

The Matrix

Spring 2014

ON STALKING,
FEMINISM,
AND VICTIMIZATION

PORCELAIN
FIGURINES

ADVOCACY

THE GIRL WITH
THE HAPPINESS
TATTOO

KIDS
CULTURE SHOCK

MOSAIC

INFINITE

VILLAGE CONFESSION
FROM LITTLE BOY



DEAR READERS,

A reoccurring discussion in many of the classes, events, and casual conversations I have attended and/or participated in at PLU revolves around the importance of recognizing particularities while building community. The seemingly paradoxical and antithetical idea of fostering a collective mindset while consistently becoming more and more aware of race-, class-, gender-based oppressions is exactly what I wanted to incorporate into this semester's issue of the Matrix, entitled "Mosaic."

Student Contributors:

Caris Ristoff
Kristen Hayes
Leah Larson
Caitlin Dawes
Laura Johnson
Andrew Tinker

When searching for a title for this Spring 2014 issue, I considered a number of metaphors that attempt to illustrate the idea of togetherness coexisting with uniqueness. I recalled analogies ranging from the model of the "patchwork quilt" used in some feminist theories to the "salad bowl" used in elementary schools to describe the United States' racial and ethnic diversity. I just couldn't get myself to name this semester's publication "Salad Bowl," though...

Eventually I honed in on the image of a mosaic: a piece of art constructed with materials including shards of broken glass, beads, buttons, and more. This image seemed to foster the development of an interesting analogy for the partnership of diverse communities within social justice movements. I had found the title!

Not quite. After thinking more deeply about using "mosaic" as a model (and after discussing with the Matrix's faculty advisor Beth Kraig) I discovered its insufficiencies. Most evident of these insufficiencies is the fact that a mosaic is not able to change over time—once its pieces are grouted into place, there's no going back. In an interconnected and ever-changing world, a static model such as this simply will not do. I recognize this. Nevertheless, I continue to find merit in the "mosaic model." I envision our mosaic to be fluid—not glued down—and to be continually creating new works of art.

The wonderful submissions of first-time as well as veteran Matrix contributors initiate this collective social justice "art project." Each piece brings the author's unique experiences and perspectives to the page while expressing larger, unifying themes of advocacy, awareness, and the journey of "becoming."

I hope that you enjoy the work presented in this issue and that you ponder what you add to the global art project.

All the best,

Ruthie Kovanen

Many Thanks

University Student Media Board

Beth Kraig
Amber Baillon
Hai Doan
Lace Smith
University Printing
Impact
Readers like YOU!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE GIRL WITH THE HAPPINESS TATTOO <i>CARIS RISTOFF</i>	PAGES 4-5
INFINITELY <i>KRISTEN HAYES</i>	PAGE 6
ON STALKING, FEMINISM, AND VICTIMIZATION <i>LEAH LARSON</i>	PAGES 7-12
ADVOCACY <i>CAITLIN DAWES</i>	PAGES 13-14
CULTURE SHOCK <i>ANONYMOUS</i>	PAGES 15-16
PORCELAIN FIGURINES <i>LAURA JOHNSON</i>	PAGES 17-18
VILLAGE CONFESSION FROM LITTLE BOY <i>ANDREW TINKER</i>	PAGES 19-21

The Girl with the Happiness Tattoo

Caris Ristoff '17

I AM THE GIRL WITH THE HAPPINESS TATTOO. I use it as a reminder to find happiness whenever I can, to choose it when it seemingly cannot be found. My life is immersed in joy, in love, and my happiness will never fade. I treat my life like a blessing, and my body like a temple. I indulge in consistent practices of yoga, regularly meditate, and naturally sustain my body with clean food choices. This lifestyle helps me maintain a balance between my myriad of activities. I have a balance that holds contentment, leading to the satisfied life that I have chosen. My tattoo is a manifestation of this. As long as I have this tattoo, I will never have the excuse of resorting to negativity. There will always be a visual reminder to choose joy. I must choose happiness. I must choose a positive life for myself. And I have. My life now is filled with an unbelievable amount of positivity. I see the beauty in my surroundings, and I see the beauty in myself. Now, my life is full of bliss, of perfect harmony between my environment and my mind. However, it wasn't always like this.

My mind was immersed in negativity when I was younger. I could never see the beauty around me, and was especially blind to the beauty in myself. I seemed to only have one outlet to cope with this potentially destructive mindset that enclosed me: novels. I used them to transport myself into different surroundings. Typically, when I read I was in my big bright bedroom at my parents' quaint house in the countryside. However, as I did this, I was trying to break free from my negatively bounded mind that I resided within. My mind, my thoughts, didn't correlate to the environment that I existed in, and the room in which I read. The room was as cheerful as any pre-adolescent girls should be—bright blue walls, a faded silvery vanity hugging the corner, it was adorned with colorful elephant paintings and abstract artwork scattering across the walls, while yearlong Christmas lights set alight every single corner in a vivacious continuous circle. However, my cheerful surroundings contradicted my inner turmoil. Even though there was exquisiteness around me, there was darkness in my mind. I was trapped in the anxiety and stress of my individual self. I was blind to the beauty around me, and the presence I held in the world.

My outward appearance seemed to be the main cause of my anxiety. When I looked in the mirror, I never saw beauty. I saw my uncomfortably progressive acne, the awkwardness of my height, and my graceless pre-adolescent body. I never believed that this ungainly transition to adulthood would end. I never believed that I would grow into my height, grow into my body, and grow out of my flawed skin. I let my depressive thoughts take over. Because of this, I believed that my negative appearance always translated to my environment, causing me to subconsciously make my surroundings as dim and bleak as my mind. This time in my life was a fight, a fight against my own negative self-image. These years of struggle were when the internal battle between childhood and adulthood became strongly prevalent. I consistently was caught in low feelings of self-worth. It was during this time that I needed an outlet to help me get away from my mind.

I found books. Books took away my stress. Books took away my anxiety. Books took away my feelings of low self-esteem. Absorbing my mind into books took away the time for me to focus on my self-worth. When I read I only had the stories of the characters to focus on. The outside world was not apparent. I kept a small piece of my sanity by these shortened mental breaks. Ironically, the books that I read weren't filled with happiness, wonderful endings, pretty characters, pretty settings, and pretty plot lines. I was concerned, and so very concentrated on finding the happiness within myself, that I had no time for frivolous books with a veneer of joy. Books that force you to feel the happiness of others were useless to me. I did not need Nicholas Sparks to invade my life with romance, romance that I could not feel, and had no desire to experience.

I did not care about those characters happiness or their joy. I cared about myself. Because of this, I decided that the best way to improve my emotional and mental wellbeing was to read the contradictory side of these joyful novels, and read dystopian novels that expressed horrible circumstances, extreme sadness, and terrible situations. I remember pondering, "What better way to increase my happiness and stability in the world now than to read books that reveal the tragedies that I don't have in life? That I never will?"

This thought process succeeded. I let my mind absorb these stories of terror, of horror. Stories with horrific suppression of thought and actions, stories where women had no voice in society, stories where people are forced to fight to the death. I quickly immersed into them, opening my eyes to the beauty of my own world. I began to realize my world was one of safety and stability, and my suppression of positivity was only caused internally by myself. I used books of sadness and unfortunate circumstances not to escape from my environment, but to break away from my overly stressed and anxious pre-adolescent mind.

It began with the trilogy series *The Uglies*, by Scott Westerfeld, novels based on a dystopian society where beauty is of the main importance, and a complicated surgery is inflicted on each individual as soon as each person transfers over into adulthood. The surgery has one side effect, the loss of a somewhat stable mental capacity, replaced with a new mind that only focuses on the superficial aspects of life. I read about how the people in this society only cared about their hair, their makeup, and their choice of clothes. As I let my mind wander, I escaped from my own petty troubles of low self-worth and low self-esteem as these three novels in the trilogy expressed the terrible aspects of a horribly superficial society, and as I let my mind wander, I escaped from my own petty troubles of low self-worth. I began to understand the superficial ways in which I viewed myself while the main characters fought to resist the procedure that created a superficial outcome. As I progressed into this trilogy, I became more aware of my own superficial appearance based problems in reality, slowly making them appear more controllable.

It wasn't just *The Uglies* trilogy that drew me in. *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins, tells the story when an extreme hierarchy of power controls not only the mental and emotional state of the lesser people, but their physical well-being. One powerful district controls twelve others, and renews their dominance every year by making one female and one male from every lesser district fight to the death in a "game". I read through the pages of gore, of young teens slashing and shooting and stabbing one another for survival, engrossing myself into their circumstances. Yet I also read through pages of strength and rebellion, as one young teen fights against the dominance of the powerful district during the game. The more I let my mind absorb itself into this book of horror, the more I realized I had the power to rebel over my negative mindset, and regain

control over my own life both mentally and emotionally.

The Handmaids Tale, by Margaret Atwood, is a novel that represents the extreme degradation of women's rights to a point where they become simply objects of reproduction. This novel became a powerful escape from my own world. The book chronicles a futuristic society and supposed nuclear warfare, where many women, because of radiation, were deemed infertile. The women who remained fertile became slaves to state mandated rape, in order to maintain the race. I escaped thoroughly from my own troubles and into the tragic lives of the handmaid women in this book. I felt their pain from the degrading lives they held, to the lack of power they were to forever have. Because of characters endless fight for a voice in this book, I became aware of the powerful voice that I was able to hold in the free society in which I lived.

Yet what I seemed to connect with the most was the famous novel 1984, by George Orwell. 1984 had the ultimate sense of a purely dystopian society, a society where even your thoughts are calculated and evaluated by the government. I read about how terrified the people were to express any negative thought toward the government, and how scared they were to lose their sanity or their life. I was truly able to comprehend all of the control that I actually had in my own civilization as I escaped my negative thoughts into the repressive circumstances of this novel. I found that I lived in a society where a superficial front isn't typically the value of many, a society where one has strength against a government that does not have an excessive hierarchy of power. And I recognized that I lived in a place where women have the ability to show expression in their opinions, and be a strong voice to the people of this world. But more than anything, I realized that I lived in a place where I have the ability to express any thought, for every thought is free.

I escaped through each one of these terrifically complex yet horrifying novels helping me cope with the negative mindset that has trapped me. Novels carried me through the terrors that each one possessed, as if I was living each line, each paragraph, and each page out of context to the reality of my own mind. And it was ironically wonderful. Every experience that wrapped and carried my mind through a new book opened my eyes a little wider, and by the time my complete expansion into adulthood came, my mind was ready. The escape through dystopian society books helped me cope with the difficult transition that many women have experienced, the transition into adulthood. I held a book in my hand, and held the key to my freedom from negativity. And from all of this, I turned to positivity, and became the girl with the happiness tattoo.

I held a book in my hand,
and held the key to my
freedom from negativity.

Of the five classified Romantic languages
We have five translations of feminism.

- Féminisme
- Feminism
- Femminismo
- Feminismo
- Feminism

Our blossoming evolution into third wave feminism
Is that of intersectionality
And challenging the veil
Of sisterhood.
The metaphor of these five translations is an embodiment of
Telling the truth.
Where the organization of letters will vary
But the root of the word remains.
I always and continuously ask myself
What it means to be an advocate of feminism.
And how it is defined in theory
Versus practice.
It is how we use our language that will set us free.
It is when we understand the root of a word
The soul of our speech
And the authenticity of our actions.

The first step,
Understanding the power of our tongue.

When I analyze the translations of feminism
I am pleasantly surprised with the simplicity.
With each addition or elimination of a letter,
I understand how feminism is contextual
While eloquently illuminates a universal compassion.
The revolution of feminism requires a human evolution.
It is a vision
A springboard for inspiration
Too often abused and misused.

I advocate feminism because I believe our misunderstandings
And battles for power
Can be healed with the kindness of our words.
I am an activist for social justice.
I believe in women.
I believe in men.
I believe in feminism
Féminisme
Femminismo
Feminismo.
Internationally
Intersectionally
Intrinsically
Infinitely

I N F I N I T E L Y
K R I S T E N H A Y E S

On Stalking, Feminism, and Victimization

Leah Larson '15

This essay is what is referred to as a braided essay or a mosaic essay; each numbered section is a part of a specific narrative. As the essay progresses, the narratives collapse onto each other and become the same story. The sections marked "I" refer to situations in which I am being stalked or am coping with stalking, the sections marked "II" refer to situations in which I am being exposed to feminist thought processes or am interacting with the feminist community, and the sections marked "III" refer to situations in which I am exposed to instances of victimization.



I.

It is March of 2012. My alarm starts blaring--it was 6 AM. I quiet my alarm, quickly jump out of my lofted bed, pull on my worn-out blue jeans and black hoodie, and pull my unkempt blond hair back into a ponytail. I grab the day's essentials and throw them into my backpack--toothbrush, philosophy textbook, MacBook, various chargers, headphones, and cell phone. Hopefully I wouldn't find myself needing to return to my dorm.

II.

It is May of 2012. My brother's girlfriend from high school, Kate, drives up to Cathedral Park in Portland. She and a few of her fellow college graduates jump out of a car, dressed in sundresses and flower crowns. One of their professors shake all of their hands before walking up to a microphone.

"I'm just so proud of all of the ecofeminists and I'm so honored to be a part of this private graduation ceremony. To quote Vandana Shiva, 'You are not Atlas carrying the world on your shoulder. It is good to remember that the planet is carrying you.' As you go out into the world, remember where you started."

Kate stood up and hugged her professor.

"I'm so honored to have met you," she says. "Discovering ecofeminism is one of the best things to ever happen to me."

III.

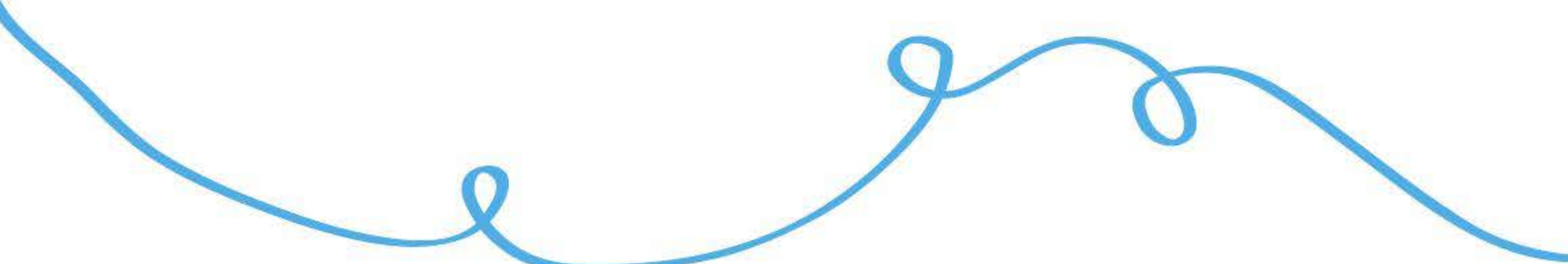
It is April of 2012. I am on the phone with my mother, discussing my recent loss of a friend group.

"You're just too much of an unfriendly bitch to keep friends. It's sad but true."

I.

It is March of 2012. I walk into the cafeteria section of the University Center at about 6:30 AM. I scan the area for a free table near an electrical outlet. Thankfully, I spot one in the back corner of the room. Though, it's hardly luck. No one is in the University Center that early in the morning.

I sit down, plug in my MacBook, and promptly start skimming a class reading for the next day. Eventually people start filing into the University Center and a dull hum of conversation starts to build around me.



At around 9 I stand up and grab a plate of slightly soggy waffles from a cafeteria server. I stare down at my plate, pushing sections of waffle through pools of syrup. Out of the corner of my eye I see a group of girls sitting down near me. One of them, Natalie, begins to stare at me as she tears apart her poppy seed muffin.

I grab my headphones out of my bag and quickly attempt to distract myself from her gaze with the catchy tones of "Call Me Maybe". A fluttering sensation erupts in my chest before evolving into a violent buzzing in the pit of my stomach. I force a bite of waffle into my mouth, determined to appear nonchalant. I tap my foot along to the crooning of Carly Rae Jepsen. Unfortunately, my body betrays me. My hands begin to shake. Natalie keeps staring.

II.

It is May of 2012. I sit at a desk in the back corner of the library, scrolling through my Tumblr feed. I see a quote from Margaret Sanger. "Women cannot be on equal footing with men until they have complete control over their reproductive functions." I read over it, pausing before sharing it. I click on the profile of the person who posted it, scrolling through their most recent activity. I was suddenly swimming in Judith Butler, Gloria Anzaldua, Simone Beauvoir, and Eve Sedgwick.

II.

It is June of 2011. I am at a friend's high school graduation party. We are all gathered in a half-formed circle around a ping-pong table, watching some people play beer pong.

"So, what do you guys think Leah is going to be like in college?"

"Oh god. She's totally going to become one of those awful college feminist types."

I chuckle lightly, sipping my root beer.

"It would take a lot to make me into a college feminist."

III.

It is January of 2012. I'm sitting on my lofted bed, listening as my roommate plays the Tangled soundtrack for the 30th time. She's packing up her laundry and some books to take somewhere for the weekend. Out of the corner of my eye, I see the door to my room open slightly. Natalie, a friend of mine from my wing, walks into my room. She leans against the doorway.

"You sure you don't want to come to my house for the weekend?"

"Yeah, I'm sure." I sigh. "Sorry. I just need a break from everything that's been happening in our friend group for a while. A weekend alone should help."

"I keep telling you that nothing's happening. You keep starting shit with people when it isn't there to begin with. No need to start drama."

I shut my laptop and look at her.

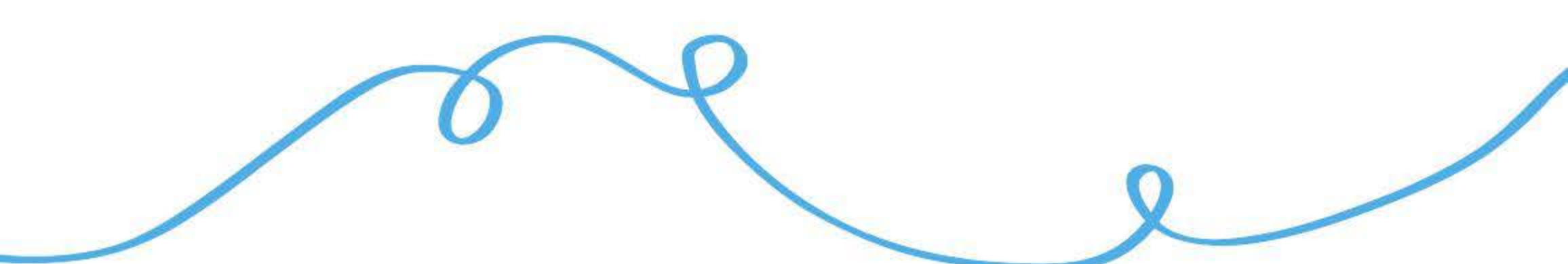
"That's all well and great for you to say but I haven't felt particularly wanted or like I can trust anyone in a long time. The other day one of your friends insulted me and I didn't even react. I was used to it. I shouldn't be around people who I expect to have insult me."

Natalie sighs and rolls her eyes.

"Whatever. We'll talk after this weekend."

I.

It is March of 2012. I'm sitting on a couch in the basement of my dorm building, typing on my laptop as I eat some microwave pizza for dinner. As per the usual, I've put off eating until late at night. Easier to be alone that way, after all. As I finish off the last bite of my pizza, I peek up at the clock on the wall. 11 PM--should be safe enough to head back to my room. I pack all of my supplies back into my backpack and start walking up the fire escape up



to my floor of my building.

To my right, I hear the bathroom door open slightly. The faint sound of giggling escapes--through the wall of sound, Natalie's laugh is especially obvious. I quickly close the door to the fire escape and scurry back down to the basement. I can feel my heart pounding as I hold my hand to my chest, desperately trying to calm my breathing.

I can't handle seeing her. I can't handle hearing her. I can't handle her.

II.

It is May of 2012. I am sitting in my Communication Ethics class.

"Within the SMCR model of communication, the sender sends a message through a channel to the receiver," lectures my professor.

"However, it takes some time for the message to send through the channel and as a result of this process, the message can frequently be distorted by various environmental factors. The burden falls solely upon the sender to ensure that the message is clearly sent to the receiver. Consider perhaps a man who chooses to compliment a woman on the street. He may believe that he is complimenting her and he probably has positive intentions. However, if he chooses to yell at the woman from a distance or chooses particularly sexually charged terms, the woman is likely to become frightened or nervous. The message becomes misconstrued. Particularly because society believes that this behavior is overtly aggressive and inappropriate given that the women are being harassed based upon their appearance."

At this point in the lecture, I was hardly paying attention. I had studied the SMCR model in multiple writing and communication courses. I knew that my time would probably be better spent skimming my reading for my next class.

"I don't support that example." A classmate of mine's comment suddenly catches my attention. "I feel like in that case, most women are looking to get complimented. They dress and act in ways to receive attention right? So they expect the message to be given. They just get pissy because they dislike the guy or girl or whatever. The message doesn't get misconstrued by the channel, the receiver just doesn't like the sender."

My professor stares at my classmate, mouth slightly agape.

"No. Just no. While I accept that my example isn't the best example of disruption within the SMCR Model, your statement is false. People do not ask for harassment and they do not ask for abuse. Regardless of what they did beforehand or what they may want. If they feel afraid or uncomfortable, it is not appropriate. It is not their fault."

I.

It is July of 2012. I'm sitting on my therapist's couch.

"So, when did she start sending you the messages online?" My therapist, an older man, stares at me.

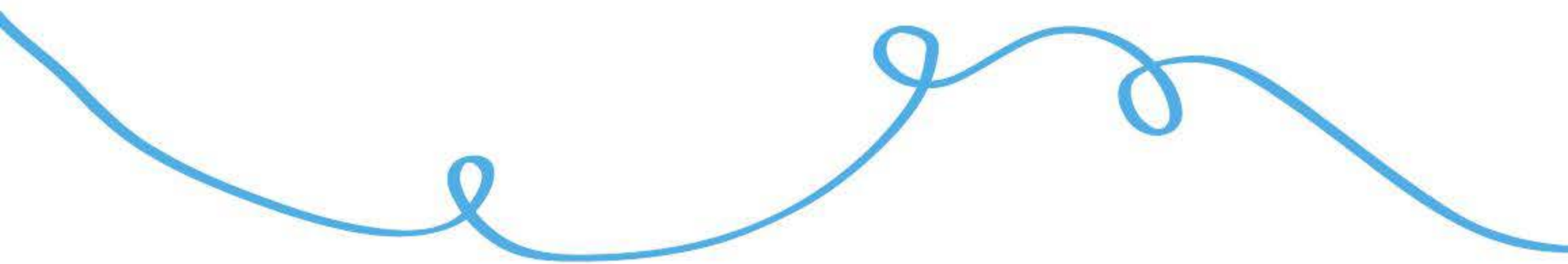
"About a week after school ended," I say, staring down at my hands. I had originally started attending therapy again to help me with my social anxiety problems. After all, I could barely handle eating lunch in public anymore. By the end of spring semester I could barely shower in the bathroom of my wing. I had found myself completely petrified to be with people. Every time I was with people I suddenly found myself with a pounding heart and an inability to breathe. However, the therapist doesn't seem to care about my anxiety problems at all. He seems to care much more about Natalie.

"What do these messages that she send you usually say?"

"They usually mock me. A few of them have said things like how I shouldn't trust Christina, the only friend I still have at college, because she's obviously hiding things from me."

I look upwards towards my therapist.

"Why are we talking about this? What about my anxiety issues?"



"I don't think you have anxiety issues."

"Then what do you think is going on? Why do I want to start sobbing every time I leave my dorm and every time I stay in my dorm?"

"Leah," my therapist says. "Are you afraid of Natalie?"

"Yes."

"She stares at you when you're in public?"

"Yes."

"She harasses you?"

"Yes."

"You said she followed you to class once?"

"I think? It could have been an accident. We were neighbors, so she could hear me whenever I left my room and--"

"I'm going to repeat myself. Are you afraid of Natalie?"

I sigh softly and look downwards. "Yes."

"Leah. I think Natalie is stalking you."

III.

It is August of 2012. I'm sitting in an airport restaurant with my mother.

"I just don't know what happened," my Mother says. "No. That's a lie. I do. You've never been able to maintain friendships with people. You always push them away."

I bury my head in my hands. "That's a lie and you know it. I'm still friends with people I went to kindergarten with. I've never had problems maintaining friendships."

"Then what do you think happened?"

I stare at my Shirley Temple on the table. "My therapist thinks Natalie is stalking me."

"No."

"No?"

My mother looks at me. "That's not what is happening. My daughter isn't a victim."

"I mean, that's just what my therapist is saying."

"Your therapist is wrong. You're just not good at keeping friends. My daughter is not a victim."

I.

It is August of 2012. I'm messing around on Facebook, procrastinating packing my clothes for college. I see a red notification bubble pop up over the message icon. I click on it.

Hey Leah,

I know you probably never expected to hear from me again, but I just wanted to say that I am sorry for how things ended between us. I still think that you were one of my good friends. I honestly can't really remember why we stopped being friends. I felt that we both just got too involved in things that were none of our business and I have no idea.

-Natalie

I stare at the message. I don't know what to say. I don't know what to do. All I know is that it is completely wrong. She knows why we stopped being friends. She knows that everyone insulted me constantly, that I couldn't trust anyone, and that I never felt like anyone wanted me around. She had been harassing me for months and all



of a sudden she likes me and we never had any reason to not be friends.

I scroll upwards through our message feed, looking at our final words to each other when our friendship ended in February.

I'm sorry, Natalie. I deserve better.

I deserve better.

II.

It is September of 2012. I have just walked back into my dorm building after getting dinner with my RA. Natalie is standing outside of the building, pacing. I run to my room, locking the door behind me and shutting the blinds. I climb into my bed and curl up under the covers, desperately trying to rid the image of Natalie from my mind and calm my heart. I reach towards a bottle of Nyquil on my bedside table and take a swig of it, hoping that sleep will temporarily cure me of my fears. With time, I pass out.

Much to my displeasure, my roommate's snoring disrupts the poor sleep I do accomplish. I roll over and look at my clock, forcing my eyes to focus on the blurred numbers. 4 in the morning. I stretch and yawn slightly before crawling out of my bed. My mind flashes back to images of Natalie waiting outside of my dorm. I bury my head in my hands, briefly steady my breathing, and then climb out of my bed. I figure that a glass of cold water should help relax me.

By the time that I manage to reach the only working water fountain in my dorm building, I walk past a large bulletin board that the RAs had put together. I stare at it, sipping from my water bottle as I read about various institutions and resources on campus. One flier catches my eye.

Sexual Assault? Intimate Partner Violence? Stalking?

Contact the Victim's Advocacy Center in the Women's Center to receive help.

I stare at the pamphlet, running my fingers across the edges of the paper. My therapist's words from the summer ring through my ears.

I think Natalie is stalking you.

I pull the pamphlet out of the staples attaching it to the wall, fold it, and place it in the pocket of my pajama bottoms.

III.

It is September of 2012. I'm sitting in an office of the Women's Center at my college.

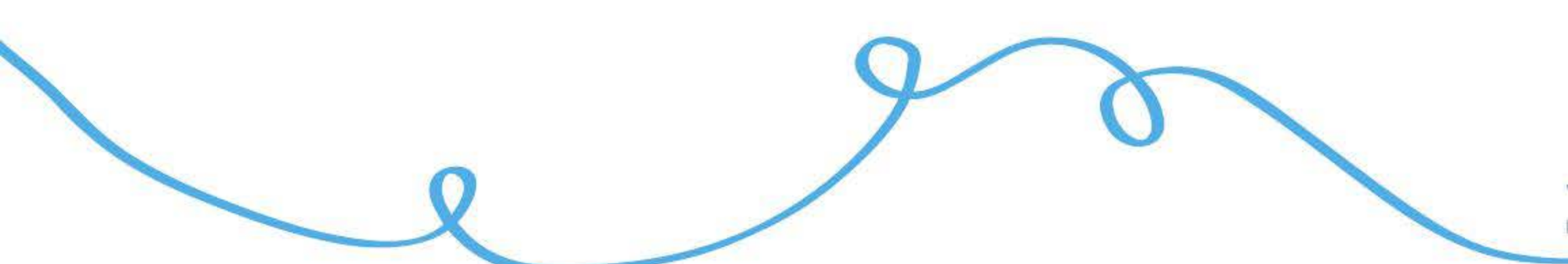
"Why didn't you think Natalie was stalking you?" A representative from the Victim's Advocacy Center asks me while sitting at her desk.

"Honestly? I-I'm not sure. People, my therapist, told me that she was. I didn't want her to be though. And I kept being told that she wasn't by other people. I don't want to be a victim of stalking. I don't want any of this."

The woman smiles at me. "A lot of the time when victims get told by other people that they aren't victims, it makes them hesitate to believe that they are victims. That's how a lot of crimes don't get reported. But this meets the legal definition of stalking. You ended the relationship. Natalie had clear signs that you were not interested in maintaining your friendship. She followed you, stared at you, and harassed you. Reasonable fear is present. I would recommend trying to get a restraining order of some sort."

I.

It is October of 2012. I'm sitting the center of the cafeteria in the University Center. I stare at my email inbox, waiting to read the results of my restraining order against Natalie. While it is just a restraining order through the university, it's something that I want. Something that I need. I was given a temporary restraining order during the meetings and for the first time in months, I felt myself able to breath. I felt myself able to leave my room without the constant fear of being seen or watched. Sure, sometimes when I was in class the people around me would



stare at me for a while and I would get nervous. I would feel uncomfortable. But not like before. I never felt like I needed to cry and run away. I never found myself on the verge of fainting in the middle of a lecture.

1 new email

I click on the message, eager to read its contents. I skim through the message.

The Office of Student Conduct grants a No-Contact Order between Leah Larson and Natalie Harceleur for an indefinite period of time.


II.

It is April of 2014. I'm sitting in the University Center late at night, chatting with a Norwegian girl from the debate team. We've both purchased ice cream and are discussing some recent debate rounds when at the corner of my eye, I see Natalie.

It's been at least 6 months since I last saw Natalie. She's holding hands with a boy that I don't recognize. They walk together into the student market, grabbing a basket and taking things off the shelves. I look away. The No-Contact order, thankfully still in place, prevents us from looking at each other too much. It's better to be safe than sorry.

I look back at my Norwegian friend and ask about her new debate partner, about what she thinks of America, whatever I can to ensure that she stays for a while.

As much as I don't fear Natalie anymore, her presence still affects me. It brings me back to the days where I would find myself faint in her presence. As my friend rambles on about the lack of peanut butter in Norway, I think back to when I didn't see myself as a victim. My Mother thought that being a victim is a sign of weakness when just the opposite is true. To be able to look at yourself and identify as a victim is an act of power, not submission. It's admitting that something terrible has happened when society would rather have you lie and cover it up. It's admitting that you deserve better.



ADVOCACY



CATILIN DAWES '16

PUMPING THROUGH THE VEINS OF PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY is the mission to become advocates within our communities, wherever our college careers may lead us to be in the world. I believe an advocate is someone who is not afraid to speak up for those who cannot, for those who do not know how to, and/or alongside those who already are speaking. That is why PLU has the liberal arts education. PLU wants to show each and every one of us that we cannot thrive alone; that we are a community. To show that we all have our own perspectives to bring to the table and to show how to have an academic conversation with not just our peers, but faculty, and staff. With these classes, PLU broadens our minds with ideas such as women's rights, gender and sexuality, diversity, sustainability, and education, just to name a few. But things get more challenging when it comes time to actually being an advocate in the field.

One day it dawned on me how scary it can be to face people who are strangers, or even friends and family. Being in the queer community myself, I felt safe at PLU. I never thought that I would need to be an advocate within the safety of the Lute Dome. I had not felt oppressed since high school. And there I was, in the Aglio line for dinner, tired from the battle of dead week and still recovering from my first final. All of the sudden, the guys behind me start shamelessly bantering amongst themselves, including slurs towards the queer community and towards women in their conversation. They said things like "fag New York," "gay-ass Nikes," and "I swear Hillary Clinton is a man." There I was. I could not even turn around to glare at them. In fact, I have no idea who was even behind me. I do not know if they could tell from behind that I am biologically female, and later it dawned on me that I was wearing Nike shoes. I was stunned.

There I stood: a Reike Scholar, a Social Justice Director of Hong International Hall, and a periodic QASU member. I could not even look them in the face or side glance at them to show my disturbance. No. I just stood there. It frustrates me that this happens. We pay \$45,000 to be here and the vocabulary rolling off the tongues of some students are of high school level. Seriously? I was left wondering how I could better advocate in the future.

A week after the incident, I watched a show on the Smithsonian Channel called "Hip Hop: The Furious Influence of Rhymes," and things started to "click" for me. This show connected with me so significantly because I too write on occasion, and have been to a few of the places that were featured in the documentary, including: the Bronx, New York, Paris, Berlin, Jaffa, and Dakar. The documentary showed that each of these places has people who articulate through their lyrics what others are afraid to say because of an oppressive government, environmental pressure, unequal rights, and/or fear. The beauty and the raw emotion that each of these countries' rappers brings to the table, not just as artists but as advocates for their community, is amazing.

One group in particular from the documentary that I remember, DAM, raps primarily in Arabic, Hebrew and English. They raise their voices to the Palestinians and to anyone else who will listen. I knew of the conflict in Israel between the Palestinians and Hebrews when I visited there in 2010. There was a wall that divided Palestinians into ghetto neighborhoods, called the "territories." This experience gave this song added meaning for me. Other countries and their struggles featured in the film also took my attention. One of these countries is France and its ongoing battle with

racial discrimination that results in youth riots against the government. Another is Germany and the ever-presence of the Berlin Wall. Although physically only its

ghost remains, its emotional presence still divides the Berlin citizens. A third country that caught my eye was Senegal. Featured here was the influence of French and British colonizers, evidenced by a culture diluted from Westernization. In each of these countries, the documentary highlighted several brilliant rappers. These rappers spoke in many different languages about their struggles as individuals, as communities, and as countries. Their words flowed into a form of expression that allowed space for each and every one of them to say what they feel needed to be said.

One rapper on the Smithsonian show said, "Even if the words are in a different language, it is the beat that speaks to me first. Then the whole nitty gritty stuff on what they are saying." This idea connected with me when M.I.A.'s song Bring the Noize became my dead week and finals week mantra. M.I.A., a British rapper, combines in her songs advocacy and awareness of the Hindu religion, the Indian ethnicity, and the politics wrapped around the lives of the immigrant Indian community in England. After listening to her quick spits for a week I finally looked up what she was really saying (mostly because I wanted to join along). She was saying the whole time, "Bring the noise when we run upon them. Freedom."

I'm coming to realize that advocacy can come in all sorts of packages, including education, experience, and music. I'm also realizing that advocacy is not something that can be thrust upon someone; there must be consent and understanding to what someone is about to delve into, which cannot always be predicted. We cannot rely solely on education to spread the works of advocacy. Perhaps, then, we can use our own words and experiences. Hip hop, rap, and slam poetry are not the works of gangsters, drugs, and money. The hip hop community is more than that. It combines the raw emotions of people like you and me. People of all races, ethnicities, sexualities, religions, nationalities, beliefs. Everything. I want to encourage others to learn from the work of those they do not know and see how they express advocacy for their community. Advocacy is not limited to protests and picketing at rallies. It is our voices.

Advocacy is not limited
to protests and picketing
at rallies.

Culture

SHOCK

ANONYMOUS SUBMISSION

A RESPONSE TO PLU DANCE ENSEMBLE 2014

ON CAMPUS WE HAVE A BEAUTIFUL EVENT put on by students and faculty to showcase the wonderful talents and skills of dancers and choreographers. This event is called Dance Ensemble. Unfortunately I was unable to go last year, but with my availability this spring, I was able and eager to see the show and to witness the talents of my peers.

I grew up a band geek. For me, concerts were to show off talent and to entertain the audience by how impressively your group could play an edgy piece or a slow and intricate one with many raw spaces. Both revealed talent nonetheless. When I entered the Karen Hille Phillips auditorium and sat as close to the stage as possible, nothing could've prepared me for the show the dancers and choreographers were about to present.

With the background that I come from, my heart was forcefully ripped out of my chest as a result of the pieces that the students had put together. I had NO IDEA that you could express social justice themes through dance!!! Perhaps I am just ignorant—I don't dance, never could, probably can't now. But look at our culture. We have Dancing with the Stars, America's got Talent, and other shows that stress that if you want to be noticed you need to be entertaining and do something that simply catches the eyes of the audience. The PLU Dance Ensemble did more than just entertain.

My eyes were caught with tears as Amy Arand's piece came to the stage. "Born to Dance" started with a silhouette of the four dancers on an exposed stage. The silhouette outlined their bodies—not as sexual objects, but as powerful women with a message. Although there were four dancers, they were like pairs. Each a unit, a body, life and death. I interpret the choreography as the dancers dancing around life. It represents how we zoom in and out of life and death-like moments until we finally do die. But in this dance, death was not vigorous or sudden—it was slow and happy. It provided a new perspective of death that is sometimes glazed over.

"Confine(less)," a piece choreographed by Paula J. Peters, couldn't have oozed more social justice. The group of dancers emerged on the stage late for work in male business suits. The ques-

tion, "WHAT IS SUCCESS?" was projected on the back of the stage. The piece not only challenged the dancers, but challenged the audience as well. For the majority of the show, the dancers wore leggings or dresses. Now, they were in menswear performing the same jumps. The flow of the piece had very powerful imagery. It showed that women are forced to fit into a man's world and that patriarchal society has influenced women's roles in the workforce. As the piece progressed, the pace became more frantic, and the dancers were dancing to keep up with the flow of time. The fast pace spoke to the American sense of time: never ending and always moving. No time for a break.

One part of the piece "Confine(less)" was a solo "dancing out" of a few dancers' responses to the question of what they want to do in their lives. Some had goals such as owning their own dance studio or living life happily, while others did not know what they were going to do. While we preach at PLU how fluid gender and sexuality is, some other words we never get to also apply to a similar "fluidity scale". And there it was presented in dance, that success is fluid and conceptualized differently even by seemingly similar people.

There were two pieces that were a bit controversial, each for different reasons. "Tribal Awakening," choreographed and costume designed by Avelon Ragoonanan was a beautiful piece that incorporated both tribal dance and modern moves. I thought that the piece was very respectful of First People's culture and felt there was a fair bit of research that went into the piece to ensure being respectful. But at

the same time, there seemed to be a bit of ethnic dissonance. For example, the dancers were

most likely not from a First People's tribe or culture. Thus, should they be able to perform such a dance out of respect? Regardless, I think that the intention of the dance was to challenge the skills of the dancers and the choreographer. Still, though, this issue is similar

to the question of whether or not white actors should play the roles of people of colour.

After the intermission, there was a change in pace. The step team, Lute Nation, shared the stage with four other dancers and performed a piece choreographed by Mamie Howard entitled "The Submission." This piece came with a statement of disclosure, and detailed in the bulletin that it was "based off of Amy Waldman's book and investigate[d] the struggle to reconcile the tension between an individual's Muslim and American identities. The piece [was] dedicated to both the victims of 9/11 and Islamophobia."

The imagery was very powerful and was also difficult to watch. The first dancer had a head scarf, and within the first seconds of the piece, ripped the head scarf off and threw it to the ground, symbolizing her rejection of her religious identity. The piece continued as the dancers expressed aggressive moves showing their struggle and pain with their two conflicting identities. When the step team emerged onto the stage, I was expecting a loud contrast in comparison to the previous soft pieces. Instead, the steppers formed a bazooka gun, shot another stepper at the front of the stage, and then dragged her off of the stage. VERY POWERFUL imagery here.

I am beside myself, and I don't know what to think about it. As a person of the social justice community, I believe that making people think, question, and ultimately get pissed off, can be a good sign. It forces those who are confused and angry to really think about why they are confused and angry. I am curious to learn more about how dance can be a platform for social justice issues.

I had NO IDEA that you could express social justice themes through dance



PORCELAIN FIGURINES

LAURA JOHNSON '16

Over the years I have discovered the startling truth that identity is not a unified state, is not static, but is constantly evolving. The journey of discovering one's identity can take many forms; it may resemble for some a gradual slope, but for others it might be a rocky terrain. However, an almost undeniable fact remains that there are moments, experiences, or people that have a profound influence on this journey—or will have.

For me, language and the power of the written word have—to put it bluntly—transformed me. From reading books a child and imagining myself as a collage of all my favorite characters to learning valuable lessons about life from well-worn paperbacks, language has the ability to praise, to break, to mend, or to destroy. Using this inspiration, this collection of poems tells part of my story of language in my life with the goal of demonstrating the power of this unique, and amazing force for change.



Part I: Empty

Porcelain figurines sit atop the shelf,
Forever frozen with glazed features,
Always smiling, always pleasing,
Always perfect.

A small, fragile shepherdess,
Sits amongst a small flock of silent sheep—
Kept away from the clumsy hands
Of my childhood. Put on display
To admire, but forbidden to touch.

The original girl on the pedestal.

Goody two-shoes they used to say,
Overachiever, dutiful daughter,
“Gifted and talented.”
Words of praise that were soon laughed
Away as my peers ignored my daily tears.

I was the girl that cried.

Tears of stress,
Tears of expected failure,
Tears that became ordinary,
Standard, and even
Expected.

With peals of laughter,
Two sisters ran into the kitchen and
Committed the ultimate crime.
As my mother yelled, broken shards
Of cherished ceramics at her feet,
I discovered that day,
All porcelain figures are hollow.

Empty.

Just like the girl on the pedestal.

Part II: Shattered



Glue was only ever meant to be
A temporary solution.
It could bind, it could stick,
And it could paste.
But it could never truly
Mend what was once whole.

To fall from a position so high,
Is not simply to crack, but to
shatter.
As the porcelain figments fell
Into the trash, my identity was
Thrown away that day as well.

My spirit has long been bruised,
Battered, tattered, and torn.
Without a solid shaped shell—however
Fragile—to call home,
Who am I to become?

Part III: Words

They say words are capable
Of breathing life into the inanimate,
Allow the sea to speak in seductive tones,
Set free the caged parrot
From a life of imitation,
Of speaking a language
No one understands.

Words are power—it's a literary truth.

When we wish to find our voice,
We turn to words to express,
To entertain, to argue.
To define.

Words are our identity.

Part IV: To Become a Person

Moving underneath the rubble
Of my former self, stirs
A small wisp of charged energy—
Waiting for a vessel to transform.

Arriving empty—a hollowed boat—
To the crime scene of my identity,
I feel a tingling, a nudge, a push.
A fresh breath of air.

As air enters my lungs without
The dulling smog of my porcelain cage,
My mind is at rest, my wit is sharp.
My pen is inked, and my pages clear.
A new person sits before this desk.
No longer the girl who cries.
No longer the girl atop an
Impossible pedestal for all to see.

For now I am a person,
An overflowing cup of words to shout,
A force of nature that has chosen
To soar.
Yet, now I must ask,
When will you begin
To write your own story as well?



When I was young
(maybe four feet tall)
I had a daydream
That I didn't share
Since it wasn't what
Boys were supposed to
Think and it made
Me unsure about hiding
My feelings to prepare
For being a ninja
My daydream had me
Live in Amazon village
As the only boy
All around my friends
Weren't afraid about what
Boys were allowed to
Do and to be
They were proud and strong women
Who towered six feet tall and
Spoke in six word lines from
Their bold bodies which I envied
They ran society with true equality
Fighting misogyny sexism and general oppression
They used words pregnant with intelligence
Critical theories about motherhood and periods
Totally comfortable with their sexualities they
Claim their bodies themselves to be
Sites of resistance conceiving a culture
Safe for all women no exceptions

Now I'm older and I
Wonder (standing at five feet
tall with words that have
grown along with) About if
I fit in more with
Men who brag about their
Courage cash cars and cocks

VILLAGE CONFESSION *FROM LITTLE BOY*

ANDREW TINKER





Than I do with women
I try to say what
I think a man is
But I can't until I
Let my mind run free
Masculinity is scientific reasoning that
Hates emotions because they cloud logic
They are feminine and care
Diagnosed as personal character flaws
Cognitive biases and/or mental failures
Patriarchy is men ruling society
And values power as capability
To ruthlessly destroy at impulse
The male gaze penetrates by
Observing women as sexual objects
And lesser because they're unreasonable
Observing men as hardworking breadwinners
And animals with uncontrollable urges

I am still limited by
My body even when I
Try wearing panties or when
My friends paint my nails
Or style my hair or
Offer to do my makeup
And it makes me wonder
If I can pass for
A girl and if so
I'll give birth to ideas
Beyond the words that people
Use to limit sex saying
That women are from Venus
And men from Mars not
DNA all twisted and turned
So we get confused and
Get it wrong when we
Say just who is who
I get mad and want
To fight from the flesh
Challenge and tear up divisions



Being assigned male at birth
Gives my voice unearned respect
To tell my personal narratives
Against letting masculinity and femininity
Be carved onto my biology
From the moment of ultrasounds
Or from doctors who exclaimed
With scientific authority my identity
"It's a boy!" no one
Asked me what I thought

I quake when I think
That maybe I'm wrong
On who I actually am
For so long I was
Scared of being a man
And I felt sure that
I am not a woman
But now I'm not sure
I think of what it
Would be like to not
Be a boy or girl
Or to go between them
To change my body and
Stop being so timid and
Scared instead to just let
My mind have safe space
Where I can say defiantly that I am more than just a body
Who I am cannot be contained by my biology
I cannot be defined by doctors using sterile terms to limit
And my gender does not equal my genitals
I have vocabulary in my mind to express thoughts
That burst past word limits assigned to bodies
I don't want to be constrained and stretch to fit
The dominant values placed on reproductive organs
Just a scientific venture promoting infertile identity
Ignoring people whose existence in public causes gender trouble
Making it harder to erect barriers between men and women
My mind wants to be free to experiment and daydream

THANKS FOR READING

The Matrix



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Sax·i·frage



