whatever happens in this world, chicken adobo would always be delicious. I can send you the recipe.

Gay Marie Manalo Francisco is doing her PhD in Politics and International Relations. She comes from a tight-knit family based in Antipolo, City, Philippines. She learned how to cook rice (without using a rice cooker) at age 9.

TW: Racism

Beige is Not the Only Skin Colour

Lara Brownie

The recycled cardboard signs stamped with “*I will never understand, but I still stand*” wave frantically in the air, at the motion and roar of protesting voices ringing through the city. I stand back and observe the connections humanity has made through injustice, inequality and inequity.

I am a privileged, young white girl with minimal ideas, barely scraping the surface about the inequality of race, gender, and status. I grew up in an inclusive home where racism, homophobia, and discrimination ceased to exist. But I was only ever exposed to what the media wanted people to see. In school, we would learn about the racism and poor treatment of humans, primarily because their skin colour was black and not white. We learned about gender discrimination, misogyny, and a women’s role in the home, work field, and political statuses. If we were educated so much on inequality, why was the beige crayon the only crayon considered ‘skin colour’? We were also educated about the fight people put into reducing disparities, such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr, and the connections people found together thorough injustice to combat for justice. What about the thousands of black names not mentioned that served their countries? As a human race, we are given the capacity to allow our connections to do good. To change the world by giving everyone their own voice, platforms to share their stories, and tactics on how to fight for freedom.

Not only through deceit and indifference, but acceptance, love, and varied common grounds of majority and minority groups

does connection occur. As a white girl, the entire idea of inequality makes my heart ache. I struggle to comprehend why, when we all share the same skeleton, does inequality exist. What matters is the head and the heart. Current affairs and injustice show me where my heart belongs. It belongs in a place where kindness, compassion, and connectivity rise above pain and suffrage. I lay awake in what Charles Dickens would call “active sleeplessness” over the severity of worldly events and how we can combat together. In this world of warped views, social construct, and cruelty, there is light through the importance of human connection. I hear the phrase “*History is repeating itself!*” quite frequently. Still, I agree to disagree that history has never actually ended, then gone on to repeat specific patterns. Injustice is no fashion trend, people do not wear it when it suits them, they live it- through every single breath they take. This history has never ever ended. I am old enough now to understand current affairs more insightfully, research at my own will, and vote in politics. This has brought to light the different views people have in situations of power and where their moralities lie.

Connecting through social media platforms has proven to be a fast way of releasing new information to billions of people at the click of a button. Educating yourself at times of injustice is your choice, so do it- Google is a free web browser. But this also has proven to provide somewhere for the exploitation of brutality to gain power in white supremacy. On the contrary, as foul as these exploitations are, they have been a source of education for humanity. If the police brutality against George Floyd had not been recorded, it is almost certain we would not be saying his name today. This generation has been desensitized and heavily exposed to violence and harmful content. It has educated us on the dangers of police brutality, hate crimes, racism, and intentional murders because of somebodies’ skin tone. Inequality disproportionately affects minorities. In prison settings, black is oversaturated, white are the minorities. Go figure.

We can choose to see ‘connections’ as the stepping stones and links between racial suppression, inequality, discrimination, and brutality. We can also want to see ‘connections’ as a way to bring humanity together to protest, share stories, and to educate. There is power in numbers. Connectivity sparks between two or more people typically when there is a common ground for the connection to flourish, for souls to meet. In times of heartache and strife, the burning pages of a book are reduced to ash as people connect and can steadily abolish injustice. I can only imagine and suggest a hopeful prophecy of justice and equality in the future. I hope to be around to see it for myself.

Lara Brownie - “There is no single way to define ‘connectivity’. You simply cannot put a cap on how humanity connects; whether that be through art, hardships, common ground or complete differences. For me, my means for connecting shape-shift; as I grow and change, so do my platforms.”

TW: Racism

Do Black Lives Matter to you?

Hannah Kazadi



On the 25th of May 2020, George Floyd was murdered by 4 police officers in Minneapolis. Not only did this spark outrage within the African American community, but it triggered Black Lives Matter movements and protests throughout the world as we demanded change.

There is not a single person who could argue with the fact that Black people have been the most disrespected, the most neglected, the most oppressed individuals in the world. We were classified as savages, our skulls compared to that of animals. We were kept in human zoos for the amusement of the white public. We were stripped of our education and career opportunities - so many of us still are. While many say that we should move on and stop bringing up the past, the murder of George Floyd was just one of the countless incidents that saw a Black life taken at the hands of police brutality, at the hands of white supremacy.

Police brutality is an issue that has not stopped growing. I am not one to make uninformed judgements, so I have put myself in the shoes of these police officers who go to work each day. I have tried to understand what it is like to put on that uniform and do that job in order to put food on the table. From what I understand, when you put on that blue uniform and that badge you have a duty to the community. As a police officer, you are in control, you hold all of the power. But when you pull out your gun and decide to shoot it at an unarmed black teenager, you are abusing your power. When you break into someone's home and shoot them while they are peacefully asleep in their bed, you are abusing your power. When you put your knee on a man's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, killing him in broad daylight, you are abusing your power. So how can we as citizens believe in you, trust in you, let alone feel safe around you when you are a fundamental part of the same system that was built to criminalise us? It is a continuous struggle, not only for African people but for indigenous people all over the world who have been handed setback after setback while white people have been thriving of their privilege as they benefit from the same systems that are stained with the blood of our ancestors. To this day the tangata whenua are still waiting for the government

to uphold the promises of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and yet, pakeha people benefit from the system on a daily basis but believe adding "BLM" to their Instagram bio is enough activism for one day. Real change will only happen when those who benefit from the system every day realise that they have the real power to make a difference.

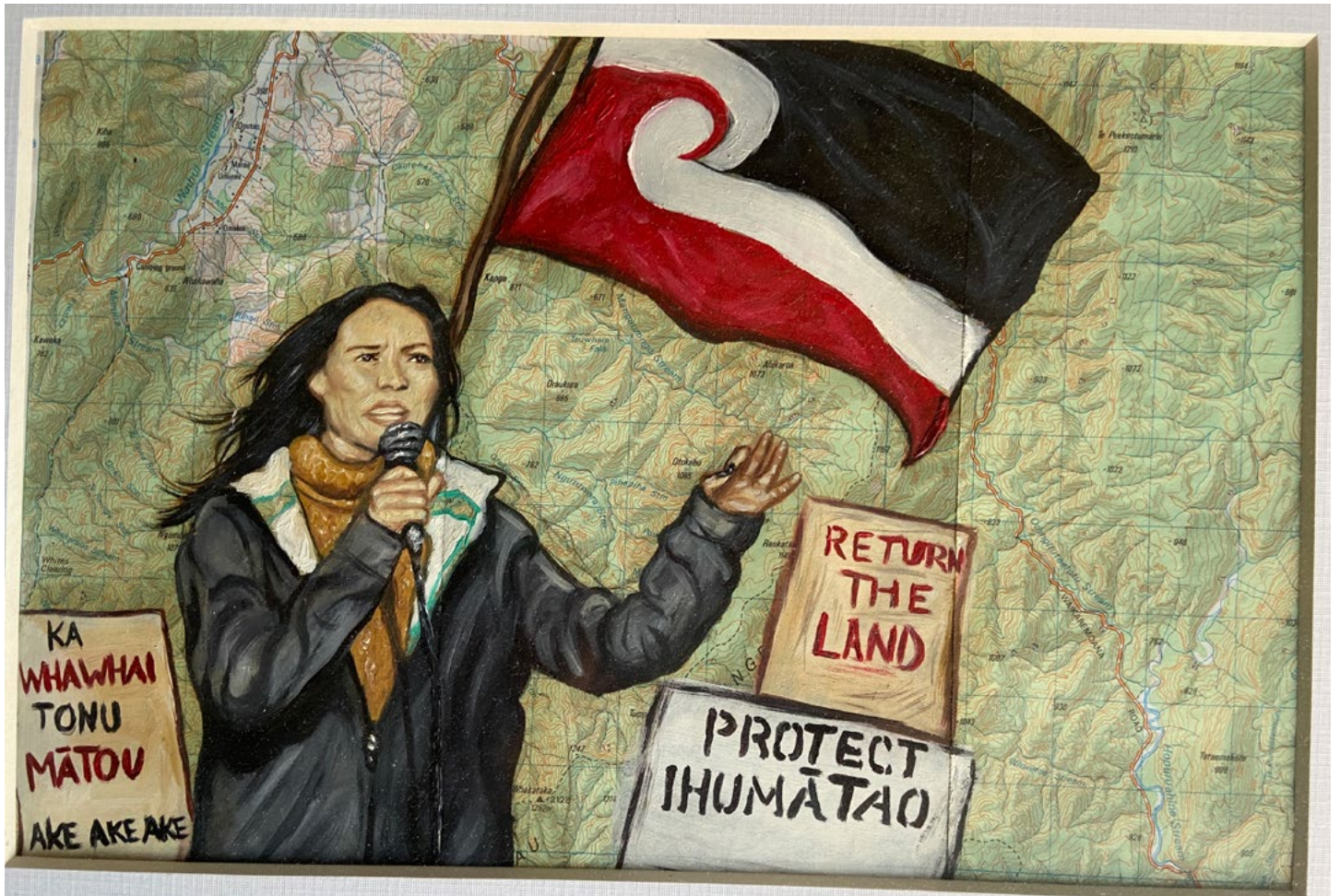
As a Black Woman life has certainly not been fair to me purely because of the colour of my skin. I remember buying skin lightening products when I was younger because to me that was power, being fair meant that you were pretty, it meant that you were better. No one had taught me this, but it was engraved in my

mind from such a young age that it seemed so normal for me to reject who I am. From a young age I had been told that I won't get accepted into good schools because my Afro wasn't tidy. I was told my lips were too large and my skin too dark. I had been followed in stores for absolutely no reason. When I was a waitress, I had been told by the customers I was serving that they didn't want a 'negro' to serve them and yet when I mentioned the incident to my white manager, she shrugged it off and told me to do my job. Racism is embedded in everything we do, it is in every system that thrives at our expense. The world is only just waking up to this but we have lived through it for generations.

Black Lives Matter. Period. We do not have any more tears left, there's no time to cry.

Black Lives Matter because my Congolese great grandmother saw her brother's hands cut off by the rule of Léopold - he is no king in my eyes. Black Lives Matter because my South African brothers and sisters were stripped of everything, not just the land, and were treated as pests in their own country. Black Lives Matter because my brothers and sisters in the United States were packed and shipped like sardines across the ocean, only to be separated and sold like cattle. Black Lives Matter. Period. We do not have any more tears left, there's no time to cry. The movement is crucial, now more than ever. We are being murdered at an alarming rate and that's why we are angry, that's why we take to the streets, that's why we protest and demand change.

Join us.



A Performative Deconstruction of the Typography of Indigenous Women Through a Postcolonial Lens

Katja Phutaraksa Neef

Katja Phutaraksa Neef, a Global Studies student, explores how global artists shape and critique the contemporary world we live in today by critically examining the connection between photography, history, and exoticizing indigenous women. Reclaiming the space by revealing the connection between the colonial past and how it still lingers today.

Photography has always been a method to record important moments in time while providing accuracy by capturing the subject, its setting, and the surrounding environment. Yet, seen through a post-colonial lens, photography specifically employed by ethnographers and anthropologists in the 1900s was instrumentalized to create the subordinate 'other' by fixating on differences by removing context. Pushpamala, a contemporary Indian artist, challenges colonial photography and exposes the anachronistic portrayal of history by transforming herself into both the exoticized 'native' and the anthropologist, thereby subverting and undermining the colonial gaze in a critical and satirical manner. Pushpamala critically sheds light on how colonial powers used pseudoscience to control and create imagined distinctions through physical and cultural differences as well as contemporary society as a whole. Her art practice involves not only being outside the image but climbing inside the skin of the people she is emulating to reveal and understand their experiences concerning a broader colonial Discourse. Pushpamala's wider work of art captures the ever changing and constantly evolving nature of female identity through depicting a plethora of archetypes and ex-

ploring marginalization through a feminist lens, thereby opening the wounds of India's colonial past.

Western binaries have created fictional distinctions between 'Occident' and 'Orient' by perpetuating 'otherness', and imagined racial demarcations are reestablished as opposed to being grounded in science. This is evidenced in the filtering of media, photography, literature, and film through a western lens in which racially charged narratives are reinforced. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said contends that assigning and rendering the Orient as being submissive and devoid of agency dehumanizes its populations. This narrative can be traced back throughout history between the West and the East where representation is driven by political power and evidenced in modern literature such as Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1998) where civilizations are divided into categories and their differences ignite conflicts, reducing cultures to static and essentialized qualities where race informs social behaviors. Pushpamala implores the audience in the place of the spectator to feel a sense of discomfort by confronting this clash of colonial imagery through contemporary postcolonial art.

Anthropological photographs serve as evidence of how colonizers asserted their powers and primordial racial superiority by depicting 'savages' and othering them in the process. Maurice Vidal Portman, a self-proclaimed historian and anthropological photographer exemplifies this fixation and construction of 'savages' through documentation and photography for scientific insight as an outsider. **This naturalized and substantiated colonial efforts in 'taming' and controlling locals, as racial and physical differences are evident and assigned constructed meaning of inferiority.** This idea is the basis of Pushpamala work above as she recreates colonial equipment depicting that is used to quantify and collect data from physical attributes of the 'natives' such as measuring her face with phrenology calipers — resembling a gun put to her head — which supposedly determines her worth but threatens her cultural and gender identity as a woman with biologically determinist science.

Pushpamala reveals the socially constructed nature of the photograph where realities are created rather than being an authentic representation, thereby essentializing the 'native.' Pushpamala, therefore, uses her artwork to shed light on how mediums such as photography were instrumentalized in exacerbating racial discrimination in order to assert their power and justify racism—questioning how conventional knowledge systems are produced and at what cost.

Instead of marginalizing the Toda women a second time through reproducing the images, Pushpamala reclaims the space and subverts the gaze in a satirical and critical manner by casting herself as the person behind the lens, in the frame, and in control.



Pushpamala N. Toda, From the Ethnographic Series Native Women of South India: Manners & Customs, 2000-2004. Sepia toned silver gelatin prints on fiber paper.

The viewing of this photograph is biased and non-neutral as they are seen through different political, cultural, and social perspectives and judgments. Pushpamala does not critically examine the indigenous bodies, but rather the position of the spectator by rejecting the colonial fantasy of depicting indigenous as primitive. These subtle changes and performative interpretation of the similar, original photo from the time highlights what is concealed in the social context and setting of the original photos and brings to light the underlying issues that occurred in the asymmetrical interaction between the colonizer and the colonized simultaneously highlighting the performative nature of photography.

Pushpamala artworks act as a vehicle for social commentary and critique in which the distinction between her recreated photographs with the original photographs are blurred—emphasizing the anachronistic nature of photographs as a means to determine history which can be taken out of context and distorted. **Pushpamala, therefore, disrupts this idea of linear history recorded by anthropologists and ethnographies, which exert their power through photography as a medium to fashion the 'self and other' through representation and portrayal.**

Pushpamala claims agency for those marginalized. By enacting the roles of the subject and the photographer, Pushpamala redirects the gaze back to the viewer confronting them through the eyes of a marginalized native Toda woman as well as a critical contemporary feminist artist of color. Pushpamala, therefore, employs photo-performance in order to deconstruct and produce a critical social commentary on the prevalent underlying issues of Western essentialism and gaze on culture and indigenous bodies, inextricably tying the problematic colonial past to the postcolonial present.

Whenua - Katja Phutaraksa Neef (Artwork top of opposite page) "Ka whawhai tonu matou, Ake! Ake! Ake! We will fight on for ever and ever." This artwork is based on ongoing protests in Ihumātao, sacred land situated in Māngere. This artwork depicts Pania Newton a Maori activist for Maori land rights and a lawyer protecting the connection to the land.

Female voices

In such a politically driven and connected year, we reached out to strong female leaders of major political parties to ask if they would like to contribute to Kate 2020. With the emphasis on supporting publications like these we set a generous deadline and hoped for the best. Here is what we got back.

positives

Chloe Swarbrick:

Kia ora,

On behalf of Chlöe Swarbrick, Green Party Deputy Member and Spokesperson for Education, Tertiary Education, Youth, Local Government, Open and Accessible Government, Small Business, Broadcasting, Drug Law Reform, Mental Health and Arts, Culture and Heritage, thank you for getting in touch with our office.

We will endeavour to provide a full response as soon as possible. Where the issue lies outside of Chlöe's portfolio areas, we'll get back to you in transferring your correspondence to a more appropriate office for response.

While we consider all correspondence important, and will ensure it is carefully read and considered, due to the volume of emails received, it is not always possible to provide a personal response to every email.

If the matter is urgent, please contact Tim Onnes, Executive Support and Researcher, on (04) 817 6717 or timothy.onnes@parliament.govt.nz

Many thanks again for taking the time to write to Chlöe.

Ngā mihi nui,

Office of Chlöe Swarbrick
Member of Parliament
Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand

Comment: *Despite receiving a follow up email asking about word count by a Green Party representative (who called me Kate), we are still waiting for a submission or further full response.*

We couldn't keep up with who the Auckland Central candidate for National was so we went straight to the top.

Us: *Dear Judith Collins...*

Her: *No response (not even an automatic email response)*

PM:

"Kia ora Emma,

Thank you for your very kind email, and for inviting the Prime Minister to contribute to this year's Kate magazine. It sounds like you have chosen a very appropriate theme for this edition.

Unfortunately, due to the large number of requests she receives, the Prime Minister will be unable to provide a contribution before your deadline. However, she has asked me to wish you all the very best with the publication (and please do get in touch with any future requests the Prime Minister may be able to help with!).

Kind regards,
Lauren

Lauren Hayes

Office of the Prime Minister of New Zealand"

Comment: *Fair enough. Please let it be known that the Prime Minister of Aotearoa, during a pandemic, took the time to wish us the best.*

Helen White:

Celebrating Connections - Their Place In Making Good Women Leaders.

I have been told by the editor that this magazine is called Kate in honour of all the “Kates” who have been brave and lead us forward in New Zealand. Each of these Kates was very different and led in different ways. Some of these Kates were likely full of self-confidence, but, not all of them. I am writing this to encourage all the less confident readers of this magazine, who may need to be reassured that they too have a right, and perhaps an obligation to take their place as leaders in the future. My point here is that there is no one way to lead. Further, if we want women to take their place as leaders we need to make sure that that includes all types of women, not just the loudest most confident voices. Our history is made up of not just one “Kate” but many.

At the time of writing this I am campaigning in Auckland Central and hoping to win the seat for the Labour Party. Politics is a new world for me. It is full of very confident, ambitious people. I am currently a Barrister in Employment Law, so no “shy violet” as they say. Law is full of competitive and ambitious people. It is adversarial but take my word for it, politics leaves the legal profession in the dust in this regard. I have to confess my first reaction to the very confident people come across in politics was at first envy, but I quickly realised the connections I constantly make between my experience and what a better future might look like, are the strength of my own leadership. I am happy enough with that.

My 25 years as an employment lawyer means I have worked for people from all walks of life. It has been a very interesting, yet somewhat frustrating career, which has led me to seek to change what I have seen has gone wrong, and particularly what I see is unjust. My politics is grounded in all the things I have learned over many years, meaning both in my personal life bringing up three children and in my career. I recognise that my career in law has primarily been defensive, trying to stop the worst of the harm being done to my clients by a system that was beyond my control, and now I am using my experience to do something important and more proactive.

I got here after many years of listening and engaging and trying

to help people in the current system and making connections with their experiences and what it is important to change. Put simply, what my life and work experience had taught me and what should change. My confidence that I am right has been built on seeing those connections over time. It has taught me what works and doesn't work and what will work better. It has grounded me and shaped my views, my values and it is how I know what I want to change.

I don't think that currently many of us are particularly good at seeing the value of experience as a basis for leadership, we have been attracted to the very confident, “trust me I know what I am doing” approach. But if there is anything my experience has taught me is that this approach is often just bluff and bluster. I have also seen it used predominantly by men, who have learned it works in the short term and people mistake it for the real thing. In my work I have repeatedly seen women leaders, who I have often observed are paid less, look to their experience as the basis for their mandate to lead.

I remember Margaret Drabble, an author I admire, talking about how when she wrote her novels she felt like she ‘spun her story out of her kitchen sink’. I think she was saying what I am saying, that what she had to say that was important was built on her ordinary experience of life. I think this has real value.

My suggestion that the best ideas come from everyday experience could be misunderstood as suggesting I am not interested in big ideas but my ordinary experience has actually impacted on my understanding of, and passion for, big ideas the most. For example, I have repeatedly seen in my work the real damage done by the gap between rich and poor and low wages. I know just how much worse it will get if we do not close this gap and bring up the average wage. It isn't academic to me because I have seen how it impacts on the way people think and act on both side of the divide. My experience has also filled me with practical ideas for how to lessen it.

Many readers will not be remotely interested in getting into politics but this is not just about leadership in politics. It is about making sure that we recognise what we should value in leaders in all walks of life and that we do not undervalue an approach, common in women, to building a mandate to lead that is grounded in their everyday experience.

Helen White, Labour Candidate for Auckland Central, Mother of three & Barrister in Employment Law

The lesson from this?

Please vote. Do not vote based on how responsive these candidates are to their emails from a small time, wannabe editor but read their policies, learn what they value, educate yourself to make sure your vote leads to real change you want to see. Please vote. Kate Shepard didn't haul a massive petition of almost 32,000 signatures in 1893 for us not to vote every single chance we get. Please vote. (2020 New Zealand Election: Early voting from 3 October 2020, election on 17 October 2020)



Roots Commentary

This artwork is a visual response to the commonly asked question, "Where are you from?". This artwork aims to celebrate the experience of those from mixed-race or different cultural backgrounds and also people who have lived in different places who struggle with their identity. This struggle is emphasized through the color blue, which is often associated with feelings of sadness, detachment, and insecurity, but simultaneously in various cultures, a symbol of peace. The bone-white roots resembling bones represent how our roots, which may not be tied to a particular place, shape who we are. The worn-out suitcase, a literal depiction of travel and migration and how we take our roots with us wherever we go, as identity, culture, and a sense of belonging is not set in time and place but rooted in our understanding of self and the nurtured connection with memories, culture, and communities.

'Roots - A Celebration of mixed cultures' - Katja Phutaraksa Neef

The worn-out suitcase represents travel and migration and how we take our bone-white roots wherever we go, as identity, culture, and a sense of belonging are not set in time and place but rooted in our fluid identities and the nurtured connection with memories, culture, and communities.

Abigail

A True Story of Connection

Talia Parker

The scene she recounts is tattered, like my copy of *The Prisoner of Azkaban*. Mum goes for her afternoon walk down Logan Road. Our dogs insist that they must switch sides of the footpath every ten seconds, tangling their leads without fail. The wind puffs half-heartedly. Cows graze. Birds sleep. The gravel rolls and crunches, where it isn't dotted with McDonald's wrappers. When she returns, Mum opens our letterbox and finds a white envelope. No return to sender.

To that man?

138 Logan Road,
Matamata

Mum winds back down our excessive driveway, with the Kaimai mountain range rising in the background. Her hand leaves little fingerprints on the pristine paper. She pushes open our heavy wooden door and, ignoring my brother scream-laughing at his friends via CSGO, pads through to the kitchen. Her sneakers (which are three years older than me) sprinkle the tiles with mud.

At our faux marble bench, she eases open the envelope. It seems delicate.

Hi, my name's Abigail.

Maybe I have the right person, if not just ignore this.

No further contact from me.

Abigail

Perfect old handwriting. It reminds Mum of her grandmother's. She bites a hard nectarine, and wonders what she'll make for dinner. Juice ricochets onto the letter.

Later that night, my whole family gathers around the Skype camera to recount the story to me. They jostle for space around our chipped kitchen table, describing the strange wording of the message and reading it out in an old-lady voice. Jokes about my dad's supposed affair with Abigail are flung back and forth, like I used to wildly hurl a netball every Saturday. Dad's own quips are the most resonant, suggesting the most outlandish extra-marital conspiracies involving secret submarine rides and late-night trysts in the paddock among the cows. He leads his five-strong court of jesters with a smile smeared with pride. I myself sing a parody of Michael Jackson's 'Billie Jean'; Abigail is not my lover, she's just a girl who claims that I am that man!

But, there's a weight lodged in my lungs. There is something about the note that is desperate, yet resigned. Who could That Man be? Perhaps her estranged son, or an ex-lover, or the father she never knew. Maybe she's a delusional psychopath. Or a dementia patient. Or a teenage boy pulling a prank. Part of me is utterly convinced she's a ghost that haunts our property. Abigail is everything and nothing, and we move on to other topics.

I don't know what it is about Abigail that gets stuck in my teeth. Maybe it's the gentle flick that finished each 'm.' Maybe it's the empty space where the return to sender should be. Maybe it's the sense that she has already given up on hearing back from this man. Maybe I'm just sad that her paper aeroplane has nosedived straight into the ground. Unless my dad really does have a secret double life, That Man will not be found in our house.

~ ~ ~

The next day, twenty minutes in to our nightly Skype call, I say



something to Mum about my package of textbooks arriving. This pings a reminder in her brain, and she dashes off, promising she has something great to show me. Maybe it's an adorable picture of our Jack Russel terriers cuddling on the couch. Actually, my brother probably got another perfect score on his physics test.

Mum holds the envelope up to the camera. To that man,
Please.

Nausea spreads through my stomach like
poison.

I am Monday
morning.

Seeing as I know where you live now, I will approach you. If it won't be a good time, please let me know. I'll come at 1pm today, and if you aren't home, I'll try again at 6pm today.

As I've had no confirmation that you received my last note, or that you do live at 138 Logan Road, I'm nervous & apprehensive.
(Not sure what I do or say if I've got it wrong.)

Anyway, if I don't try I'll never know.

Hope to see you today.

Abigail

Mum had found the letter this morning, and opened it on her way to work. She reads it out to me, not in a funny voice, but with the faintest flicker of amusement.

I am fizzing to hear about the in-the-flesh encounter with Abigail. What did she look like? Who was she looking for? Was one of our boys That Man?

Mum never saw Abigail, but my brother had come home from work to let the dogs out before returning; he's our only chance. Mum calls him into the lounge and asks if anyone had come to the door that day. He takes out an AirPods, and needs the question repeated. After a few moments, he digs deeply through his fog of not caring and unearths that actually, an old lady had come by yesterday, asking if he could help her find someone.

I nearly scream. Here comes the whole story!

Well?

What,
Mum?

What did you say to her?

"I pointed out the houses around and told her there was no one here who knew her."

Now that his informative duty to us is fulfilled, he leaves out the back door to walk the dogs.

As Abigail left, she had said to him: "I think I'm at the wrong place."

I think of her hopes soaring like a balloon that a child let go, too late to grab it back. I conjure her, tiny in our cavernous doorway, framed by our line of decrepit fejoa trees, the frail autumn sun fading fast. Her weathered face, pointed toward disappointment. She would have had trouble backing out of our topsy-turvy driveway.

I ask my Mum to send me photos of the letters so that I can transcribe them. At 8:30pm, well after I intended to start studying for my law test, I sit at my laptop. The tattered fragments of Abigail's story are a puzzle that keeps shifting and blurring. But for some reason, for some impossible hope of connection, it pours from me anyway, like a steady stream of tears.

Talia Parker is an aspiring writer studying English and Media. When she's not studying, you'll find her at home with her family or getting gelato with her friends. She loves baking, and hates unanswered questions.

Ashes and dust

Charlotte Parker

How do you know where to begin when you don't know where you will end?

You don't.

It is thought among men at round tables, dictators in bunkers, and housewives in 1962 that to begin a task you must know what you want to achieve to begin. No. No, you see the greatest things come from diving in without knowing where you will go.

That was you. You weren't a start, and you weren't an end, purely a rogue patch in the middle. One which I never intended to find because we did not simply begin we just simply became. You stood before me with a kindness as sweet as honeysuckle, yet on the outside you wore the thorns of a rose. I was never allowed that close. I knew if I tried to hold you too tight in my worn hands then even the armor I'd built on my palms would be pierced by your rejection and that you'd slip away. Yet, I tried. I picked you up with such precaution the museum conservators glare with envy, hoping you would be as blind to my actions as your feelings are to you, that maybe if I went with the pace of the tortoise I would win the race. Race. Racing of my heart, of my mind, of my fingers as I type because there is no longer a winner if we both lose. Now I'm left with physiological reactions to an extraneous pain I never imagined...what about you? I guess you

Charlotte Parker - Hi, I'm Parker. I'm not good at love. Maybe I never will be, and that's okay because life isn't about connections with a special someone; it's about a connection with yourself. This piece made me remember I have to love myself first, and let myself be happy, or nothing matters.

lost someone who cared, someone who could've been there for you, but that someone was me and that was the worst loss of all.

Each flame that I light in someone burns within them so harshly they throw it back at me. It scorches on and on, skin shedding as snakes do, to try rid myself of this burden you have given me. "It's gone" you say, but then of course it is. To you there is now nothing but ashes as I have faded away to the mess you have made me become. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, if I am the ashes then you are the dust. You will sit and be forgotten by the ones who cared because you make pyromaniacs dreams come true by scalding the hearts of those who mattered. You will continue to collect the dust as you believe it loves you, but you are just a physical attachment. No empathy, no love, the dust does not care. You are there to benefit the molecules that surround you and not to support all the atoms of your own being as you value the connection of others over the connection to yourself. You are not really connected to the dust you have become.

A connection is bonded through the pulsing blood in your veins, racing once again with the heart and the mind but yet it runs deeper. This is merely a purgatory to where you want to go and where you believe you should be. You want to go to heaven, why would you not? A serenity that will never end, blessing your body with a calmness you never imagined you could have. You need it to reach your soul. The plasma must delve into every inch of spirituality you may possess and consume your being with the idea that one person is the mirage in the desert. Your life source that comes from the light of the beginning and the shadows of the end as it is once again the rogue middle that you never thought would come. To kiss them is to drink the holy water and be cleansed of sin, now look into the eyes of the ashes, tell them "I did not feel it".

Your stomach flips. It has been awoken too early by its alarm as it realises what has happened. It tosses, turns and rolls inside whilst it continues to think. The ashes have eyes but so does the stomach and when they open you see that you lied. Your epiphany rushes through every crack in your skin, every pore in your face and every nerve in your body. It knows what you don't. That you felt every inch of heaven and yet you ripped it all away, because heaven is too good to be shared or to be felt. You don't want it this way. You are the paper shredder to your existence as you rip every receipt received for a good memory because it is simpler for it to disappear as the magician does than to face that you the hare, hiding in the hat, didn't win either. You lost too.

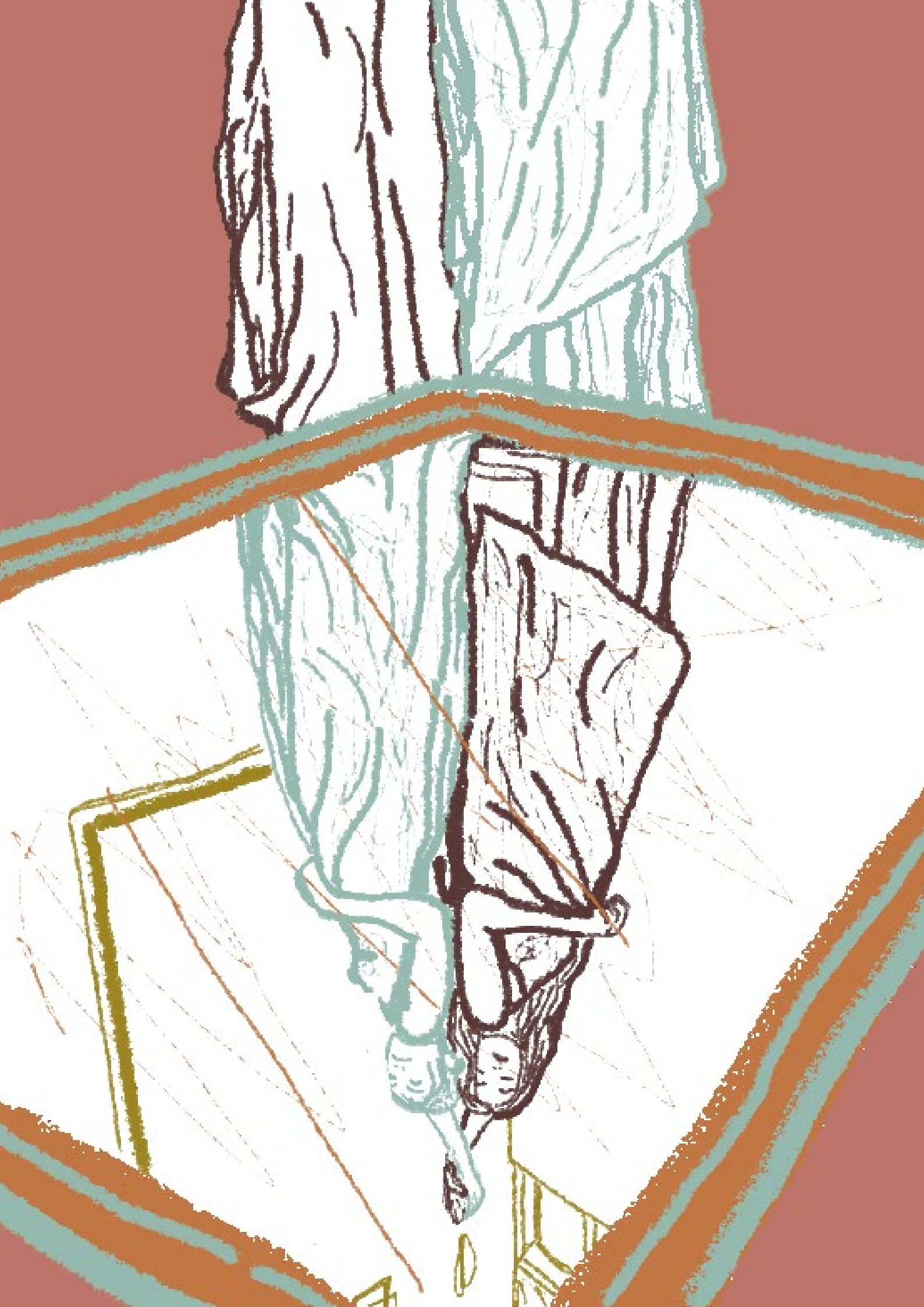
You lost heaven.

I lost earth.

Together, heaven on earth became absent and so we must say to all that is finite;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

"Mga hindi ang" Illustration on right page by Gabbie De Baron. "Mga hindi Ang" is Tagalog for 'plurality not singular'. I always try to incorporate my bilinguality and femininity to my art; there's something monumental about redefining femininity. From 'frivolity' to 'power'. I believe that's not done by sowing a single seed but by being there for one another, even in the harvest.



Vulture

Isabelle Johns

On your little magnetic drawing board, the one with the flower-shaped stamp and the butterfly-shaped stamp and the other stamp you can't quite remember, you write your name out very nicely. This is no mean feat. Previous iterations have sported uncomfortable gaggles of strokes, all lanky limbs at odd angles, but flaws are nowhere to be found in this incarnation. There is something filling about writing your name well, all the proper strokes and order. You show mum when you're done. She takes a photo.

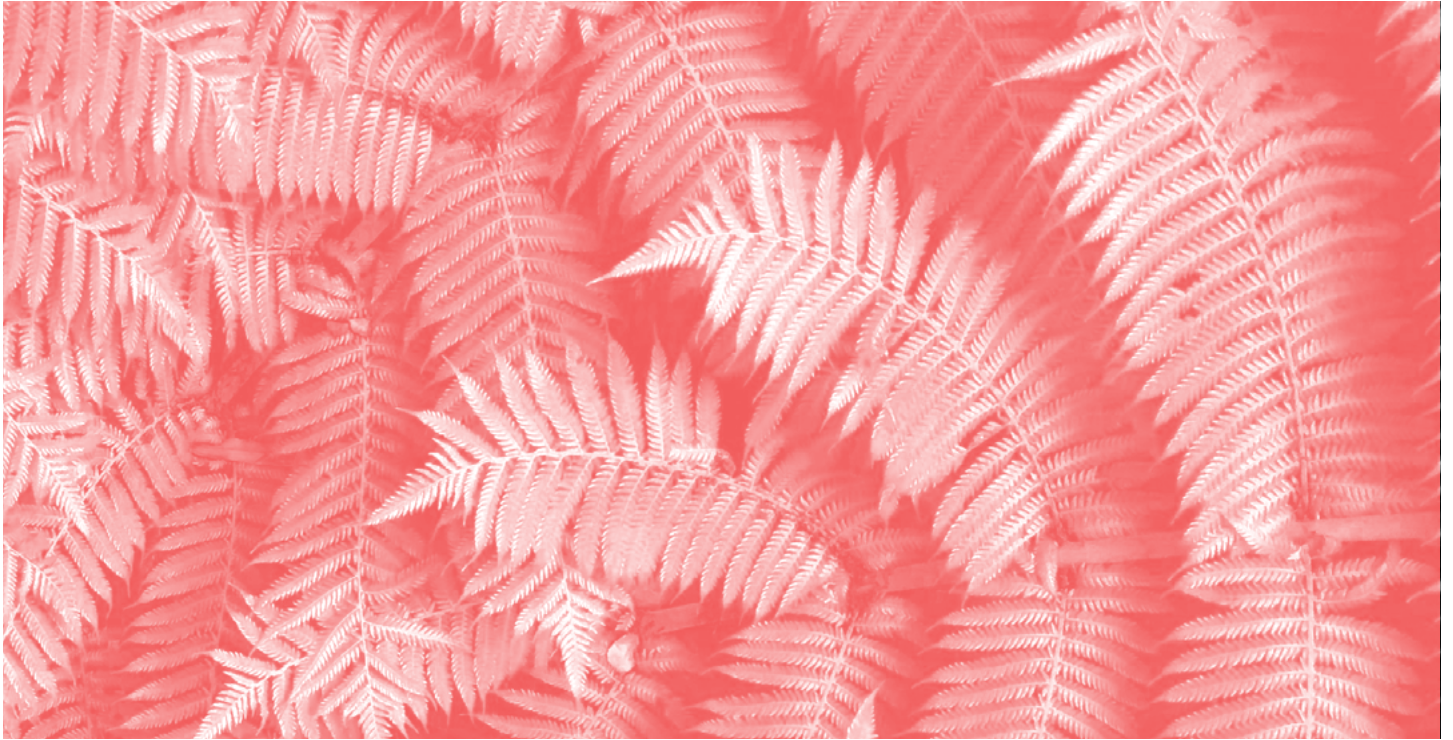
No one will remember the name Steven Paul Smith. A Wikipedia article that references a fan site that references some forgotten zine interview from the 90s will tell you that he started going by Elliott in high school, and so it was from then on. Sure, it was never his legal name, but you don't see people asking after Steven Smith in the record stores. Meanwhile, on the streets of Beijing, no one will remember the name *Yi Ping*. Mum walks you to kindergarten. People you know, people you don't, and the people in-between, they all call you *xiao laowai*. I am not *xiao laowai* I am *Yi Ping*, you say, and in the years to come she will remind you of this childhood brashness, giggling. Is a name really yours if people don't use it?

You open your lunchbox to reveal a steamed *man tou* bun. The spiky blond boy beside you whose name you can never remember peers over cautiously. What is that, the boy asks. It's *man tou*, you say, steamed buns, and would you like to try some? He pulls a face. Today you learn that apparently *man tou* do not look like buns, but rather look like wet puffy old soggy bread, a sentiment you and mum mock all the way home.

The next day, the bun is moist and condensation has built up on the container. She must have put it hot into the lunchbox today, fogging it up. The surface of the bun looks like the welts you get when you have grass allergies in springtime, with water like sweat droplets stagnant on its brow. Nobody else eats welly sweaty soggy bread. You're going to make yourself a jam sandwich tomorrow.

It's never too early to sit her down and have a frank, open conversation with her. Sitting at the coffee-table, you tell her about how you went to Amy's or Eva's or Thomas's house yesterday afternoon and how lovely it all was there. From here, you begin to address the burning issues: why doesn't she know how to make chocolate





chip waffles for afternoon tea or do pilates or have siblings who will buy you barbie dolls on a whim? Mothers should keep up with Shortland Street, you conclude. She clicks her tongue and tactfully suggests you move out, maybe to Amy's bunk bed with the pink netting fairy lights. Maybe you will.

Guji Guji is a picture book by Chih-Yuan Chen about a crocodile egg that rolls into a duck nest. The egg hatches and the ensuing crocodile grows up believing they are a duck called Guji Guji. One day, Guji Guji meets a group of crocodiles. You are not a duck, they say. Look at your pointy teeth, your blue-grey body, your razor claws. You are a crocodile. Despite this revelation, Guji Guji remains loyal to his duck upbringing and helps chase away the crocodiles for good. The moral of this story is to stick to your ducks.

Mum's made a bowl of *chao mian* for the *bo bing* celebration tonight, which you are carrying with all the grace of a crocodile waddling on its hind legs. The house is rife with banter and the smell of steam and soy sauce. Go and play with the other children, they're playing cards. A girl whose name escapes you but face you remember makes a quip about the Jack of Spades, and how it looks like *something*, but you're not sure what that something is because the conversation takes off, up, and away into a language you no longer understand. The girl asks you if you know

what she means. Of course you do, you say, with a hesitation only an impostor could manage. You feel like an actor for the rest of the evening. Later, when you're leaving, you forget the Chinese word for *goodnight*.

Your cellphone is ringing, and it's from her. Raindrops keep sliding down the screen and the call deadlines before you can respond. Halfway up the Central Park hill and full-way drenched in a clammy uniform with the mud clumping in your soles, your phone begins to buzz again. Her voice crackles into action. She says she's coming home from work soon and would you like a pick up, it's raining so hard, don't walk home. You don't need the help, you say. Are you sure, she asks. You're not, but you wish you were.

She picks you up a few minutes later, regardless. You drop in a word of thanks and try to give your words an offhand, casual angle, but you leave out the part where you walked up the hill at a snail's pace and kept a careful eye on the road hoping she would drive past and see you walking in the rain, knowing she would stop for you. The heater is on in the car. She says she's going to make *chao mian* for dinner, or so you think, but you're not quite sure because the whisper of Elliott Smith's spider-silk voice and the rustle of freshly bought bok choy bumping around in shopping bags starts to carry you off, down into the gentle current of a late afternoon nap. It won't be long before you're home.



Julia Zhu - Here is an old work I made that some may consider feminist. I didn't have much deep thoughts/writing about it but a lot of people sexualized it and thought there was more to it which felt annoying. It was mainly vulgar toilet humour at the time (we just had to make a vessel and the object that goes in it). I realize now that it's more about periods and validating it as a real thing and getting rid of the taboo vibe. Rather than it being dismissed when maybe some people want to avoid school/work while on it due to symptoms getting in the way. There's some frustration around it when people projected their own assumptions on it and didn't really believe whatever I said the idea came from and thought there was something more.

books to read your kid in the womb

Amanda Joshua

If a shark stops moving, it will die.
My mother thinks she is a shark.
One Tuesday in May, I find her single-handedly shifting the grand piano in our lounge.
She doesn't seem to give a fuck that it is 4 am.
The TV is sitting on the floor and it repeats over and over; he couldn't breathe she doesn't stop rearranging the room till she is sated.
My mother grew up with skinned knees under a scorching African sun.
She was basketball captain.
As such, she has never been afraid of falling down
Elbows and shins, perpetually scarred
The way she saw it; injury was not an eventuality
It was a certainty.
When she moved us to this country, she gave me a white name that people could get their mouths around easily
Then dry heaved in the airport bathroom because we no longer sounded connected to one another on paper
My mother has a degree in English Literature but I've never seen the woman get to the end of any book she ever started reading.
The exception is supposedly the paperback Moby Dick she read to me while I lounged Jonah-style, still inside her stomach.
I'm fairly certain she googled: 'books to read your kid in the womb to ensure she comes out a nerd'.
In my twenty two years of life, I never met a ball I couldn't fumble,
Or a sport I was willing to risk scarring my knees for.
(Short skirts are such a beloved wardrobe staple)
In the event of a zombie apocalypse, do not rely on me to last any longer than your high school boyfriend
But know that I care very deeply for every Adichie novel I have ever encountered,
And that I'd be lying if I said on no occasion has the library inspired in me, feelings bordering dangerously on arousal.
When the people march for George Floyd,
I march holding my mother's hand
Hoping that whatever book I read my kid in the womb will be read in a time where being black is not a crime
We will not stop rearranging the system till we are sated
The connection holds.

Amanda Joshua is a English lit/ Law student with a kink for Austen novels. She is good at providing emotional support and wriggling her ears but still cannot drive. In her spare time you can find her painting her jeans and trying to decolonise law school.

Colours in a Painting

Jackie Lamb

You make me wonder who I am

I attach to you an electron
in a storm cloud watching
your face, eyes crinkled.

You are my confidant I tell you
maybe gay maybe gay maybe gay
y I tell you I'm breaking up with her

you look up you see me

I do not tell you
about

lavender lavender lavender

I do not tell you I
love

lavender lavender lavender

it chokes my mouth lavender in
my food lavender in my hair If
you reached out you would find I
know you won't

You are blue-pink I see lavender lavender lavender I paint my
wall I decorate my room But everything is lavender I paint You
with

lavender lavender lavender

I open my mouth at home and
my mother tells me about the

poor confused trans people she works with
she she she

pulls up studies to convince me
my mother is a counselor I tell
myself I am real I exist in

lavender lavender lavender

If I could paint my life I would paint you all red,
browns and golds, The colours of feeling Of
being more than you are Just because you talk
you you you watched him your brother cries to
me feet bare and glasses off Fine. If you won't
kiss me I'll kiss someone else.

Bubbles

Loredana P. Kint

Drifting in these bubbles through our mundane tasks,
Quivering beneath our iridescent masks
That long to unfold more than the air we breathe,
Or, like geothermal bubbles, calmly seethe
Beneath the mud that cracks a little bit each day,
Like watched pots, never boiling till you look away,
Our secrets and our fears in vain are simmering,
But our pretty bubbles keep on shimmering.

We fizz toward the surface, desperate for change,
Our bubbles become an aluminium cage,
Reality goes flat and tastes sickly sweet
When, from two metres, a companion we meet;
Hardly a greeting, our bubbles barely brush,
How much longer to feel a human touch
Without the need to wash our hands yet again?
However long I rinse, some bubbles remain.

Some speak of the bubbles like pets, and say
"I hope your bubble is doing well today,"
But someday soon we'll take our bubbles for a walk,
And let them all run free while their owners talk,
Cut loose the leash, and let all roam
Among the world that was our own
Before the bubbles were our home,
Before the bubbles were our home.

Loredana is a Medical Student, and a poet in her (scant) spare time, who endeavours to write in the style of her favourite Romantic era poets. Her poetry often features nature and the ways in which it harbours complex connections, both like us, and to us. Bubbles was written in April, as a reflection upon the word's diverse new meanings. It encompasses the range of pent-up emotions she glimpsed in the bubbles around her, and expresses hope that these, and we, may be released someday.

Entwined

Loredana P. Kint

Can leaves forget the branch where they were born,
When every vein still thrums with sap once shared,
Or might they feel more kin to others torn
And similarly, to the seasons bared?
Should oak and gingko mingle with the beech
In shifting jigsaws layered on the floor,
And yet retain the sentiment that each
Is both its past, and seed for something more?
Like flags, they draw our plaintive eyes below,
Into an earth where there is ample room
That trees diverse as we, embrace with roots
And saplings lean on history to grow,
Then come the spring, more splendidly we bloom
Together, and in summer share our fruits.

Untitled / 2018

J. D. M. M.

Baby's bleeding out.
She's a humble human.
A mortal mess
Spending her nights in hotels,
And her days between
Chaos and illusions.
Red blood on white sheets,
A black dress and teary eyes.
She's living in a penthouse,
And with each line,
Baby's closer to heaven-
She's almost an angel now.
St. Peter doesn't let the trauma in,
St. Peter doesn't let the men in.
But when she comes back down,
Falling back into reality,
Heaven seems so much further away.
How can you drown your demons,
When they pay your rent?

SELF LOVE

Yashika Khetan

Every time you compliment someone, Ensure that you
love the skin in which you are. Every time you listen to
and comfort someone, Ensure that you later turn off and
reflect inwards. Every time you send flowers to someone,
Make sure you write yourself a love letter. Don't wait for
someone else to replenish your cup, You owe yourself
some of the love you give to others.

HOME

Renee Wells

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HOME

There she stands in solitude,
yearning for a place to call home.
The blur of the crowded room puts her at ease,
for she is not alone.
Her wandering hand travels the splintered path of the bar,
until it meets another.

Her gaze meets mine as a drink meets her lips,
we smile and feel infinite.
Like two old friends who had found each other once more,
we meet and touch and wonder.

She traces delicate circles on my skin,
vulnerable, yet safe and familiar.
Her tender love, her warm embrace,
is an ecstasy only just discovered.

There were stand in solitude,
in a place we can now call home.

Layer Upon Layer

Loredana P Kint

Inspired by Orakei Korako

Layer upon layer, mountains have been built
Of centuries' footprints in sandstone and silt,
Rising from plains with a thunderous tilt,
Gaining new mantles from lava flows spilt.
Layer upon layer, the rivers have bored
Through boulder and bank, as they endlessly warred,
Across unwashed landscapes intrepidly poured,
Opposed by the mountains which forced them to ford.
Layer upon layer, the mosses have grown
Toward every riverbed or hostile zone,
Each dragon-mouthed vent in the crumbling stone,
They brave anything to have roots of their own.
Layer upon layer, mankind has advanced
Across every stream, every crest have they chanced,
On moss and on mountain our forefathers danced,
And conquered each layer upon which they glanced.

Warm

Lillie Balfour

I might be underwater but there's definitely at least one more can in my hand and it's resisting the pull of my thick thumb. The kitchen bench drives into my back and demley i realise the same instant rap song is starting again, or maybe it's just too loud that the base has surrounded my circle of vision - still firmly focused on this next goddamn can. My friend is laughing as they step closer and i smile too because they smell like heady cologne and the smoke curling lazily out from under their bedroom. The weight of their hand steadies mine and they look away on ly briefly to peel my drink open. Such closeness is warmth, and such ternerness inviting. This is my last can.

Lillie Balfour, yee haw 24, Gemini. Currently at Elam. Learning how to be soft.

HOPE

Yashika Khetan

It's easy to feel anxious with all the unfortunate events but
Let's take a moment to look at the good outcomes Pollution
levels have gone down, Some have spent more time with
their pets, Closed doors have led to families bonding, Empty
streets have opened our minds to possibility, Indeed, life is
beautiful.

It's heart-wrenching to see thousands of souls leaving us but
Let's take a moment to reflect on death Embrace the fact that
one day we will all die so Live life with greater humility and
compassion Our lives are more meaningful because we have
limited time Indeed, life is fragile.

We are all unique in our own ways but Irrespective of our sex, nationality or religion We
seek love, happiness and connection We need our families and friends more than any of the
materialistic things we chase after Hang in there with your people, appreciate what you have
Indeed, we are all same sentient beings.

We will eventually recover from this but Let's continue to appreciate the
smallest of things we took for granted Dinner with someone you love,
smiling at strangers A hug from your dad, the smell of a bookstore
Continue to acknowledge ordinary work by our extra-ordinary fellows
Continue to be kind to all and be kind to Mother Nature Indeed, we
needed to slow down.

Yeah, we're gonna be all right, my friend
Yeah, the sun, it will rise again.

old flame

Christine Tuck

sitting in a magnet embrace
with blankets and burning twigs
my hands try to catch the melting
marshmallow breaths
and hold them there
with the matches of light
for as long as I can
before the moment passes
and our dust scatters like stars

Strung between You and Me

Kelly Ye

the science behind our attraction
dumbed down to chemicals and hormones
to just dopamine and endorphins,
there aren't any signs hailing caution.
a kaleidoscopic scan of brain activity shows
patterns of your heart overlapping mine
this sublime fantasy
that is so addicting.

the spontaneous sparks
from inside of me
are somehow the same
as your tickling fingers down my chest.
giggles that run and pop
like easy-go-lucky bubbles
that i blow onto your neck
so each individual hair would stand
electrified, this invisible electricity
that's felt in the shared air
breathed between us with mirrored smiles.

this connection strung from me to you
is outrageous at times
in how we steer each other
a little inconspicuous
this dance that's left to destiny
sweet lines
we draw around
each other's bodies
with caresses
so gentle
with hugs
so hard
like we're going to break
its magnitude
is felt
from every fibre of my being.

Excess:
how can the connections between you and me
be put so simply,
to just
a travel down the pink neural network
a pair of protein molecules swinging hands
between our intertwined fingers
carefully dragging a ball of
dopamine
along the inner part of the brain.

You asked me why

Ruby Rae (Lupe) Macomber

My daughter, there is a pohutukawa tree with your placenta buried beneath. Its roots protrude so far,
the entirety of your world could be poised between its fingertips. The same tree wept upon
the sight of your coffin,
and the same roots made space for you under the earth.

You asked me why this land bleeds,

And I still can't give you a straight answer. You don't like insincerity, so I am not. But there are ways to move
smoothly in and out of a confrontational conversation
that I have yet to master. In short, my daughter, this land bleeds because it lives.

However, what you see is determined by what you presume. I could tell you land this
bleeds molten lava,

tedious tectonic plate pus. My daughter, I could say, sometimes this land is reckless, agitated. Like
you, this land is upset by stagnation, it will keep you on your toes. But my daughter, you chose to
care for it anyway.

I could say volcanoes are bleeding earth arteries,

and ash stains your retinas red, to explain why you see bloody wars overseas. To justify
how children can possibly traverse crumbling streets

cloaked in a stranger's' blood. Crimson fills in the crevasses of hands barely large enough to cover the wounds they are bandaging.

My daughter, you ask me why this land bleeds, but you must first consider
why you bleed. Your blood cascaded antibody-less, group AB,

but I didn't see how that meant anything when you rested between hospital sheets with terminal
leukaemia. White blood cells suffering the thrill of a delirious hiatus. Leaving your platelets to
clothe themselves,

and only the broken fists of your immune system as a fortification against suffering. An ornamental component of
divine life

had forsaken you, and there was nothing I could do.

From the waiting room, I envisioned Haematologists extracting every last

red, white and platelet, until all that remained, was plasma. The fourth fundamental
state of matter,

the liquid tasked at moving salts and enzymes throughout your bloodstream. Stripped bare, hot ionised gas inhalations mistook
your lungs for clouds, and saw your body as an endless sky in dire need of inhabitation. But you did not want to be inhabited.
So the day before your stem-cell transplant,

I whispered promises doused in gold with the hope they'd stain longer than blood. My daughter, mortal memo-
ries can be erased so effortlessly. Eventually, your memory will be divulged by only the immortal,

faded photographs, and the scent of your unwashed clothing.

y this land bleeds

But my daughter, you knew how to be authentic,
and how to get rid of those who didn't deserve your time. You disbarred sound from
your final thesis. Within sterile hospital walls, we seldom communicated,
and when we did it was through only apathetic shrugs and nods. But I remember you asking
whether we give blood back after we die,
or if it's leased to us with an undefined expiration date, and care instructions. All I could do was sigh. But
then you commenced chemotherapy,
your hair began to thin, your stomach misplaced its foothold inside your ribcage, and you lost your periods.

You see, menstrual blood is the only type of blood not traumatically induced. Not smeared across a butch-
ers apron,
nor dripping from the scalpel of a surgeon. My daughter you are
taught to fear danger,
and by correspondence, fear blood. No wonder you sobbed funeral tears when your white cotton day was inter-
rupted. By no choice of your own, you proficiently-shoved sanitary products into your socks
and hid behind opaque excuses. You learnt that the body's means of regenerating and reviving were inappropriate, period. Tam-
pons became politically-charged bullets and pads were the plastic-sealed supermarket solution for a time of the month that women
have hidden for as long as they can recall.

But my daughter, I hope you know that women know how to let things go, We can be predictable, yet spo-
radic, We can reside in the abdomens of rivers and in the congested gums of forests. Some people don't ever
truly see us, but here we remain regardless.

My daughter, do you know what forgiveness tastes like? Or does anger coat your tongue, the demanding partner of denial
— lights itself on fire, boils blood. The doctor's promises of recovery came doused in
gasoline
ignition inevitable. Who holds the right to determine whose blood resides on these streets? The
last time I checked, blood and water are complementaries,
thick and thin, colourless, and colour-independent. Blood holds the script for who is supposed to
love you, not who is going to.

My daughter, you asked me why this land bleeds, and I'm sorry you never heard my response. I
don't know why innocent blood is shed at the hands of the guilty, I don't know why it's so often
misrepresented,

and I don't know why your blood betrayed you.
What I do know is that you are buried beside a pohutukawa tree. Each summer it bleeds more vermilion flow-
ers than the last, some may call it predictable, others may call it sporadic. But my daughter, what you rest under
is a fluent crimson umbrella. I imagine your blood crying thunderstorms and protecting you from the down-
pour. In a world of liquid expiration dates, blood prevails, and so shall you.

Ruby Rae (Lupe) Macomber - Ruby is a first-year psychology and pacific studies student. Her piece examines the dynamic of various mother-daughter bonds, how the relationship can stretch, mould, strain and weave throughout life. The words of her mother she will take with her until death.

S(le)ight of Mind

BubbI try to trace the gaps between your sight and mine
because something peculiar happens when she looks
in the mirror and p-p-pulls a part
her portrait like the
sinews situated in her stomach
are stretching before her very eyes.

*You're beautiful
No, I'm not.
Yes, you are.
NO, I'm not.*

and that reminds me
of what they taught me in psychology
that in order to see you must wait
for the light to hit the back of your brain
travelling along neuronal tracts
until it reaches your occipital lobe,
the home of the visual cortex.

That's when the revelation lightnings through my skull:
YOU DON'T SEE WITH YOUR EYES YOU SEE WITH YOUR BRAIN
YOU DON'T SEE WITH YOUR EYES YOU SEE WITH YOUR BRAIN
DON'T SEE WITH YOU DON'T SEE WITH EYES SEE WITH YOUR
BRAIN SEE YOU DON'T SEE YOU DON'T SEE YOUR EYES DON'T
SEE YOU SEE WITH YOUR BRAIN YOUR BRAIN YOUR BRAIN .
. . .

Perhaps that's what happens?
All meaning is
jumbled
as
it
is
communicated to the ventral stream,
light and colour swimming,
trying its god damn best
to bypass the biases, we possess
the ones we've seen on TV,
heard from others' mouths
implanted onto our own lips

or as we're scrolling—
those glossy screens
and faded images
we pin them to the wall, hold
them up in our irises, until
there's no floorspace for anything else
but this cacophony
of noise:

they're lying

you're disgusting

you shouldn't wear that

you're two sizes too big

you'll never be good enough

*your body is ugly.
ugly.
ugly.
ugly.*

a dis
rupted
flow
of visual information
intellectualised
and learnt
by a brain which has noticed
a pattern
between weight
and worth,
leaving gaps between
facts and fiction,
sight and perception.

And there lies the problem in seeing
with more than just your eyes
all those reflections constantly flickering,
and changing like a candle
of static electricity.

But listen to me, here
and now.

Your beauty is
non-negotiable.

Your size is
not unfavourable.

Your brain is
beatable.

If something has been learnt it can be un-learnt,
with the knowledge that there is more to most
than the skin and bone which they inhabit,
and that in no way does it dictate your
self-worth,

*You do.
You do.
You do.
You do.*

Brecon Dobbie - This poem is special to Brecon as it looks at how the myths we perpetuate around the female body can have negative, lasting consequences and, instead, encourages womxn to take back control over their bodies, to love them unconditionally for exactly how they are.

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