

Naming Your Truth

AN EXPLORATION OF THE SELF AND COMMUNITY



Cover Artist: Kayya Tiwari

Mission

LUCES is pleased to introduce Kaleidoscope, the third annual publication of a literature and arts journal for Womxn of Color by Womxn of Color. Just as a kaleidoscope in the midst of rotating reflects and refracts light, *Naming Your Truth* too is our attempt to honor the colorful ways in which Womxn of Color reflect upon their histories in efforts to move forward, in efforts to self-preserve, and in efforts to subvert. Against politics that consistently ask Womxn of Color to pivot their own centers for assumed centers, Kaleidoscope is an attempt to provide space for the rich histories, cultures, biographies, and voices of Womxn of Color.

Language as Political

As Kaleidoscope strives to create inclusive spaces through language, space, and intersectional practices, we have made the decision to use "womxn" By avoiding the "-men" or "-man" suffixes in womxn, we aim to achieve independence from patriarchal, heteronormative, and ciscentric linguistic norms. We specifically chose "womxn" instead of womyn due to the latter's roots in transphobia. Womxn is meant to be an inclusive, progressive term that not only sheds light on the prejudice, discrimination, and institutional barriers womxn have faced, but to also show that womxn are not the extension of men but their own free and separate entities. We chose "womxn" with an "x" because it is more inclusive. Additionally, we value that the "x" is formed by creating two lines intersecting together, which is a visual representation of intersectionality. Let this be an invitation to members of LUCES to engage or continue engaging in more critical dialogue around commitment to justice and inclusivity in all forms of action.

Inclusion Statement

Kaleidoscope will provide a space for intentional sharing outside of the classroom and traditional community building arenas. The journal includes articles, essays, poetry, art, and photography. Kaleidoscope is a multi-generational collaborative effort. The publication is open to all self-identified women of color. This includes transgender, non-binary, cisgender and masculine of center (MOC) women of color regardless of gender presentation or sexual orientation.

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The Kaleidoscope



Mallika is a senior at Loyola studying Biology on the pre-med track and is also in the Interdisciplinary Honors program.

This year's theme, Naming Your Truth: An Exploration of the Self and Community, resonates deeply with me. I believe that womxn of color should have the opportunity to reclaim their narratives and share their lived experiences since we do not always have the opportunity to define ourselves. This theme celebrates womxn of color and their journey to finding their truth, and I am glad to have been part of putting this wonderful journal together.



Kira is a second year studying Advertising Creative and Women's Studies Gender Studies.

Throughout my life, art and narrative have been large aspects that contributed to my formation of self. In turn, as I've grown older, my artwork has reflected my background and how I see the world. Who you love, the people you're surrounded by, your values—they all influence the way you create. Identity informs art, and art inevitably informs identity. Kaleidoscope has been an amazing opportunity, not only for me to reflect on how my culture intersects with my work, but also see vast representations of how other womxn of color relate to their identity through various forms of art. There is a unique experience while reading or observing a piece: you can identify with someone's shared experience and find solace, you can learn from someone else's experience and gain perspective, or a combination of the two. I hope that you experience all three as you read Kaleidoscope.



Rashelle is a sophomore studying political science and women studies and gender studies

As a Womxn of color at a PWI, I am constantly learning how my identity shapes the way I navigate the structures around me. To me, having the agency to define and redefine oneself outside of the misconceptions assigned to us without our consent is essential and significant in overpowering the structures which set obstacles in our paths. The theme, Naming Your Truth: An Exploration of the Self and Community, for this years edition of Kaleidoscope is very important to me; here is a space for WOC to share their stories and unique experiences and begin that process of reinvention.



Castillo is sophomore at Loyola, studying in Sociology and Psychology. Since her first year, she has been heavily involved in LUCES.

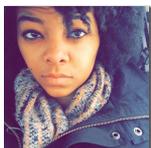
To me, the theme of this year's journal is deeply meaningful. As someone who holds marginalized identities in a PWI; as a queer womxn of color, I find that self exploration is vital. Discovering what my identities mean to me and how I express my truth through those identities is vital to my existence.

Journal Committee



Tristen is a first year master's student in the higher education program at Loyola University Chicago; she is also a graduate assistant in the office of Student Diversity & Multicultural Affairs.

This year's theme has resonated a lot with me and the way that I explore my art as a womxn of color. Much of my work has been based in my raw emotions. I find it to be a way to release my truest self and my truest feelings in a manner that manifest a sense of beauty or empowerment. The experience of being on the journal committee has expanded my own cathartic journey to include other womxn of color and their journeys represented through the art they created.



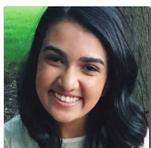
Kimani is a senior at Loyola studying English, and is the LUCES Scholar and Kaleidoscope committee chair for the 2017-2018 school year.

This year's theme resonates with me because so often the narratives we see are not the narrative we find ourselves in. Womxn of color need to be given the space to name what is truthful to them, and given the opportunity to explore themselves and their communities for meaning, and perhaps use it as a conduit for healing and growth. The way we, as WOC, navigate spaces not created for us, is an act of resistance, and within that comes Naming Our Truth.



Mandy is a sophomore studying Visual Communications and Advertising/Public Relations and is also in the Interdisciplinary Honors program.

This year's theme identified with me in many ways as a Black woman who has faced the unfortunate side effects of societal standards placed on people to bring them down. The most freeing feeling in the world is exploring these artificial standards and actually breaking the mold. When I stay true to myself, the world makes more sense and clear the path for others to take the same risk in their own unique way.



Nida is a freshman at Loyola pursuing a degree from the School of Arts and Sciences and it's her first year involved in LUCES.

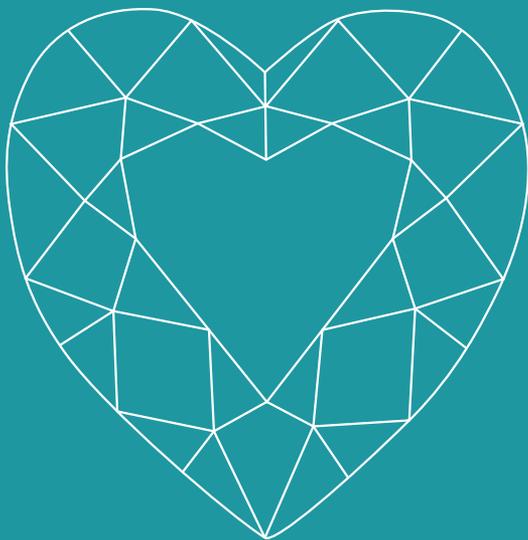
This year's theme resonates with me as I identify as a Muslim Woman of Color. Being a Woman of Color at a PWI can be difficult at times, in terms of navigating your way through the community as well as finding your identity. I believe the best way to name your truth is to find your identity, be confident in yourself, and the community you feel the most at home in.

PART 1

You Can't Define Me



We are typically not the first people to define ourselves. In a world where we are constantly defined by others, there are a lot of controlled images that are often imposed upon womxn of color; these are images that we did not create nor do we endorse.



Attenuated



REETI ASHA GOYAL



she
her
hers

how many stereotypes can I check off your list?
tape them on my back
without telling me
put me in a box
or on a pedestal
where ever I fit most conveniently
assign me your tired narrative
define me in the words of only one language
take snapshots of me over time and
sew them into one cohesive picture-
the edges fit together so perfectly don't they
water me down so that I am easy to digest
it is too hard to swallow the fact
that I exist between dichotomies
that I am not an archetype
that truthfully, I do not make any sense at all

every molecule in me came together sporadically
I am one part of every person you have ever met
and have yet to meet
I am both the girl you hurt
and the girl who broke your heart
loving cold-hearted frazzled determined
intellectual ignorant selfish empathetic
free guilty brave fragile
all at once and more
the redundancies and complexities of my existence
will overwhelm and confuse you
so I understand your need to make me smaller
I wasn't made for your consumption anyway

when I am finally alone
I take off my skin
and galaxies pour out
elements found nowhere on the periodic table
the bottom of the ocean
a sixth phase of matter
all fill the room

you will never know me like I know me.



'The Artist's Last Image Before an Argument at Dinner With Her Father During Which She Could Only Weep and Try to Leave to No Avail, November 3rd, Venice'

Description: I don't remember what the argument was about. I held my napkin in front of my face and cried. We were the only ones in the restaurant. My family had finished eating by the time I gathered myself together, and the waiter offered to take my plate away. I said no, I would finish it. I never did. I remember most that my father asked me why I didn't just go back to Rome that evening, rather than stay the weekend with them. I remember most my mother made him apologize, and it was a shitty one. It was a Friday. The taste of the food? I can't recall.

Chinese culture demands filial piety. American culture loves its independence. I have always wanted to be more Chinese, never more white, because I'm proud of who I am and I am afraid of the biting tongue of pale skin. It would even eat me, given the chance, because of my last name. It wasn't really an argument, I guess. I did nothing, struck dumb and frozen in the clash of volcanoes and glaciers that make the earth, make every second of my life. Even now, I don't know why I could not speak. Should I have bit back?

Traces of You



ANONYMOUS

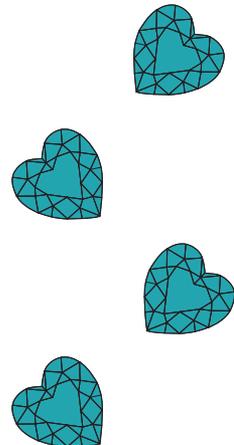
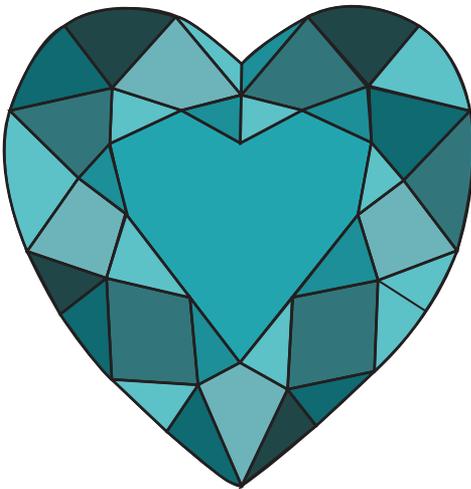


she
her
hers

I want to know why you passed down so much pain to me. I want to know what have i ever done to you for you to pass down pain that i have never experienced, yet can feel as if i was there.

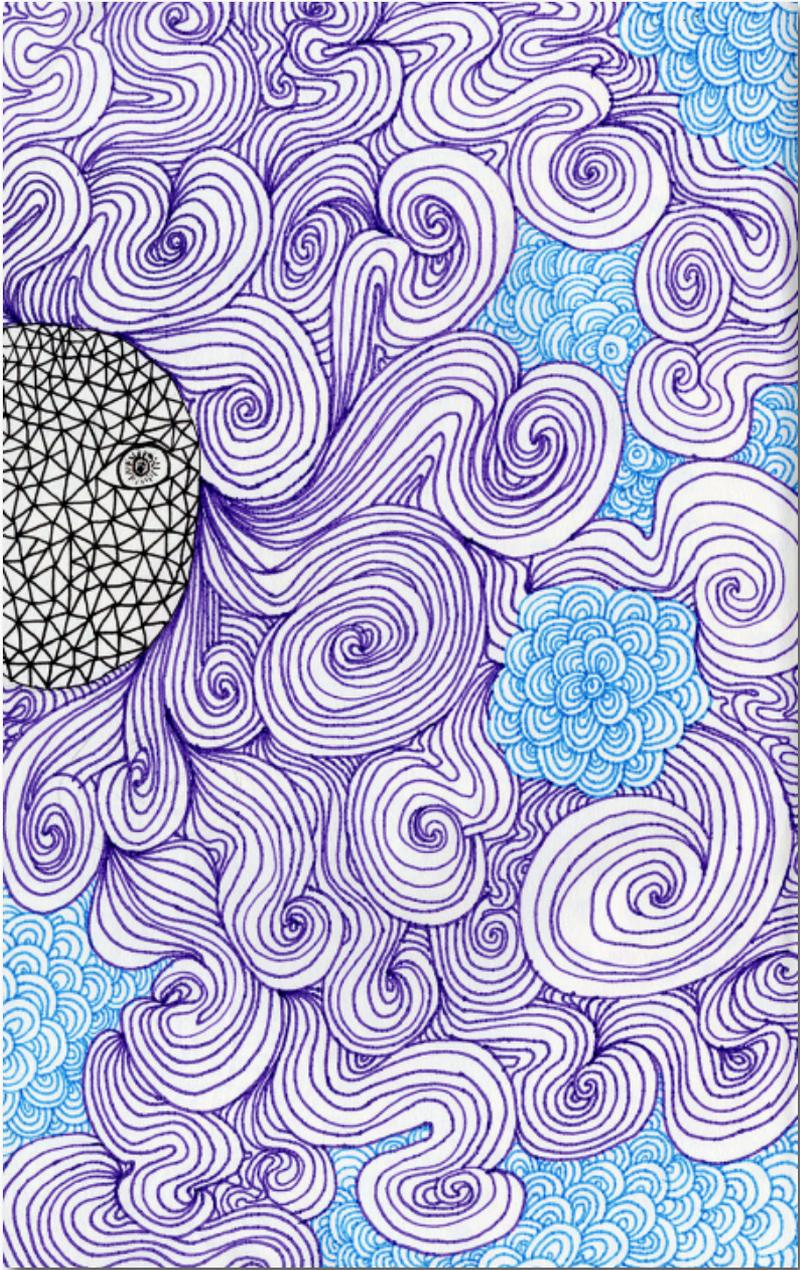
I want to know the pain your family inflicted, your family that i also share blood with.
Does this make me like them? Like you? Am i a monster like y'all?

What did i do to deserve your genes? I am not proud of you, of them, of the lives you lived. Having a mental illness is something i have come to terms with and have been able to become proud of as of late because it is a part of me, but knowing it is a possibility it has been passed down by you makes me angry
because i want nothing from you, which is what you chose to give me.



Virago Pt. 2

 NICOLE MARIE MALAZARTE





My series "Virago" contains three art pieces.

My series "Virago" connects to this year's theme because it visually depicts my process of acceptance about being a person who has dealt with breast cancer at the age of 21 in 2016. It also deals with my feelings towards cultural gender transgression. This is due to the fact that I do not have breasts anymore, and at times several people ask me 'do you still feel like a woman after getting a double mastectomy?' or 'since you do not have breasts anymore do you feel less of a woman?'

This series "Virago" is also my way of unapologetically stripping myself "naked" in front of not just a community but to myself. Some days I do not let this experience define me but there are other days I struggle. Thus, I utilize different forms of art to create a pathway to seek out my own truth and acknowledge my journey.

"Cancer is not a disease that heals after you are done with treatments."

This portrays how I was starting to establish "a new normal". I do not know if other people who have dealt with cancer thought about this but I honestly think it is very difficult for a person, who was impacted with cancer, to bounce back into the motions of life when everything was on pause. There are several long-term or permanent effects after one is done with chemo treatment, for instance, chemo brain which I have. Lastly, based on a post-treatment meeting with my medical team, my immune system will never be like a 21-year-old's ever again. The best way to put it is that I have a 65-year-old's immune system in a 23-year-old body.

Furthermore, this was at the time I rejected the label "breast cancer survivor" and I still do. This is due to the fact that I did not survive anything. I actually find this label victimizing and inappreciable. Cancer is not a disease that heals after you are done with treatments. Once a person is diagnosed with cancer, it is forever part of your biology. Even if a person has no signs of cancer for five years, there is always a possibility of reoccurrence due to undetected cancer cells still remaining in the body. Hence, I learned to use the phrase "people or a person who has dealt with cancer/dealing with cancer" from volunteering at Gilda's Club Chicago.

My Syllabals are Black Enough



DE'NEATRIA ROBINSON



she
her
hers

Is this what Black purgatory feels like? Caught in between The Huxstables and The Evans... guess I kinda sound like The Jeffersons. Where you're too "hood" to be suburban but too "suburban" to ever be comfortable in the hood.

Eloquently dressed, but... you look too polished so an apron is handed to you to remind everyone that you're the help. So The Resistance grows inside you making it hard to seek comfortable in the prison of your ancestors, much less the lavish courtyard of your oppressor.

You can sit at their table but your silverware will always be tarnished. You can bring back the small treasures of wonder, knowledge, and philosophy you've collected but they will be regarded as foreign trash and tossed within the waves. Because they were not delivered in the package they were expected to be in. The bow was a little crocked this time.

When you're the Black girl that talks White, but melanin's too rich to ever be passable for the perceived fairness of her voice.

When neither side recognizes that your very voice mirrors the same strength and meticulous intentionality of Sojourner Truth, Oprah Winfrey, and Auntie Maxine Waters.

I do not articulate or annunciate to sound White. I speak so that my oppressor and my fellow oppressed can hear me.

I speak so that generations upon generations can recite my speech syllable by syllable, recognizing that each word was carefully formed within my diaphragm to give light to the world.

I speak so that you can see whiteness is not in the sound of the words but in the way in which you use them to step on the neck of those who have suffocated, with words smothered out since birth or to give life to the stories that were never told.

"You sound White." In three words, you have managed to simultaneously build monuments dedicated to the grandeur of White voices, while nonchalantly kicking up the roses in the cemeteries of Black martyrs who had nothing but their voices and were sacrificed so I could use mine.

So let the record reflect that my words are true when I carefully say, I don't sound White you just have the ears of a fool.



I am Not an Example



ANONYMOUS



she
her
hers

I come from a background of privilege
Family by my side worries out of mind
We live reassured and happy.
I am privileged but you wouldn't know it
Constantly an example of the Black struggle
Where they couldn't find another example
They used me in school.
But my mother raised me away from these boundaries
She told me I was unique
To embrace my race
To overcome the stereotypes, they tried to place on me
Because I come from a place of privilege
And they can't take that away from me.
I come from a family of strong people
Hard Workers
They created a new world just for me
No one can take that away.
I was free to escape these expected stereotypes
I am not an example
I am me.

You're so Crazy



HANNAH GOHEEN

"Oh my God, you're crazy."

17 years old. My boyfriend at the time said this when I tried to break up with him and reacted when he didn't acknowledge, even rejected, my demand that we see other people.

Many of my most intimate, romantic relationships have defined me as "crazy." According to my partners, my emotional outbursts and quickness to anger are merely bouts of a crazy gene implanted into me. It's because I'm Latina or a Black Woman, but it is always an attempt to invalidate my feelings for their usually irresponsible behavior.

"Crazy" was my go-to personality trait: every potential partner was warned that their mistreatment of me would result in outbursts of emotion, random crying, and "invasive" questions. When I was cheated on, the craziness seemed to increase. I became paranoid at every encounter my partner had with another person because I had not taken the time to process what had happened. The reason the person strayed away was that I WAS crazy. When I tried to address it, this craziness became a barrier to receiving clarity and peace of mind.

When my trust was misused, I blamed myself for others' actions, instantly thinking my "crazy" tendencies pushed people to be dishonest or close off from me. Partners have lied, to my face, and turned around and blamed me for being crazy. "Baby, I couldn't tell you because I knew you'd act crazy." People tag me in memes about girls burning down their boyfriend's houses, all because they didn't get a text back. The "Crazy Girl" persona is romanticized and considered comical, but as a result, I forgot who I was in the process.

*"People will abuse you then have
the audacity to call you crazy."*

People will abuse you then have the audacity to call you crazy. I've seen elements of this in many of my past relationships. Consequently, this label has prevented me from achieving full justification of my emotions. I've always cried -- nearly everything on this planet has made me tear up, as a result of anger, frustration, sadness, or exhilaration. When I have been hurt or taken advantage of, anger makes an appearance first, stripping the validity from my emotions and labeling me as crazy. Because I thought I was mad, it felt justified. Now, I am aware that I was not taught how to manage emotions -- how I cope can hurt others, and myself, but it does not make me crazy.



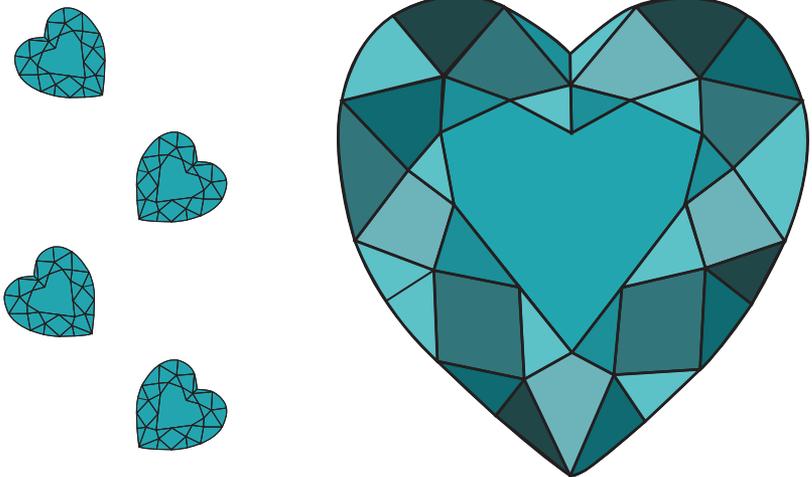
she
her
hers

Crazy is also a word that has isolated many individuals and kept them from interacting with various parts of society. To be crazy means to be mentally deranged, especially as manifested in a wild or aggressive way. An author from the Harvard Crimson articulates the danger of this word correctly. Using mental illness as an insult, not only does it contribute to societal expectations that prevent men and women from expressing their emotions in constructive ways, it is also incredibly inconsiderate and stigmatizing to those who do have a mental illness by suggesting that they deserve to be mocked or dismissed. (<http://www.thecrimson.com/column/femme-fatale/article/2016/3/3/mental-illness-stigma-crazy/>)

The other day, in a typical conversation with a close friend, I employed my usual phrase after sharing a period of frustration about another person in my life: well at the end of the day, I'm fucking crazy, so...

My friend chuckled and said, "but you aren't crazy. You just say that to make light of the trauma that has impacted your life".

I'm not crazy. The only thing that makes me crazy is allowing others to call me this when they try to invalidate my feelings, my experience. What it was an unhealthy practice in the process of emotion. I'm far from perfection – I still process emotions in harmful ways and refuse to tell others how I feel for fear of being "crazy." I hold anxiety and experience depressive episodes. Instead of keeping and embracing this stigma, I have the power to change my narrative. Next time someone calls me crazy, I won't let them.





My image is my own and I can bathe in the colors of my heart
while you paint the world black and white.
The layers of white suffocate me
Placed on who I am
Depriving the light from truth.
Struggling to push past these layers
I see anything but myself
In the eyes of those who assume they know me.
I am "proper"
So I get another layer.
My hobbies
Another layer.
The way I am.
Layers upon layers.
I break out with the brightness of my darkness.
I break out with the magic within.
Because these layers have no base
No matter how many you gather.
Only I can decide.
As a prism, dispersing every color
Vibrant is the heart, mind, and soul
Despite the attempt to make me one
I am everything.



Back Talk



SYDNEY CURTIS



she
her
hers

"Someone thanked me for my resilience today
I couldn't hear them over a wailing saxophone
Picked up my journal to smooth cocoa beans

My therapist remarked about my growth
Telling me of strengths that ain't feel like mine
Til I felt it affirmed in the Boom Bap

A stranger said I was beautiful
My fists went up first
Reminded to reserve eye contact, to keep those windows
Closed.

Blind to
The resiliency, growth & beauty.

A bitch is too busy surviving.

I've internalized remarkability so much
That I can't recognize it in me
Like I am anything less
Than my ancestors'
Wildest
dream.

*The Lord Gave me my strength...
He meant me to be free*

Relying on the stars to guide me.
Transfixed.

Jupiter in Scorpio
Magnifying my gifts
'CLAIM IT, SIS'

And rejoicing in my boundaries
The places I will not bend beneath
any bodies questioning
Or kneel before an altar not of my own design
Or resign myself to clawing the stardust from my eyes
Or..."

"Wait so, is you spiritual, or is you religious?"

".....Is you done or is you finished?"

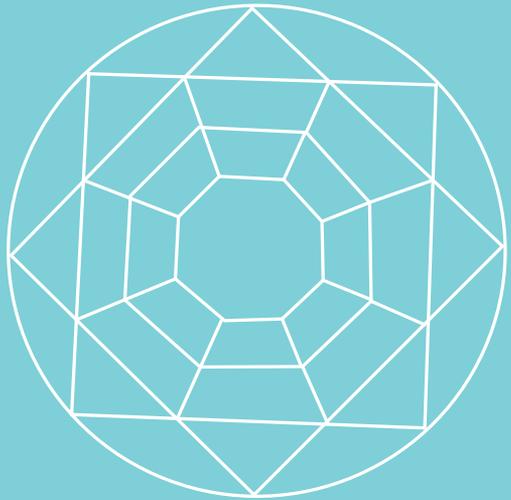
PART 2

You Don't Know Where I Come From



We are not allowed to have individual stories, experiences, backgrounds, if they do not fit into the narrative people assign to us. As women of color, we are shaped by our unique experiences and struggles.

Our origins are a vital part of who we are and inform the paths we take.





I was born knowing a magic trick
How to keep a secret
Passed down from child to child
My family's gift

How to make my body a secret
My life
It's darkest shadows locked underneath my skin
Flowing through my veins thicker than blood

I kept them without asking
Without judgment
Without love

I left them in my heart, beating
I left them as the light flickering in the doorway to remind you that I'm always home
Even when you called my body prison
And birdcage
Or hummingbird

We took turns being the canary in my coal mine ribcage

Secrets suited me
They lie at the base of my heart
Creation finds me there
Wrapped up in flowers that will soon grow through me
Out of my mouth onto paper and skin
Onto a world who did not know what they were looking for but knew they were ready

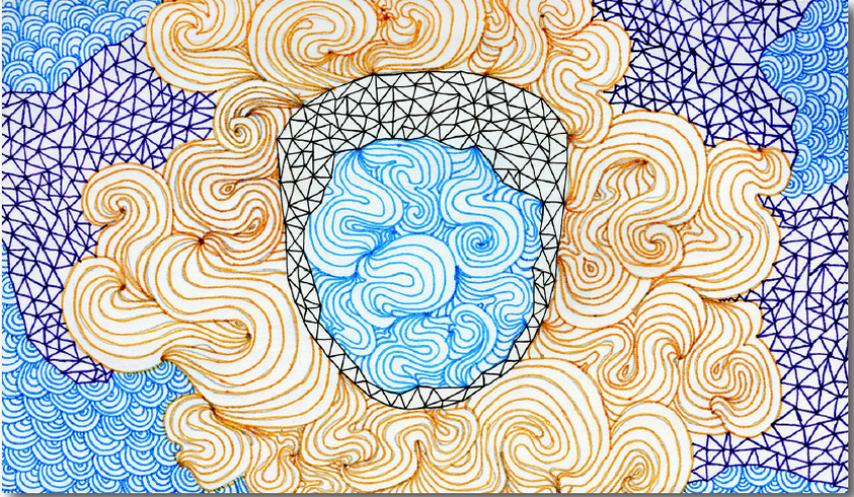
So I am full of secrets
Keeping them isn't an option

Virago Pt. 1

 NICOLE MARIE MALAZARTE



she
her
hers



This piece in the "Virago" series reflects my former mental, emotional, and psychological state dealing with my diagnosis of breast cancer at the age of 21 in March of 2016. Surprisingly I was not concerned about having a double mastectomy or losing my hair. In other words, I did not distress about the superficial. At an early age, I was enlightened with the concept that breasts, hair, etc. do not define me. I also learned awhile back to embrace aging and acknowledge that over time our physical form will eventually deteriorate. What I was truly concerned about was how my life plans stopped. Once I found my niche, which was art and design, I had great plans to pursue after Oakton Community College. However, once I was diagnosed everything I planned was halted and my life was put on pause.



A Self Portrait

JESSICA VAZQUEZ



she
her
hers



This is a la milpa behind my Nana's house, where my mother and her siblings grew up. On these fields, my mother earned her beautiful sunspots on the back of her hands from hardwork under the sun. Through agriculture labor, my mother helped cultivate and harvest the crops my Tata would sell to sustain their family. On these fields my childhood memories remain nourished. During family vacations to Mexico, as a seven year-old my father would hold my hand during what once seemed a long and scary path to nueces that would fall from the walnut tree. On this land, my native roots are grounded and grow proud.



Diversity Statement



SHANZEH DAUDI

My South Asian family never talked about our political history. The year 1947 never made it into a conversation that involved my younger brother and I. The words "independence" and "partition" were only whispered in adult conversations late at night over tea. Mama always told me, "Shanu, jaanti hoon ke tumhara dil bahot acha hai, leken kisi ko kuch nahi kahain na. Bas kam karo aur ghar ajao." Shanu, I know you have a good heart, but don't say anything to anyone. Just do your work and come home.

She said this to me when I first came home, tears in my eyes, after some bigger kids had insulted my school uniform that included a head scarf. She said this when I came home, from my public high school, enraged and confused after my classmates asked me if I knew where Osama bin Laden lived. She said this when I came home, from my liberal Chicago university, and quietly told her about having my hijab torn from my body. I never learned to ask my mother questions about my people's background, about my experience as a Muslim growing up in America, about the hatred in the world and in my own community. Her response was always the same, "Bas ghar ajao." Just come home. As it is for many immigrant mothers, her concern was for my physical safety. My emotional struggle I fought through on my own.

"We cannot let our struggle cloud our eyes...to the battles other communities experienced."

I made sure my younger brother was not raised with the same response. When he came home, eyes red and brow furrowed, I told him that there was nothing in the world stronger than someone who struggled. Jihad (to struggle) I explained to him, was his everyday experience. We can not let our struggle cloud our eyes, make us ignorant to the battles other communities experienced. In my education, I had learned what allyship, leadership, and social responsibility looked like.

"Appa (sister), what is police brutality?"

Like a prayer, I exhaled the names of children who were ripped from this world, the names of those battling mental illness and poverty and domestic abuse, the names of those who deserved everything except the fate they met. I shared with him the stories of mothers who sacrificed everything to share their pain with the world, begging us to notice the injustice. I showed him video, video, video until our ears bled and our eyes ached. We watched Black skin meet black pavement, hands in the air, a badge reflecting in their eyes. This is police brutality.

"Appa, what is genocide?"



she
her
hers

With my head bowed, I asked him to find Burma on a map. Find Yemen. Find Darfur. Find Palestine. Find Rwanda. Find the countries that do not fund HIV-treatment. Find the guns that only target Black skin. Find the diamonds mined by children, find the factories run by child slaves, find the migrant workers trafficked across borders paying the price with their lives. Find a Native American reservation, and ask yourself, was this land I stand on now built by a genocide? Find the United States. This is genocide.

"Appa, what is terrorism?"

My heart pounding, I whispered to him the difference between Daesh and Islam. Like a wave, the words came crashing out of me: terrorism is intended to scare people, to divide us, to hurt society with the expectation of horrible things. Terrorism is not the athaan, it is not our faith, it is not who we are. We repeat the mantra "not in my name, not in my name", while my brother Mohammed goes by a different name to avoid the scrutiny. I told him terror was the last thing in the eyes of six people at a Sikh Gurudwara in 2014, nine people at a Black church in 2015, forty-nine people at an LGBTQIA+ club in 2016, in the eyes of hundreds at a concert, at a school, at a church in 2017. This is terrorism.

"Appa, what is racism?"

With an urgency, I cautioned him from feeling blameless, reminding him that racism penetrates our immigrant community to its very core. I opened a medicinal cabinet to show him the skin lightening cream our grandmother gave me that morning, opened a pamphlet that depicted a woman in blackface bleaching away her melanin in the name of beauty. Racism is the torches and the salutes, the nooses and the slurs, but it is also the way anti-Blackness is passed down in the very cadence of our language. Mocking accents, skimping pay, denying housing, forcing free labor - why are the guilty posting bail and the innocent committing suicide inside prison walls? This is racism.

"Appa, what is feminism?"

*"It is the doors of heaven beneath
our mother's feet... this is feminism."*

Feminism is the poetry that is sung to us as children, as we are rocked to sleep in the arms of our mothers. Feminism is the sweat on Mama's forehead as she fries samosas in the Ramadan heat. Feminism is the way she quizzed me on my math homework in middle school, scolding me in one language and educating me in another. Feminism is not the bruises you saw on my arms before I went to high school prom, not the laugh that follows a catcall, not the moan at the birth of a baby



she
her
hers

girl. It is the doors of heaven beneath our mother's feet, the hijab that wraps me in an embrace, the roots of our faith that we are never taught to admire. This is feminism.

"Appa, what is diaspora?"

I pulled book after book from my shelf, unfolding a syllabus entitled "Encountering South Asia" that taught me stories of my people I had never known. I handed him our history, bound into the pages of novels hidden from us as children, ones that our parents never read to us because they had lived the horrible reality. I had asked my grandfather once, to tell me his story. He had just received his certificate of citizenship, after 22 years of patience ebbing into desperation, when he finally pried open the doors to his past. Diaspora is what was running through the veins of my grandparents when they fled India as children, and when they fled Bangladesh with their own children, and when they fled Pakistan with me. Diaspora is never truly knowing when to stop running. Diaspora is the wave that carried me away from the tree I planted in a garden of my memories. Diaspora is the only language I can speak to my grandmother in, but I never learned to write her letters with it. Diaspora is my brother not knowing how to answer me in Urdu, and my younger cousin not understanding my words. It is the hyphen between our identities, the feeling of half and never yet whole. It is the question the universe asks - are you where you are meant to be, where you were put on this earth? Since 1947, I have been diaspora.





she
hers
they
them

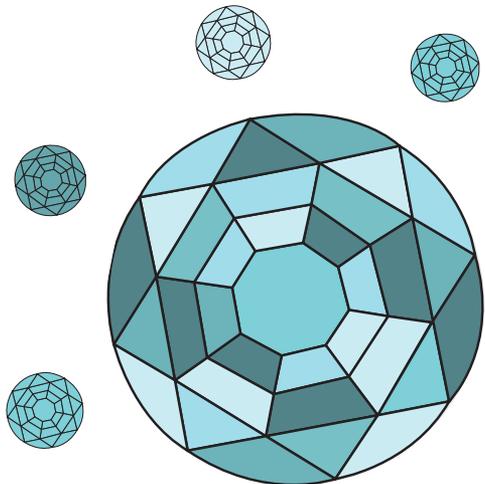
Today is dark grey
I laid back and watched
My celebratory orange,
Dull red and bleed pink.
Purple, ever royal, usurped that powdered pink throne
And then blue

At that point the grass turned cold
As the sun selfishly stripped me of its warmth;
I was no longer worthy of those glorious rays
And I lost my orange

One raindrop fell
Then another
And I was caught in a storm

Soaked to the bone and quivering
I was stock still;
My brain sent all the signals --
"This cold is dangerous
It will kill you"

Yet, I remained.
And then grey.



Chanda Mama – The Moon



NASEEB KAUR BHANGAL

When I was younger, I use to look at the moon often. The moon was where my family lived. Not because they were aliens or extra-terrestrial beings. But because that's where I thought India was. India, the only home my people have known; before this place became another place to know. The long-time home of my mother and father, and all their mothers and fathers, and all those who shaped Mattu and Bhangal, and all those who brought me into existence. The moon, that's where I thought family was as a little 6-year-old. That's where I find family on nights alone in Chicago when I look up at the moon.

In the Punjabi and Indian tongues, the moon is referred to as "Chanda Mama" (translation: Uncle) among storytelling between children and their parents. My mom used to point the moon out to me on our long walks on the dam and tell me that's where your uncle is, your Nani is, your Maci is, your Dadi is... My mom would say it's a faraway place. I felt that distance in my heart. I saw that distance in my small hands when I lifted them up to the sky and tried to repurpose them as a ruler, measuring distance between me and home. I could walk on that dam with my mom and still not seem to get closer. I could see the moon in front of me... I think when she pointed to the moon she also ached for the home she knew at her mother's feet, in her dad's stories, in her brothers' and sister's laughter, in her books, and in her childhood.

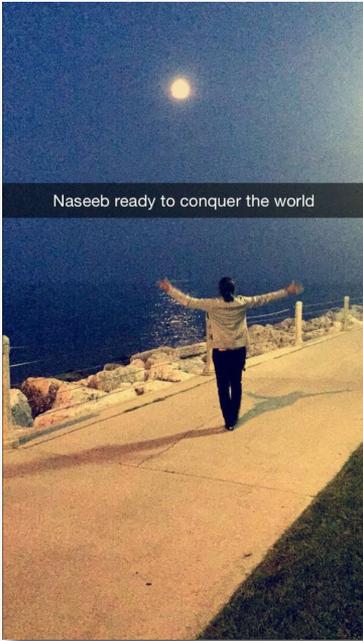
The distance between walks on the dam and the moon accurately described exactly how I felt about family. Bright in my life. Disappearing occasionally. Desperately far away but always present and pulling at me. Pulling at me like how the moon pulls the ocean tides. How it rules the ocean tides. But sometimes it pulls and I forget to look up. I forget to think about family. I forget to slow myself down in the business of this Western grind to make time for what's right there. In the Sky. Across the universe. Across the planet. 11:30 hours away. A whole day ahead. A lifetime of moments missed. Hugs left unembraced. Laughter absent. A lifetime of light shining above me. Guiding my path, my values, and my faith. All from a distance and with such force.

I recently came back from a month-long visit to India. It's hard to only have a full moon for a few days. I think the moon best describes traveling back to India as a young adult. Travel to the moon is a rare occasion, but a cherished one as well. I'm left feeling bright, full, replenished, loved, and fully attuned to my ancestral legacy. The moon reminds me of who I am. Who I come from. To not forget to look up at the moon when I find myself far away from it. But when the full moon starts to wane, my tears also follow. I cry a million tears to lose something that loves me so much; something so bright, so whole, and so much my own.





she
her
hers



The Story of My Name



LILIANNE TANG

Lilianne Chang Tang. That's what it says on my birth certificate. My first name is spelled incorrectly because my mom didn't know English very well at the time. It was supposed to be spelled as Li-l-l-i-a-n. But instead, it's Li-l-l-i-a-n-n-e. Chang is my mom's last name and Tang is my dad's last name. My parents are not legally married, but they made sure that whatever happened, each of them would always be a part of me.

I actually hated my name growing up. Lily-ANNE. It sounded so White on paper. The last syllable - always emphasized for no reason at all. Frequently misspelled and mispronounced because the Ls and Is were too confusing - how many are there of each and where do they even belong? I've been called Lianne, Lily Annie, Lilani, and even simplified to just plain 'ol Lily. I hated the spelling of my name so much that through most of my K-12 education, I used Lillian on all of my school documents. I even refused to share my middle name because Chang and Tang together sounded too closely to a racial slur.

I remember growing up and always feeling mad that I could never find a key chain or a mug with my name on it at souvenir stores. Something so small, but for some reason, meant so much to me. I guess I didn't feel close to that spelling of my name. It wasn't until my junior year of high school that I decided to reclaim Lilianne. Lots of college-related forms were coming at me, so I started using my "real" name again. I realized that the only reason I hated my name was because of the way people pronounced it - Lily-ANNE: so White, yet none of my lived experiences resembled what my name sounded like.

The truth is that I actually love the spelling of my name. So I started to embrace Lilianne and corrected people who mispronounced it. With the exception of my family. My dad calls me 'Leelin' because he can't actually pronounce my name. My mom calls me 'Linlin' because that rolled off the tongue easier for her. Sometimes, even she forgets the spelling of my name, and that's okay. It's really a reminder of how since birth, my name was and continues to be tied to some sense of my identity - being a child of immigrants, daughter of refugees who survived the Khmer Rouge.

“I don't care for the meaning of my name. But I care that I give meaning to my name.”



she
her
hers

I don't care for the meaning of my name. But I care that I give meaning to my name. I am a first-generation, low-income Cambodian American woman who is the first on my mom's side and the first woman on my dad's side of the family to get a Master's degree. I am a strong, fat, outspoken, and brilliant Asian American woman who has agency to pursue my passions in social justice. Through my struggles and my triumphs, like a lotus flower that is rooted in the depths of muddy ponds, I rise above the darkness and bloom into a beautiful flower. Like a symbol of critical hope despite the challenging circumstances that the lotus flowers grow in. I am defying the odds that have been stacked against me and thriving in ways I didn't know was possible. I hope that when people see or speak of my name, they will know. Lilianne is resilient.



Miss Chinatown

 KIRA HUTSON



she
her
hers



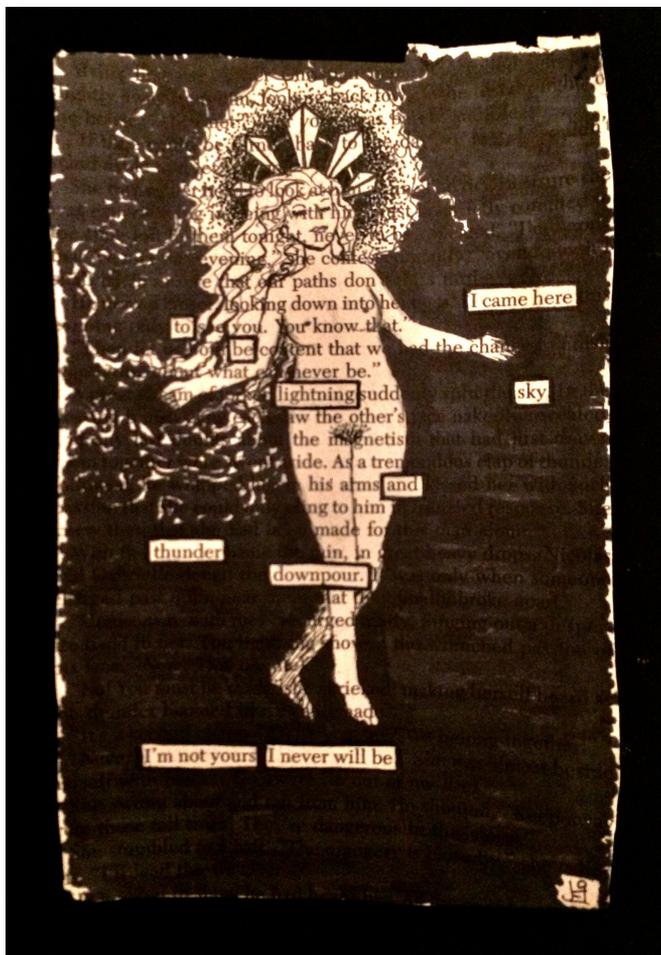
Growing up racially ambiguous, I always felt like people did not recognize my cultural background. The internal struggle of identifying with my culture but having others tell me I did not belong in it made it very difficult for me to shape my identity. My grandma always taught me to love my traditions and heritage and when she passed away it was harder for me to maintain my connection to where I came from. In this piece of glitch art, the computer code behind an image of my grandma has been manipulated. I added poetry and messages to her by deleting segments of code and typing new ones. The result is a photograph that does not take its original form. The proportions, color, and silhouette have been permanently altered, showing a completely different perspective of the portrait. Equally, my grandma has radically affected the way I view my culture and perceive the world.

Diwata

JENINE YBAÑEZ



she
her
hers



This blackout poem is titled *Diwata*, which is a type of deity from Philippine mythology. The term used to mean “goddess,” but it was reduced to “nymph” or “spirit” after the Spanish invaded and colonized the Philippines. I use the word in its original pre-colonial sense, reclaiming it from the conquerors of the past. *Diwatas* are the guardian spirits of nature. They could bring prosperity, health, and fortune. But if they aren’t paid proper respects or if their forests and mountains are harmed, they cast curses, misfortune, and disease. I think they symbolize the power to reclaim one’s identity, shifting ownership from the oppressor to the empowered survivor. Their bodies, minds, and spirits cannot be owned. They exist to be elemental, powerful, sovereign. *Diwatas* remind us that we all have some goddess in us.

My Arrival at Community

Less than six months ago, I packed up my belongings to move to Chicago to begin grad school and embark on a new goal in my life. My participation in graduate school has prompted so much reflection and growth of where I am at on my journey. Although I had explored my identities a lot during my undergraduate career, I quickly realized I had not thought about my entire experience and how that impacted who I am today. Within my first week of grad school, I met with one of my professors for coffee. I expected her to ask questions about my upcoming class facilitation or how I had been adjusting to the city; however, she asked me about how I grew up, what experiences I had in elementary in high school, what my family was like and how I decided to take this career path. Even though I had only had four classes to interact with her, I told her my whole life story. It was then that I was made aware of a concept we explored in class. Takacs (2002) argues that “[k]nowledge does not arrive unmediated from the world; rather knowledge gets constructed by interaction between the questioner and the world” (p. 31). Where I have been, what I’ve experienced and what has shaped me directly impacts my own knowledge. As a newcomer to the LUCES space and a new voice in Chicago, I want to share some of my story, how my identity has formed, and how it has grown since my recent transition.

Almost exactly a month ago, I participated in the Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs’ Womxn of Color retreat as an engaged staff member. Existing in a space of folks who I felt completely comfortable around and connected to even though I did not know each attendee personally affirmed how strong and important my identity as a queer woman of color is in my journey for my own self-definition. In the past, I only really felt that it was important to identify as black woman and only a queer woman when it was necessary. I often highlighted some of the specific experiences that family members, friends, and I who also identify as black women, and the unique positionality we have in the United States. Being a black woman is one of the first identities that I am proud to claim, discuss, and protect even in spaces where it may not be as valued.

Almost all my experiences in Ohio whether growing up or at my undergraduate institution, were marked by siloed racial or gender identities. In protected black spaces I participated in, such as Jack and Jill, I stood proud as a black woman. Although I had not yet been introduced to Kimberle Crenshaw’s “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics” or Patricia Hill Collins’ Black Feminist Thought, I felt deeply that my experience was unique from the experiences of my black, male peers. Their narratives with racial oppression were shared widely, understood, and supported.

My experience attending an all girls’ school for most of my life allowed me the space to explore the ways in which women were historically oppressed and how sexism is manifested in our current society. However, I could never grasp why I was told I was unattractive by the same black men I built community with because my hair was not fine and straight, or my nose was not slender and small. I did not understand why there were never lead roles in school productions for black women, if there



she
her
hers

were representative roles at all. I did not have the knowledge to describe why my mom was paid less than both her white male coworkers and white female coworkers.

When I matriculated to college, I was finally introduced to the literature that answered the questions I had been raising for years prior. The coupled marginalization of existing as both black and a woman left me with the desire to advocate for black women's liberation in every space I encountered. I still remember the first time that I introduced myself as a proud black, queer woman. It was during the final retreat of a group called the Racial Awareness Program that I was involved in all through undergrad. It felt so liberating to announce and own this identity that I did not even acknowledge how many times I concealed it in order to feel like a "cooperative" member of the black community at UC.

"We are powerful, we are unique, we are valuable. We must also hold ourselves accountable to help each other grow, to support one another, and to promote change in our society. Most importantly, I believe this must happen together."

After transitioning from the University of Cincinnati (UC) to Loyola University Chicago, my unyielding identity as a black woman began to shift as I found a space amongst many different womxn of color. My experience as a graduate student at Loyola, especially as a graduate assistant for Loyola University Chicago Empowering Sisterhood (LUCES), is really the first time that I have been in community with non-black womxn of color. In my first few weeks, I witnessed mindful collaboration between womxn of color that held different races and ethnicities. It was truly beautiful to be in a space that was cultivated for these womxn to come together, learn, and support one another and campaign for one another. I did not forget or deny that I exist as a black woman, but my identity as a womxn of color was strengthened. In the LUCES community, distinct silos did not feel necessary to feel supported as a black woman and even as a queer woman.

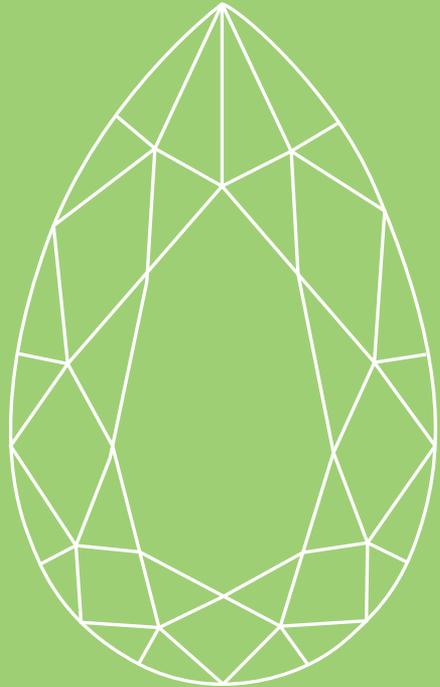
Today, as I write to all you, I stand recognizing that I stand and hold space in both identities: a black woman and a womxn of color. Coming from where I have been and how I used to see the world, it is extremely important to me. I have grown to see being a womxn of color as "a solidarity definition: a commitment to work in collaboration with other oppressed women of color who have been minoritized" (Western States Center, 2011). We are powerful, we are unique, we are valuable. We must also hold ourselves accountable to help each other grow, to support one another, and to promote change in our society. Most importantly, I believe this must happen together.

PART 3

You Don't Know Who I Will Become



Our future, goals, and dreams are not limited by others' expectations and our compounded discrimination. We continue to shatter the glass ceiling and overcome obstacles caused by a white supremacist, capitalist, and patriarchal society.



The Future is Ours



TAYLOR THOMAS



she
her
hers

the future is my niece
1 years old with a soul glow
a genius
a peanut butter baby with her
biracial skin
the future is my cousin
6 years old with a heart made of gold
a mouth so bold
a being who stands tall in all her glory
all her dark-girl beauty
the future is me
19 years old with a passion to save the world
a cloud of sadness hanging over my skull
a heart so big
a life of winding roads
all that guides me
all that drives me
because the future is us
the future of us is in our hands
and i'll be damned if this world
tries to take us down
tries to bury our dreams
our hope
our love
because we deserve much better
much greater
so we'll climb to the mountain top and then some and then some and then some
until we've turned over every stone
that's been thrown our way
until there's nothing holding us back
until the future is ours

Flower Stem



AMITA NGUYEN



she
hers
they
them

It was something so simple that blossomed into something so beautiful. The glass vase that held it was so clear like the feelings you shared with me on that day. How the flowers' blooming reminded me of the pure smile that gave way to my true self unexpectedly. The water that gleamed the light of the hot summer sun, radiating that great energy you had.

But the main part of all this was the simple bud in the corner, barely noticeable. Covered in dirt, the bud remained a simple youngling, yearning to grow, to be as beautiful as the flowers around it. It yearned to grow, pushing outward beyond its boundaries, pleading to be something amazing.

It was there in that bud that I saw you the most – the real you, with your problems sprawled out before me. The you who was determined to keep growing, despite the circumstances. To be greater than what everyone makes you out to be – the bigger flowers intimidating and discouraging the little bud.

I wanted to believe. Through that bud, I wanted to believe that there was more – that things will be better for that bud, despite what everyone has told me loudly and clearly:

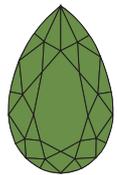
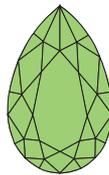
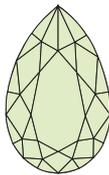
“There is no hope”

“There is only despair.”

“There is nothing more to do, but cry out for these things.”

No solution is what they told me, but that bud that grew in the vase made me believe, on that summer day that there is a solution.

So, I'll try to hold on. I'll keep growing this little bud, and keep hoping that like this bud, you too, with your pure smile and radiating energy, will never give up and grow to your fullest potential.



Aeidein for Homeland



JESSICA XI



she
her
hers

Battleground where loyalties lie
About the closest thing where truth is always
Timeless, wide child eyes that see
An old man's withered hands to know
The seas, the fields, the wandering thoughts
Where beauty rests his poet's head
Where we seek to earn our bread
Where blossoms grow and go and I
Can never travel down the same road.



My Song for You



NECH MARIE RODRIGUEZ

¡Cuando mi familia completa me dio la espalda, no creían en mí, me dejaron caer, no sabían que yo estaba luchando, luchando desde que llegue a este mundo! Yo nací para triunfar pero ni yo misma sabía de mi pontensial, solo Dios sabe en cuál momento preciso te da a brillar. Yo tengo un propósito y lo voy a cumplir x que antes que yo muera lo voy a conseguir, desde una niña me dije entre mi cuando yo sea famosa y rica a los que me ayudaron los iba cuidar. Aunq llegue a momentos en los cuales sentía no poder más, Dios me empujó para seguir adelante, yo literalmente me arrastraba en el piso para llegar a mi destino pero nunca deje de creer. Cuando mi madre me maltrataba le preguntaba a Dios que x que me pasaba eso, yo le pedía que me llevara con el, cuando abusaban de mi yo lloraba en silencio! Mis sueños un día dejaron de ser pero Dios volvió a mi y me recordó que tengo un propósito. Me acuerdo que ese mismo día le prometí a papá Dios que jamás iba a vencerme otra ves.

Aunque e llegado asta fondo sigo de pies x que se que Dios tiene algo para mí, Yo voy a lograr lo que nadie pensó que yo podría hacer! Y cuando ese día llegue se van arrepentir de haberme echo sufrir de la manera que sufrí x que una niña de 12 años no hubiera estado pensando en la muerte. X que una niña de 15 años no debería de estar pidiéndole a Dios que se la lleve con el. X que una niña de 17 años se intentó de suicidar, x que después de tener a sus hijos nunca tuvo apoyo de su madre que más anhelaba, cuando más necesite de ti nunca estuviste, te desasiste de mi como si fuese un trozo de papel peor como si hubiera sido basura, me despreciaste x ser hija de mi padre pero más x ser hija de mi madre, x que me diste el coraje tuyo el que uso diario para seguir adelante sin ti sigo PAL frente con mis niños y les enseño todos los días lo importante de una familia x que conmigo ese cyclo se rompió, tú me dejaste cuando más te necesite, preferiste tu felicidad ante la mía era un estorbo para ti, eras una mujer antes que madre pero no te culpo pues fuiste niña cuando me tuviste, y aunque no fue culpa de mis hermanos ni la mía tu sufriste también, si no fuera x ti no estuviera donde estoy, tú eres la que me motiva a seguir adelante todo el coraje que me hiciste pasar lo convertí en motivación para enseñarte lo contrario! Yo jamás pedi venir a este mundo mucho menos a sufrir. Y aunq tengo cicatrices permanentes con las que tengo que lidiar sigo con mi frente en alto, más alto de lo que jamás la e puesto! Solo tú y Dios saben el x que me hiciste todo lo que me hiciste pero yo ya ni quiero saberlo! Todo lo que sube tiene que caer y todo el daño causado lo pagaras en tu propio infierno. Yo no te deseo el mal y siempre te amare pero las cicatrices que tengo siempre me arrecordaran de todo el daño que me as echo. X que estas corriendo ya no puedes ver lo que as criado? Nací una princesa convertida en monstruo y ahora lucho x ser una reina. Tú me dañaste asta ya no poder y encima de todo rompí cada borde que me pusiste encima, apenas a la edad que tengo es que estoy aprendiendo vivir x que nunca tuve consejo de quien lo anhelaba pero está bien ya no sigo solo quiero decir.

Aunq tú no creíste en mi, ahora tengo tres que miran Asia mi y x ellos luchare a ser quien siempre soñé ser. X que Dios nunca me abandono y me enseñó trajo angeles a mi vida para poder ver mi futuro.



she
her
hers

Aunq tú no creíste en mi yo seguí adelante a pesar de todo lo que sufrí me hiciste lo fuerte que soy hoy.

¡Esta canción te la dedico a ti!!



I Am Poem



SACORA WILLIAMS



she
her
hers

I am #HarveyWorld Cray... yet C.O.G.I.C. The C is for Crazy.

I am all Black everything, from my city, to my skin, to my ripped Nike shoes.

I am of cotton picking, share cropping, "going up and yonder (North)" descent.

I am switch whippings, Bologna sandwiches and cassette tapes; I am Grandma's little helper.

I am the result of the dedication, tears, and prayers of a single Black mother with three degrees.

I am not first generation, yet, "you're the first in the family to ____."

I am from "public housing to private education."

I am an organizer, a student leader, a mentor, a TA, a student. Everything.

I am everything, but I am nothing.

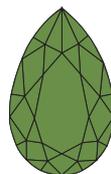
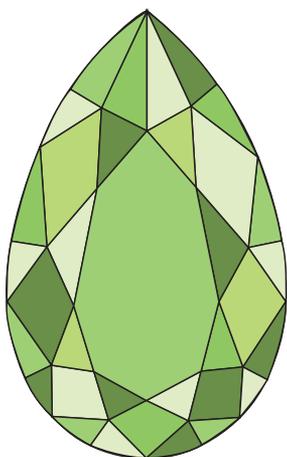
I am a social justice warrior, but I despise institutionalized social justice.

I am a diversity quota, but I challenge the status quo.

I am dedicated to creating options for my community. My goal is to end the cycle of "#Free ____"
and "#RIP ____"

I am revolutionary in my poor, Black, Queer, womanhood.

I am the revolution.



The Healing



RADIANCE COOPER



she
her
hers

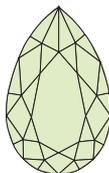
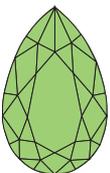
I turned my back
for one second
And I am back
In this endless
Black hole,
My memories
Snuck up behind
me once again,
and I am trapped
in that moment
that plays like a
Broken record
Again and again,

Seconds, minutes,
Hours, days,
All the time
I have spent
Wondering why?
Why always
in the midst
Of all the chaos
Girls like me always

Fall through the cracks.

It feels like we
are the sand that
Slips through fingers
Among the billions
And trillions of others,
Completely unseen
And indecipherable
Among all of the rest.
But we will be seen.
I will be seen.

No longer that
Fearful spirit crafted,
Hiding in the plains
Of her mind for refuge,
Watching her words
Carefully,
But a phoenix,
Rising from the
Ashes again and again.
A survivor.



Labor of Love: Women of Color



PAIGE J. GARDNER

As a woman of color I have been expected to minimize myself, maximize myself, stretch myself, second-guess myself, apologize for myself, silence myself, speak for myself, fight for myself, and the list can go on-and-on. In my thirty years of living, I have finally come to a place where I no longer subscribe to the idea of being everything to everyone at the same time. This concept at first seems noble until I began to notice time and time again, that I ended up emotionally empty and exhausted. I gave so much only to receive so little in return and this resulted in me feeling isolated, frustrated, and resentful.

In this reflection I share the concept of emotional labor, a sociological term used to describe the ways in which individuals manage their emotions in work environments (Hochschild, 1983). Overtime this concept of emotional labor has been connected to the ways women manage oppression and produce high quality work in exchange for compensation. The phenomenon of this concept is captured in how women conceal their discontentment, exhaustions, frustration or dismay in the hopes of producing good work that is pleasing to both management and customers. Although women are compensated to produce work, at times compensation is not comparable to the amount of emotional labor women expend.

“Although our intersecting identities can bring us a source of strength, we can also experience interlocking oppression, where we may find ourselves at the margins of society.”

Now that I have shared the definition of emotional labor and how it connects to women in general, let's get even more specific and think about how this affects women of color. Intersectionality theory reminds us that some of our social identities are interconnected in a way that they become inseparable. For me, my queerness, Blackness and identity as a woman are inextricably tied to one another. It is where I experience the highest levels of pride, empowerment, and self-love. These are the identities from which I pull my values from and also form the basis of where I find community and chosen family. Although our intersecting identities can bring us a source of strength, we can also experience interlocking oppression, where we may find ourselves at the margins of society. My identities as a queer, Black, woman of color is where I experience the most pervasive forms of oppression on an individual basis (i.e. microaggressions) and systemic level (i.e. institutional/structural oppression). Day in and day out, I have to deal with harmful language, sexism, racism, heteronormative culture, fear and anxiety about my queerness, blackness, and gender. Sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish the type of oppression I am facing and that embodies how intersectional oppression works.

and Emotional Labor



she
her
hers



BWC Demonstration with Tape: I spent relentless hours organizing our student body to block in the Board of Trustees meeting in the library. I was president of Black Women's Collective at the time.

When intersectionality is paired with emotional labor this phenomenon intensifies. Women of color have to confront multiple forms of oppression in addition to producing “good work” for the institution in exchange for a degree (a form of compensation). In order to make this happen women of color have to expend emotional labor on developing coping mechanisms and strategies to overcome these individual and systemic forms of oppression. For example, when I was a sophomore student at Mills College (a predominately White institution), I had to figure out how to continue my education when my father suddenly lost his job. In order to stay in college, I had to take on heavy debt, and pick up two additional jobs on campus to help pay for my college expenses. I became a Resident Assistant and held a workstudy position on campus that would then pay me hourly. Additionally, I was in the process of coming out as bisexual and dealing with the effects of family disapproval. With all of these extenuating life circumstances I still had to deal with issues in the classroom. During my sophomore year I was a Math major and although my school was an all-women’s college most of my math courses were taught by men. I had one particular professor who made me feel less than when I would go to office hours. I would take good notes in class and still struggle to produce good grades on my exams. I would try to make friends with students in the classroom to get more help, but the classroom cliques were not very inviting or welcoming.

For a good majority of my sophomore year I began to feel isolated. All of these issues created pressure for me: I was experiencing isolation in the classroom and disappointment in myself for not being the exemplary student I once was when I was in high school. I was not getting the good grades and I found myself on probation in my student leader positions. Even though I was not happy as a math major I was under pressure from my family to become an engineer as it would be a lucrative major and guaranteed job after graduation. I also still need to be a role model for my

siblings and community members back home. I had to manage my emotions and figure out how to succeed because failure was not an option.



After the demonstration me and all students involved predominantly Women of Color took a solidarity photo together.

Eventually with the support of my mentor, I was able to make a decision in changing my major from Math to Early Childhood Development (ECD). In doing so, I found a major that aligned with my strengths. I value community and engagement with people. My ECD course requirements encouraged group presentations, class facilitations, and I even found a grant to work at a middle school teaching algebra to fifth graders. Additionally, my supervisor required me to make a wellness plan that included going to therapy. I was extremely hesitant and didn't want to go because I thought therapy was for weak individuals. I was also afraid that going to therapy meant something was innately wrong with me. However, in order to keep my job, I had to fulfill these expectations (so you know I went to therapy).

I will honestly say that going to therapy saved my life. It was truly a game changer, because this is how I built the courage to work through some of the issues in my life and break out of isolation. I was able to tell my parents that I changed my major which laid the foundation for me to become independent of my parents. I was able to come out to my family and live my life freely and openly as opposed to being in the closet. Additionally, therapy helped me realize that I was also socially over extended in my student leadership positions. I eventually stepped down from my Black Women's Collective president role so that I could focus on my course work and make time to study, go to classes, exercise, sleep, and eat. Thankfully my therapist was a Black women and able to understand the uniqueness of my stressors as a woman of color. She affirmed my thought process and even



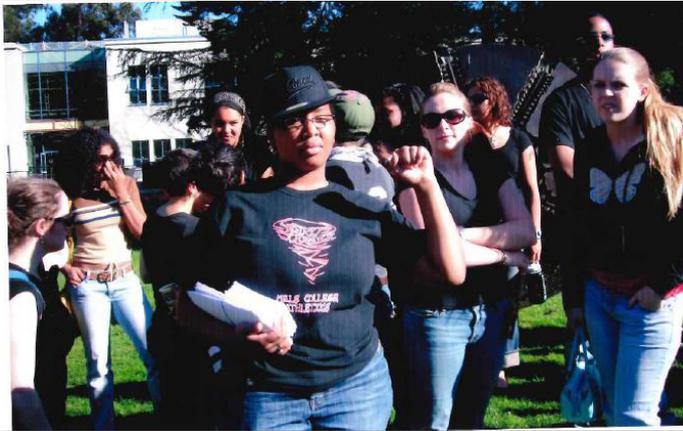
she
her
hers

provided space for me to practice how to speak to my family and friends about setting intentional boundaries.

Although the origins of emotional labor derive from how women manage their emotions in the work place, as you can see from my story this concept extends beyond working environments. For college students the working environment becomes the college campus (inside and outside of the classroom). This includes working as a student in the classroom, working as a student leader, working as a volunteer, working as a romantic partner, working as a platonic friend, and the list can go on and on. As college students, women of color have to: (1) manage meeting the expectations of family, faculty, and the institution (not to mention the most important expectation is fulfilling your own personal expectations), (2) navigate finances to secure housing, food, books, and general tuition, (3) combat sexist/racist microaggressions inside and outside of the classroom from peer students, faculty and staff and (4) combat all other various forms of individual and institutional forms of oppression based in classism, ableism, religious oppression, ageism, as well as many others.

I do not think we can move through life with out expending emotional labor, however I do believe that we can decide how much of it we want to give to others. In my story I realize that no one was ready to help me make the difficult decisions aside from my mentor who was invested in my success. My family would have never encouraged me to change my major or encourage me to explore my sexuality. My professor would have never challenged the class to be more communal and supportive of student's different learning styles. The student organization I was apart of would have continued to allow me to burn out in my role as President, which could have resulted in me having to leave the institution. I started to spiral downward in isolation until my mentor took note of my distress. She believed I was a capable student able to be equally successful in my academic commitment as I was in my leadership roles on campus.

“My lesson from this reflection is that if you can find at least one individual whether it be a friend, partner, or mentor who is invested in your success, that simple act of forming your community of support will make your college experience more enjoyable and much easier to navigate.”



Another photo of me just working to keep people together and pass out instruction for students to follow.

My lesson from this reflection is that if you can find at least one individual whether it be a friend, partner, or mentor who is invested in your success, that simple act of forming your community of support will make your college experience more enjoyable and much easier to navigate.



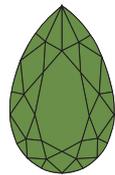
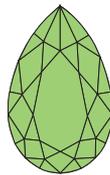
Lastly, a photo of my very first Women of Color retreat. This picture is significant as it serves as the first time I got to examine all of my intersecting identities as a Queer Woman of Color. This was my safe space to do self-work and practice self-care.



she
her
hers

Additionally, it becomes important that you do things that are rooted in your passions and academic interests as only you can earn your degree from Loyola. Since emotional labor will always be something we as women of color have to manage and negotiate, when you put yourself first, the outcome can be most rewarding. I choose to fully commit myself to the practice of self-preservation and self-love. This commitment is a continual labor of love with no means of an end point. I can say in my thirty years of living, setting boundaries, practicing self-preservation and self-love is only a practical concept and nothing that I have completely mastered. If anything, overtime I continue to strengthen in my practice, develop more navigational tools, and help others like me begin the process of self-preservation and self-love.

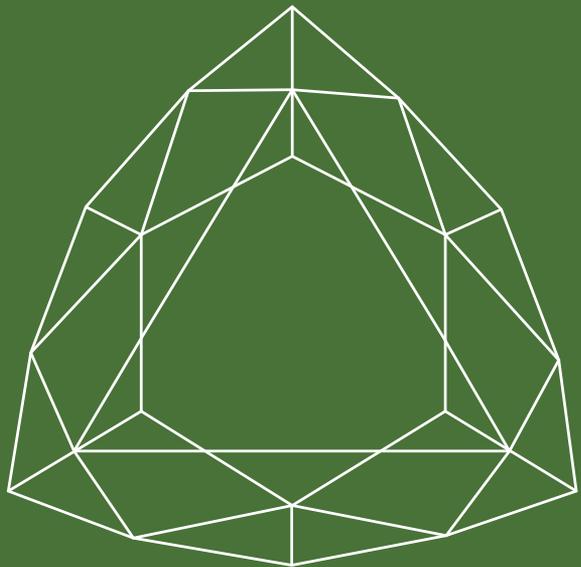
“I choose to fully commit myself to the practice of self-preservation and self-love. This commitment is a continual labor of love with no means of an end point.”



This is Who I Am



Our most radical act of resistance is the reinvention of what it means to be a woman of color. By unapologetically being ourselves and standing authentically, we begin the process of self-love and acceptance. At the end of the day we are all individuals seeking our own truth.



Alexander (*More Nazis Survived Than Victims*)



JESSICA XI



she
her
hers

I met a man from Bergen, Hordaland
He was cute - he had a girlfriend.
People survived hell on earth by lying in a pit of bodies
Shot and waiting, long night through. Measuring time by puddles of blood.

INTIMATE DEATHS

BEAR WITNESS AS WE AGE

WE WHO HAVE LIVED HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN YOU

NOW IS THE PAST WE AFFECT.

Define for me narrow-minded because
We assume this acute sense from others, small-town
Suffering is a universal truth we must confront (genocide)
Look ye well upon your ovens, the monsters. They never were born.

[

]

In this lies the dreaming.
Shackled men have spent more time
Thinking of eating more than weeping
Nothing of their vengeance or their childbirth pain is mine.

You are more likely to kill your neighbor than I
The same pressures make oil, diamonds, vulcan, pax
I loved myself in all my beauty, not doubting
One hundred forty years ago I was from Bergen too.

Luces Mentees: Something



SVARA MEHTA, DIANDRA SARR, RI'ENNA BOYD, SOPHIE CHO, & LAUREN BREW

This is Svara's Story

9th grade, I decided to start wearing my culture, a chandlo, ya know? The dot on my forehead. Stares, remarks, rudeness is all I received.
If Christians can wear ash on ash Wednesday and be accepted, why can't I?
Embarrassed, I felt like I didn't belong. Confused if I should wipe it off after prayer or to be proud. Being proud of who I am is what I chose and that is who I am today.
Not only am I a woman, I am a woman of brown color adapting to the American mainstream.
Me and my "American clothes" with a bindi on my forehead, brown hair, brown skin, and with an American accent is who I am. I may not look like you, but I am human too.
Instead of judging one, begin with questioning one.

This is Diandra's Story

Coming to Loyola or Chicago as a matter of fact,
All the way from the comforts of home,
With uncertainties
Uncertainties for what?
For my future.
As normal as it may seem,
To a 1st gen it's unacceptable.
Yet as I try to discover my interest
Among the many white faces
Of my professors and peers, I had a mentor
To remind me that I DO BELONG

Since being at the mentorship program,
I learned to utilize my resources.
I reached a level of comfortability while being at Loyola.
I looked for spaces that I wasn't the only WoC
LUCES was there.
However, LUCES shouldn't be the ONLY
Safe haven for Women of Color.
Women of color should be accepted everywhere.



she
her
hers

This is Ri'enna's Story

Layola? La-hoya? Loyola
I don't care. How far are we from Northwestern?
Catholic? I don't think so
The view is pretty tho.

Where are all the black parties?
Lowkey regretting not joining the MLC
Only black girl on my floor
I thought having a white roommate
wouldn't be an issue
Only shes open
Too open
With her feelings
About minorities.
Maybe she thinks
Im white?
I don't know
I mean, I'd be fine with it --
if she wasn't so vocal
But I get the room to myself every weekend...

What am I gonna do?
How am I gonna deal with her omg
And then- it was delivered
"If you are receiving this e-mail it's because we want you to apply to be apart of..."
L-u-c-e-s. Lucies? LUCES
Little did I know that taking that 40-or-so minutes
To tell my story would end up
Giving me something I could never replace
Not just a mentor, but a safe space

This is Sophie's story

Unnie

It means older sister in Korean

One part of being at LUC to me meant:

Less time to be with my unnies

What felt even worse was when I realized I had to be an adult

As a daughter of immigrants

I am painfully aware of how much better my life is than my parents

Because of their hard work

I knew that as an adult, I HAD to repay them

To me that meant late nights in my dorm

Glued to my laptop for hours searching for:

scholarships, top PA programs in the country, acceptance rates, tuition, interviews, student loans,
jobs with the best salary

Until my brain turns to mush

The pressure follows me like a shadow

My obsession with success

consumes my brain

But LUCES has introduced me not only to supportive peers who face the same internal struggles, but
also

Cindy, my mentor

She not only empowers me with her supportive words

But with her story

She has shown me that hard work and success is futile if you aren't happy

She is the remedy for my stress

The cure for my anxiety with her sage advice

My own Loyola unnie

This is Lauren's story

My whole life

I've felt like I don't belong

Surrounded by people who don't look like me

Everywhere I turn

Feeling different

Feeling wrong

They ask why I speak the way I do

Why I act the way I act



she
her
hers

They ask "How do you get your hair like that?"
Maybe...I'm black
I just want to feel accepted
I just want to be seen
For who I am
Who I can be

But here
Everywhere I look
There are beautiful women
Beautiful women with skins of all shades
Beautiful women who are passionate
Intelligent
Unique in so many ways
A community

And for once
I feel like I belong

This is Our LUCES story

Coming to a new place, it's always hard to figure out where you belong.
For girls like us, women of color, who come in all kinds of unique shapes, colors and backgrounds
We must support each other
Loyola University Chicago Empowering Sisterhood, or LUCES if you please
This is where girls like us come together to find a sense of belonging, to be
Be free of judgement, free of expectations, to be ourselves
Unapologetically
We are not just people of color
We are not just women
We are women of color
With dreams, aspirations and desires
Together we are strong

Virago Pt. 3

 NICOLE MARIE MALAZARTE



she
her
hers



This piece portrays my current state of being. It shows I am still trying to reinvent “a new normal”, accept this “identity”, and validate my feelings. In addition, I oppose others who are trying to define my gender through my lack of body parts, specifically breasts. Ultimately, I thought of this experience as one of the greatest struggles in my life, but now as I look forward, being a woman of color impacted by breast cancer is one of my greatest strengths. I honestly do not know who or what I will become but this is who I am, Nicole, a breast cancer virago.

I'm Not Here



RASHELLE BROWNFIELD



she
hers
they
them

I'm not here
I'm never here
I do make visits
and those become the most pleasant times
to date
but I am never here

I am a traveler
a bird with short seasons
who flies when the sun rises and lands when
the moon takes its place
a meteor shower that comes every thousands
of years

I do not spin in the rings of Saturn
Instead, they orbit around me

I am a stranger to language
I do not stay in the same domain long enough
to know their tongue
I make visits but I remain so silent
it is as if I was never there

there are teeth around my throat ,
a rabid beast has its hold on my voice
it steals my words and masks my screams
and help will never come

who can decide whether my irrationality is
intentional
whether that uncomfortable feeling is natural
like a shadow which drapes itself over my
frame,
And whispers "yes, you want to be alone"

a candle's glow licks the ceiling
begging to be set free from its glass cage
wanting to explode into flames
To consume the building till nothing remains

but all it will ever be is a small flame
it lacks potential but holds promises
the candle resides within me
warming me on my travels as I caress the sky
holding clouds at arm's length

I am a traveler
a bird with short seasons
Not knowing where to go
But going everywhere

I am never here
but I am there
and there
and there .





At this point, I would rather have the pizza guys pronounce my name wrong than spend half an hour trying to correct them. Although my name is spelled normally, it is pronounced differently. It's not [mə-rē-ə] it's [mar-y-ah]. My recurring pizza orders lead me to the realization that more often than not, we take our names for granted. We do not realize the importance of them and how they makes us unique.

I learned this, along with several other important lessons at my Religious School, called Madrasa (Ma-drey-sa). I have attended Religious School for twelve years now alongside high school. Waking up at 7 a.m. on a Saturday was hard for a five year old, and twelve years later it still is.

Saturdays were long, tiring days where I carpooled 4 hours back and forth. Religious School wasn't exciting, learning was boring, but somehow the experience I had there changed me forever. I have obtained a wide range of knowledge about myself and my religion. Most importantly, I learned that my religion comes before anything else.

When I look back, I realize Religious school wasn't just fun and games; it was something valuable. We learned how to stay true to our morals. One day, I knew my morals would come into question, and those days arrived in October 2015. The most important ten days, known as the ten days of mourning, or Muharram.

2015 was different because our religious leader was coming to America for the first time. Junior year is supposedly the most crucial year of high school. Realizing that I would have to miss ten days of school was a big deal. Missing ten days of school meant missing several exams, having a hard time catching up, and possibly failing some classes. As the quarter ended that year, nonetheless, I managed to keep my grades up.

Previous to Houston, children would learn the importance of these ten days and how religion comes before anything else. When our leader arrived in Houston, thousands of other people from all over the world also made religion their first priority.

During these ten days, thousands of people would gather early in the morning and attend services all day. After the service, crowds of people would line up to the dining hall waiting to be seated and served. When lunch ended, majority of people would go back to their hotels. By nightfall, everyone gathered to mourn again.

Houston was everything I imagined, everything I had been taught, and everything our teachers told us to expect. I helped with feeding thousands of people every day for ten days straight. I became independent from my parents. I practiced my religion without the assistance of anyone. This was the year that I applied what I learned in the past twelve years.

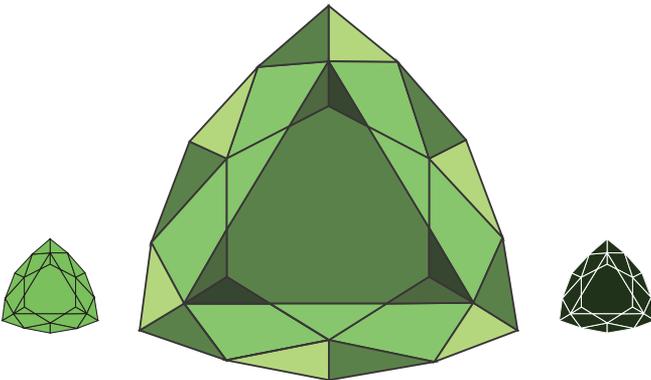


she
her
hers

“I now realize, that there is always a bigger picture. There is always a preparation for something greater than what we can see before us at the time.”

The trip to Houston made me realize I can accomplish anything. A mere act of serving food to people before I ate, made me understand the joy of putting others before myself. I understood the reasons why my parents encouraged me to wake up at 7 a.m., every Saturday, for twelve years. I realized I am a true believer in my religion. I realized it is possible to drop everything, practice what I believe, and then pick it all up after it is all over.

I now realize, that there is always a bigger picture. There is always a preparation for something greater than what we can see before us at the time. This is exactly how I am approaching university. I eagerly look forward to expand my horizons in education, explore different opportunities, and to find a niche in where serving others through myself is not just an act of volunteering, but second nature, just like my pizza name.





Reclaiming

My name.

The soft lilting syllables

Pored over for nine long months

Chosen with care

Mangled in an instant by foreign tongues.

Ashamed to stand out, to correct others.

To assert my identity.

To reclaim.

My beautiful name.

I now wear it with pride, with honor, with knowledge

Of the profound meaning and culture it carries.

And am no longer afraid to say:

This is who I am.

Respect it.





There is nothing I want more in this world than someone who loves me naked, she said.

I want her to stare at me like I was created just for her, my imperfections turned into perfect markings on a body living multiple lives.

I want her to see the moon living in the lining of my skin, quote Pablo Neruda when she gets a glimpse of its glow, beneath the stretch marks where my hips sweep over.

I want her to explore the deepest parts of my soul, hidden in the dark crevice between my thighs and in the tangles of my hair.

I want her to breathe a sigh of relief, a catching of breath at the creation that is me, the curve of my breasts and the soft spot where my clavicle rests.

I want her to see the pain pulsating on my skin, the blood rushing in my cheeks when I feel her press against me.

I want to feel her love pour inside me, cleansing me.

I want her to see the spirits that live inside me, the voices of ancestors that travel up my spine and rest in my throat, sit on my shoulders, wrap their arms around me.

There is nothing I want more in this world than someone who loves me naked, she said.

Prescription



HANNAH GOHEEN



she
her
hers

Prescription Name: Hannah Goheen

Date: December 1, 2017

Issue: Depression

Rx: Healing

Frequency: Two days on, two days off.

Cry until your knees shake, until you choke, until your body is drained of blood and tears. There will be enough in two days' time.

Scream until your insides ache and your heartbeat rests inside your ears. Feel the pain until your head spins. Rest your eyes, so you can begin again.

Run until the soles of your feet bleed, watch the glass and rocks cut your skin.

Eat the cheeseburger you crave and relish in the pleasure, the softness of this simple moment, and sink into its presence.

Rock yourself to sleep and hold yourself tight. Feel yourself be held. Crying may occur.

Seek those that care for you. Ask for love at least twice a day.

Refill: Unlimited

bravery



JESSICA MENDEZ



she
her
hers

be brave in the face of obstacles and
in the recesses of your mind

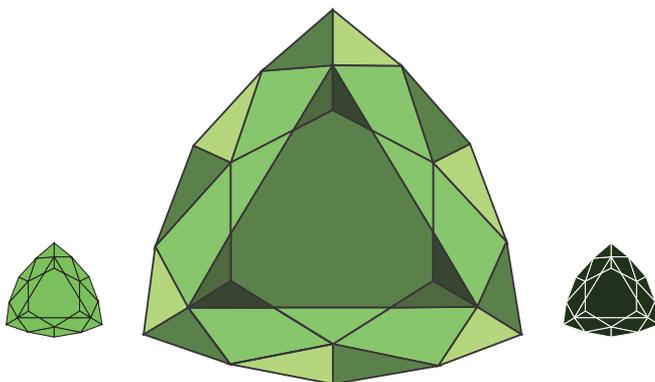
for the world outside is mighty
but the mind is most unkind

hang in there despite the doubting,
anxiety, and self-hate

because one day, you will wake up
and those feelings will abate

with hope, hustle, and self-loving
you will surely grow

for you are the soil and you reap
what you carefully sow





My own heart
Pretends to be empty
When she's full to the bursting
My own heart
Betrays me
She's warm
too forgiving
Too forgiving of me
I am unkind to her
Again and again
A disappointment
A failure
yet each morning
I feel the tenderness
Blossoming deep in my chest
My own beloved heart
Somehow untainted



Black Queer Femme Visibility



TRISTEN HALL



she
her
hers

My face totes mascara that brightens my eyes

Naked palette color brims my eyelids, sparkly shreds compliment the specks of yellow against the green

Blush stands out on my cheeks, even if it doesn't compare to the pink they receive whenever I get compliments from you

No matte lipstick because I like the bold prints it leaves on your soft skin

My lips taste sweeter because you kiss the messages that come from them

I love souls; I love the beauty that rests within no matter how it's manifested on the outside

That doesn't change the way my hips sway when I walk

How strong my legs look when I click in my heels

The attitude or energy I bring to the world, the tears I'm not afraid to cry, the compassion I supply

I used to lie

I used to try and hide behind my gender conformity and the assumptions that align

Somewhere along that line I lost myself, I left what's important behind

I am a black, queer woman all things aside, and I refuse to be lost or tossed to the background in all my communities

Do not preach unity if you and me can't be authentically we

Without having to conceal or compete

To be seen, to be heard, to be free

Respect my visibility



Untitled



NIDA AHMAD



she
her
hers

Nee-da

Nitha

Niada

Na-da

"Ne-da"

"Nee-da"

"No, Ne-da"

This was the encounter I went through every time I walked into a classroom for the first time. I hated the fact that every time someone would read my name they would assume that it was "Nee-da" when in reality that wasn't even close. I learned very early on in my life that the backand forth with a teacher, over how to pronounce my name was never worth it in the end, because I learned that they would never actually know it. My escape from the horrid attempts of people trying to say my name, was to just change the way it was pronounced at school; from preschool on, I was "Ne-da". I've grown so accustomed to just saying "Hi, I'm Ne-da," due to the fact throughout my whole life, I attended POWs, and no one would ever question how my name was actually pronounced... until I came to college. Trying to introduce yourself as "Ne-da" isn't as easy as it was in grade school due to the more diverse environment. I'm slowly learning to realize that if someone truly wants to get to know you, they will try to pronounce your name the proper way, no matter how long it takes. So...

"Hi, I'm Nida [Nid-tha]."

Closing Statement

The Kaleidoscope Committee would like to thank all contributors for sharing their stories, their creativity and their invaluable art. The growth of this Journal provides continual support for the wider LUCES community. Our goal and hope for the journal and its transition to Kaleidoscope is to provide a myriad of expression surrounding a select theme for each volume. For the 2018 third edition, the theme and focus was "Naming Your Truth." We hope each piece allows you to reflect on what defines and allows you to defy as a womxn of color; taking time to acknowledge the interconnected idiosyncrasies that exist amongst all things encompassed in the embodiment of you. As always, we hope Kaleidoscope inspires you to express yourself unapologetically as a womxn of color within the Loyola and Greater Chicago community. Please consider contributing to our journal in 2019 and continue to support the LUCES community at Loyola University Chicago.



kaleidoscope

a journal for womxn of color by womxn of color

Department of Student Diversity & Multicultural Affairs

We firmly believe that part of Loyola's promise to prepare people to lead extraordinary lives requires us to truly be a home for all cultures and people.

We embrace all races, sexes, gender identities, gender expressions, religions, ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic classes, sexual orientations, abilities, and residency statuses.

We foster the success and community building of historically underrepresented student populations through mentorship, multicultural education, academic support, and celebration of unique and shared experiences.

