

Spare Rib

INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST ZINE AT DARTMOUTH
VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 2 24S EDITION

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The Precipice Issue



letter from the editors

Precipice, our theme this spring, powerfully resonates with *Spare Rib* at this juncture. Acknowledging that our organization's essence has always been greater than the sum of our (zine) products, our executives turned a critical eye to our production process in the new year. In turn, concerns around the sustainability of our whirlwind production schedule prompted our landmark decision to move from a one-term to two-term publication cycle, publishing twice instead of three times per year. As students with a shared passion for the political and personal power of art, we reached a precipice – a moment of reckoning – and made this choice that we hope will better support our members in the short and long term. For our writers and artists, “precipice” evoked a range of personal, artistic, and political narratives as they explored individual interpretations. Whether journeying alone or with others, the arrival at the cliff's edge is an emotionally-charged moment often fraught with anxiety or anticipation that may lean positive or negative. After the decisive moment in which one may choose to stay, jump, or perhaps build a bridge, there is an enduring challenge in learning to live with change and to navigate its aftermath. Moreover, we recognize that some precipices may be more visible than others and are committed to voicing everyone's journeys.

The global political realities that we now face are urgent, demanding our empathy and activism. As our organization has reaffirmed its commitment to our political underpinnings, we increasingly engaged in activist education and action these past two terms. The process witnessed increased collaboration with other organizations as well as community-building within our own, fostering a stronger sense of connection and purpose.

As you flip through the zine, we invite you to consider this idea: that as a society, we are always at some precipice moment, whether unprecedented or recurrent. Although the terrain and/or vista may change, the stakes from the precipice remain high. We recognize that precipices do not foreclose an outcome, nor invite a resolution or sense of closure. Yet from whatever cliff you stand on, we invite you to turn your gaze to the horizon.

*With love,
Avery Lin & Maggie Emerson
24S Writing Leads*

2024 spare rib mission statement

The *Spare Rib* newspaper was first published in 1992 to highlight women's accomplishments and persisting problems in the two decades following co-education at Dartmouth. For reasons we are still working to discover, the original *Spare Rib* went out of print after a few years. Thirty years later, our goal reflects a movement that has evolved considerably since 1995. We are re-establishing *Spare Rib* to discuss struggles, achievements, and history of people and places beyond the center, hindered (but not constrained) by racism, classism, sexism and further means of oppression, through analysis, humor, and critique. **Our struggles deserve recognition, our perspectives deserve to be voiced, and our strengths deserve to be celebrated.**

the name “spare rib”

As written in the second chapter of Genesis, God took a rib from Adam, the first man, and from it fashioned Eve, the first woman, to serve as his companion. We propose a different origin story, in which **no one is merely a piece of flesh, secondthought, servile, or spare.**

statement against colonial exploitation

In accordance with Spare Rib's values and mission, we want to bring attention to the land on which we stand, its history, and its original peoples. More than a land acknowledgement, this is a statement against a historical injustice. This is a historical demand and a material necessity that has been brewing for over five centuries. Dartmouth College is a settler-colonial, patriarchal, bourgeois institution, founded on the eve of the American revolution. It is thus profoundly entangled with the settler-colonial project. This institution stands on unceded, continually-occupied Abenaki territory and within the wider Turtle Island, lands currently under the violent, fascistic military occupation of the Euro-American settler regime. These lands have seen genocide, warfare, and plagues, which have decimated most of its original inhabitants. They have seen treaties ignored and broken, cultures and languages forcibly erased, and entire populations displaced. Indigenous peoples remain here, standing proud and resolute, in love, community, and joy, awaiting the new dawn to come.

Now more than ever, Spare Rib assumes the historical duty to stand in solidarity and dedicate ourselves to a genuine end of colonial injustice. Spare Rib stands for a return of the land, people's government, and Indigenous self-determination. This statement is a new beginning for our efforts for Indigenous justice and autonomy — this is not the end. As we move forward, we devote ourselves to a future of collective liberation for all oppressed peoples.

land acknowledgment

Spare Rib was created by students at Dartmouth College, a **school built on unceded Abenaki land that, to this day, prospers off of Indigenous trauma**. Settler-colonial exploitation is ongoing, complex, and damaging to all, and *Spare Rib* aims to **acknowledge the privileges and exploitation we take part in within society**—devoting ourselves to honoring Indigenous peoples and allies around the world that fought and continue to fight for a more equitable and inclusive future. We will continue to voice our support and encourage others to educate themselves and learn about Indigenous issues and identities.

disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in *Spare Rib* are those of individual authors and not necessarily reflective of the zine, writers, or staff as a whole, nor represented as wholly complete or correct information, nor intended to disparage any group or individual.



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AN OPEN LETTER TO SPARE RIB

By Raegan Boettcher

Art by Clara Schreibman | Design by Lillia Hammond

Dear Ribbers,

I remember, with startling clarity, the time that I first engaged with Spare Rib. Picture this: January 2021, winter of my freshman year, I was back living in the town I grew up in, in a house that my cabin-fever-stricken family filled to the brim, driving each other up the walls during that first tumultuous year of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Everyone spent the first two weeks of Winter 2021 at home before coming to campus because of a nationwide post-holiday surge.) I scrolled through my inbox that overflowed with campus emails begging me to hop on to another Zoom meeting and trashed them all (because who the hell had the energy to attend another hour of awkward small talk with blank boxes and terrible internet connection?).

But, for some reason or another, the Spare Rib campus email caught my attention. Maybe it was the always-charming use of emojis, maybe it promised a space for writers or a space to talk about social justice, or maybe I was just feeling lonely and disconnected and needed something to hold onto for a moment.

I hopped on the Zoom that night, and we all debated the options for the next edition's theme (we landed on Transition for the 21S edition — perhaps still my favorite edition of the zine, even if it is just because it was my beginning). Despite the inherent awkwardness of a Zoom meeting, I

remember it being filled with laughter and light and love. It felt like something that could keep me afloat in a freshman year amidst a pandemic that no one could have anticipated — something good. I went to bed that night buzzing with possibilities, an article already spilling out from my head while I frantically jotted my jumbled thoughts down in my notes app for safe-keeping.

Now approaching the end, I sat down to write this letter with the primary concern of record-keeping. I wanted an organized place for me to write down all the thoughts that I still have floating around in my head, something better than ideas frantically jotted down in my notes app like I did that first time around almost four years ago.

In June, I'll graduate, leaving the campus and the community that I have called home for the last four years. And for all of the institution's faults and shortcomings and frustrating bureaucracies, I will forever be grateful for my time at Dartmouth because it connected me to all of you. That is something I will never regret.

Initially, I wanted this article to be a sweeping meta-analysis about the various factors that have contributed to the repeated devaluation of Spare Rib as an organization. More than that, I wanted to write about the necessity of planning for longevity in our movements, the importance of building a legacy, and how to give everyone the chance to think about politics in new ways.

I think I can still call this piece a meta-analysis. I try to communicate why it is so vital for us to understand longevity and legacy and to cultivate passion and joy for the work that we do. And I try to articulate why we can't race along the tracks, without direction, perhaps off the edge of the cliff.

In the end, though, I think this article is more of a parting gift. This is a love letter and a goodbye, a how-to and what-not-to-do guide, an attempted list of things that I wish I knew when I started and an incomplete list of all the things that I have yet to learn — all wrapped up in one article, the last thing I will publish in Spare Rib. It's a going-away gift, an attempt to bring together all the thoughts that I haven't had the chance to put down until now. I do this all in the hopes that it will help someone one day; maybe it will help you to start thinking, to begin dreaming, or to hit the ground running. Maybe this will plant a seed for you now, and you'll bloom so much larger for it.

I don't have all the information or answers; I'd be lying if I said I did. But over the course of my college career, I spent a lot of time engaging in campus politics. And I've learned many lessons — not all on purpose and many not particularly enjoyable. But I learned nonetheless, and I consider that a win. (Apologies for being sardonic, but at this point, I feel as if I've earned the right.)

Social and political activism at Dartmouth is fundamentally different from other schools. Arguably, we are the wealthiest and whitest Ivy League college^[1] with a reputation for being the most conservative, but we are also in the middle of rural New Hampshire with an already small undergraduate population and very few graduate students. The strategies that may benefit other college campuses do not always serve us well here. Organizing mass demonstrations on our campus is both difficult (because it's often hard to get a "mass" of Dartmouth students mobilized in the first place) and frequently unnoticed (because we don't have the same access to media attention that we see on urban campuses like Columbia in New York City). This means two things: 1. We have a higher barrier to mass political action than other campuses, and 2. We have to get a lot more creative.

This space for creativity is where, from my perspective, Spare Rib really shines.

Although it was not necessarily the original intention of the organization, over time, Spare Rib has developed into a space that values education and outreach. Conversations around event planning circulate around questions of how we make sure that everyone is on the same page: what is the barrier to entry? What might people need to know to engage with this topic? How can we open this up to people who have never engaged with Spare Rib before — or politics at all, for that matter?

Even in the first edition, Confinement from Fall 2020, you can see the roots of this educational orientation. The "Bare Bones" section consists of articles like "Culture 101: Appropriation" and "Sex and Gender 101: The

Sex Spectrum" by Maanasi Shyno '23, and "Woman or Womxn?" by Jamie Tatum '23. The end of the edition includes a glossary with helpful definitions of terms and phrases that people may not have heard before, put together by Amber Bhutta '23.

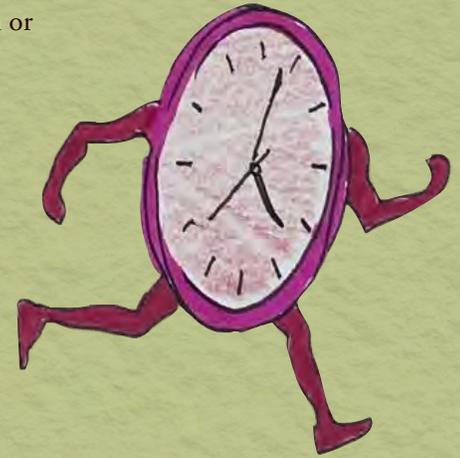
Maintaining this educational orientation and low barrier to entry has not always been easy. Several attempts over the last few years to invest in these efforts have included recruiting a "101" project lead to encourage and support introductory articles on complex topics (although this didn't work very well for us, unfortunately) and most recently, Topical Tea Times, a new meeting structure in which we discuss a current issue to encourage political education and investment in the world around us. Topical Tea Times the past two terms have included a history and discussion of self-immolation after the death of Aaron Bushnell outside of the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the role of political activism in academic institutions inspired by Robin Kelley's article "Black Study, Black Struggle."

Topical Tea Times emerged from a conversation about how we might engage more with timely political problems with a zine publication schedule that always puts us behind on a minimum three-month lag. This kind of conversation is also something that I think sets Spare Rib apart — the fundamental willingness to engage in ideological struggle, consider what is working and what isn't, and come together to figure out a creative solution.

Earlier in the development of Spare Rib, we instituted Rib Talks, a termly staff meeting in which we did exactly that to formalize engagement in organizational criticism. Some of the Rib Talks topics included how we can encourage accountability in the zine creation process, ways to make Spare Rib a more inclusive space, and several attempts to write a manifesto to define our shared ideology.

The very first Rib Talks discussed the role of intersectionality in our politics, why it is important for us to be intersectional feminists, and how to reflect these ideals in our practice. It was an important conversation to have, although it was partially a reaction to the organization being labeled "White Rib" by other campus leftists at the time (which was both mostly inaccurate and very uncreative).

Intersectionality began as legal terminology, coined by Kimberle Crenshaw. Literally named for the place where streets cross, Crenshaw coined the term to illuminate how



factors like race and gender can work together to compound discrimination in legal cases. The case that inspired the concept examined hiring discrimination against Black women. The company in the trial argued that their hiring history could not be considered unlawful discrimination because they had hired several other (white) women and several other Black (male) employees,^[2] so Crenshaw had to consider how to elucidate the intersection of misogyny and racism. “Intersectionality” became a way to explain the unique experiences of Black women that fall outside of singular definitions of discrimination.

For Spare Rib, “intersectional” began as a modifier to distinguish our ideology from “white” feminism^[3] and align us with more progressive forms of feminism that recognize multiple dimensions of oppression such as race, sexuality, class, etc. However, the extent to which intersectional feminism as a general ideology engages with each of these dimensions widely varies. In my experience, intersectionality often lacks recognition of class-based oppression entirely, focusing more on other oppressive forces without understanding the class dimensions that underpin them.

Furthermore, viewing oppression under an intersectional paradigm often leads people to treat marginalization as additive rather than understanding each mode of oppression as unique and context-dependent. Especially once bourgeois politics and academia adopted intersectionality into their institutional ideologies, it affirmed people’s investment in superficial identity politics that value “representation” in positions of power over more material analyses that understand power as a systemic problem of inequality and oppression. As Professor Ruha Benjamin from Princeton University so succinctly said in a speech at Spelman College: “Black faces in high places are not going to save us... Our Blackness and our womanness are not in themselves trustworthy if we allow ourselves to be conscripted into positions of power that maintain the oppressive status quo.”^[4] Furthermore, having someone in power that is a woman, queer person, person of color, or previously working-class does not guarantee their continued allyship to progressive politics. (For a prime example, consider Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s vote against the right to strike for railroad workers despite her public statements of support and her many other failures to maintain “socialist” politics.^[5] Or consider Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the UN ambassador for the United States who infamously voted multiple times against UN resolutions for ceasefire in Palestine.)^[6]

Several years down the line, Spare Rib has been floating the idea of changing our name, moving away from the “intersectional” label and dropping the “zine” part of our description to reflect our more general community orientation that has recently developed. We have considered changing our name to many things (“feminist collective,” “feminist zine,” “feminist cooperative,” etc.) but have thus far been unable to make a final decision.

Moving away from intersectionality would allow us to more directly consider and include other kinds of feminisms in our practices (Marxist-feminism, Black feminism, eco-feminism, etc.), especially because it is unlikely that every staff member considers themselves a specifically “intersectional” feminist. And besides, do we need to modify our assertion of feminist politics just because it has, at times, been used for only the concerns of wealthy, white women? Especially considering the issue of white-washing and lack of class analysis is not unique to feminist politics.

There is also the problem of moving away from this label in terms of campus optics. It might not look that great if we were to suddenly move away from calling ourselves “intersectional.” Sure, we could release some kind of statement or email explaining our choice, but many people ignore their emails (it’s okay... sometimes I do, too) and others simply unfairly engage with Spare Rib as an organization.

To give just one example, I remember hosting a workshop for the staff to update our Indigenous land acknowledgement when I was a writing lead during Spring 2022. The purpose of the event was to think about Spare Rib and our relationship to Indigenous issues and engage with the history of settler-colonialism at Dartmouth as a staff. I facilitated the meeting along with my co-writing lead at the time, but we were not experts by any means and made this clear. We focused the meeting on brainstorming as a staff; we looked at our previous land acknowledgement to identify what could be updated, removed, and added, understanding that it was not ever going to be perfect; our goal was organizational improvement, not perfection. However, some people assumed that Spare Rib was offering to workshop other organizations’ land acknowledgements — I suppose based on misinterpretations of the meeting title or unfair assumptions and preconceived notions about who we are as an organization.

Spare Rib has also received some superficial criticisms for several of our other characteristics, from our investment in art and poetry to our horizontal structure. For some reason, Spare Rib’s horizontal structure and consensus-based decision-making has made us into somewhat of an outsider amongst other parts of the “campus-left.”^[7] We have garnered a reputation for being a myriad of things: too slow to make timely decisions, too invested in complicated “bureaucracy,” or ultimately too unserious to publish anything “besides art and poetry.” These misconceptions all reveal a fundamental misunderstanding of how we operate. Furthermore, they expose that such criticism often arises from people who have never actually read our work,



which is especially ironic when they come from people that tried writing more “serious” articles with us in the past but ultimately backed out.

Why have we received such a negative reputation for seemingly innocuous reasons? Yes, that’s a rhetorical question, so I’ll spoil it for you: it’s just misogyny. There are implicit assumptions that feminism is not useful as a political paradigm within left-wing movements (hilarious!) or that misogyny is somehow no longer a problem (how ironic!).

None of this is to say that Spare Rib is somehow perfect, above criticism, or better than any other student organization on campus, but I am trying to elucidate the problem of some people blindly criticizing us for things they do not truly understand.

Undergoing ideological struggle is a good thing. This is how we all become more politically developed, and this is how we build organizations that are meant to last. Remaining static within restrictive ideological frameworks and outdated methodologies helps no one. And, of course, there are valid criticisms to mention for horizontalism and consensus-based decisions that we should absolutely acknowledge. Admittedly, it is hard to be truly horizontal, given that logistically someone needs to be steering the direction of the organization and making sure things are getting done. Horizontalism proliferated in the U.S. around the time of the Occupy movements, a left-wing populist movement in the 2010s that started with Occupy Wall Street in 2011.[8] Many of the iterations of the Occupy movement, including Occupy Dartmouth, were vaguely anarchist and took a fairly reactionary stance against any kind of hierarchy.[9] Are we even truly horizontal with a leadership board that steers the direction and plan for the organization? Is horizontalism something we still want to strive for in the first place?

Regardless of how we answer those questions, it is not inherently bureaucratic to have a decision-making process. Without a formalized process for an organization to decide things, whether it be consensus-based models, democratic-centralism, single-choice voting, etc., decision-making can become a game of who can talk the most, the loudest, and over everybody else. (At a certain point, we might as well join the Senate with how often people recreate the filibuster.) It is true that consensus models are slower than individuals making executive decisions, but I don’t think speed or efficiency are important enough for us to sacrifice our fundamental values, especially when the so-called “inefficiency” of our consensus model typically adds only 24–36 hours to the response timeline.

Dartmouth students, in general, have a problem with the constant feeling of running out of time, mostly attributable to the sprint of the 10-week quarter. This chronic limit of time creates an unrepentant sense of urgency in every aspect of student life — from academics to socializing to campus politics. It becomes particularly salient for campus political organizations when faced with a short span of open time

between the threat of midterms and finals combined with the pressure of the 24-hour news cycle. At many of the political organizing meetings I’ve attended at Dartmouth, there’s an unrepentant sense of urgency to respond immediately with direct action to any problems on campus or more broadly — often at the expense of student safety measures, deeper critical engagement, and basic human needs like sleep and food. Community care and safety is all too often left to the wayside.

Obstacles to establishing strong political foundations at Dartmouth are further exacerbated by the D-Plan. The D-Plan often feels evil, like premeditated murder to any effort at building a movement that lasts past a year. I maintain that it is evil, but it was hardly premeditated; it was a rushed solution from Dartmouth President John Kemeny to a housing crisis precipitated primarily by coeducation. According to the Office of the President, Kemeny “instituted the ‘Dartmouth Plan’ of year-round operations, thereby allowing a significant increase in the size of the student body without a corresponding increase in the College’s physical facilities.”[10] (More than fifty years post-coeducation, very little has changed.)

Nonetheless, it is quite convenient for the administration to have an unstable student body for whom it is normal to be away from campus for up to year at a time. It is monumentally difficult to stay integrated in a struggle that you can hardly settle into before being thrown into your next off-term. How are new students supposed to learn from upperclassmen and previous struggles when we’re given so little time to occupy the same space?

I guess I’m trying to answer that question, too. I guess I’m trying to offer a word from me, someone who watched this space take root, to you, all the future ribbers who will lovingly tend to it and watch it grow even larger.

You will feel like you’re running out of time, like you’re sprinting to the finish. You will feel like you’re alone. Resist this feeling; resist this urge. It does not serve you, it does not serve your movements, and it will not carry you into the future.

All too often, sprinting ahead towards the edge of the cliff means leaving a lot of people behind in your wake. And a movement cannot survive on the efforts of one person, or even a few, alone. Our primary goals should always be to build up a community — a support network, a safety net to fall back on when things do not go as planned because inevitably, they will not. This is not by anyone’s fault, but simply by nature of us all being human and flawed. Our plans will undoubtedly fail, but that does not make us failures.

The goal is not to avoid failure; the goal is to have the means to recover from it. My hope, after I leave Spare Rib



behind, is that you all will still give each other this support to recover. That, too, is something that makes this organization so important, so vital, so fulfilling.

Our network of people has spread so far in just the last four years. There are Ribbers from before me and there will be new Ribbers after whom I will never have the chance to meet, but we are all connected through this organization: this community of people who understand what it is like to love Spare Rib and, one day, have to leave it.

But the joy of all this is that we remain connected even after leaving campus.

No matter where my future takes me, I think that my politics will always have a fundamentally feminist orientation because feminism was my first homebase. Spare Rib will always be the organization and the community where I mark the start of my real political development. But the place that I am now, politically speaking, is much different from four years ago. At the end of my college career, I no longer have the need for Spare Rib like I did when I started. I am ready for new endeavors.

In the best way possible, I have outgrown Spare Rib.

This might be startling to consider. I would urge you to reject your gut reaction against this and hear me out. The goal of Spare Rib, whether we realize it or not, has always been to foster people's development until they are ready to take the helm, and eventually so they can fly out on their own. Spare Rib is a unique space, an organization unlike any other that I have seen, and I will miss it like a limb, but it was never meant to be forever. And that's not a bug; it's a necessary feature.

You can start here with Spare Rib, or with feminism more generally. But you do not have to end here. (And, really, you won't — these long four years pass so much faster than you think, take my word for it.) Our mission statement says this, too, albeit in different terms: we are proposing a different origin story. Where you go from there is up to you to explore.

I am so endlessly grateful to have been at Dartmouth at this moment in time. I am so thankful to have seen the new beginnings of Spare Rib and helped to foster its growth. And I am so happy that I am getting to leave Spare Rib at a time and place that feels right for me.

Let this organization be a place for you to grow — like a greenhouse that is warm and bright and nourishing. Let this community be the people to whom you can always return. Let this be a moment in your life full of learning and questioning and experimenting. Try anything, try everything, and use this to inform you in the future.

Now and forever, your community will be there to catch you when you fall.

All of my love,

Raegan 🍎

[1] This is slightly debatable and certainly fluctuates year-to-year, and there are some differences in how colleges publicly report their demographic make-up, so there's no definitive take on the "whitest" and "wealthiest" Ivy. The other likely candidate, UPenn, claims 57% of '27s are students of color and 20% are eligible for federal Pell grants. Taking a look at Dartmouth's class profile for the '27s, 60% of '27s are identified as white and only 17% are Pell grant-eligible.

[2] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>; Kimberle Crenshaw, "The Urgency of Intersectionality," October 2016, TED Video, https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality.

[3] Arizbeth Rojas, "Feminism in the 20th Century," *Spare Rib Intersectional Feminist Zine* 2, no. 2, March 2022, <https://www.spareribdartmouth.com/post/feminism-in-the-20th-century>, p. 57–60.

[4] Ruha Benjamin, "Spelman Convocation 2024," April 2024, Outspoken Agency, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1VeVADILh8&ab_channel=AutismFromTheInside.

[5] Nadeen Ebrahim, "After vetoing three prior UN resolutions on Gaza, US sees its own ceasefire proposal rejected," *CNN World*, March 22, 2024, https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/22/middleeast/us-gaza-ceasefire-proposal-veto-intl/index.html?iid=cnn-buildContentRecirc_end_recirc.

[6] I hesitate to refer to the "campus-left" as anything in material reality, as it typically boils down to the same few people making decisions on behalf of several different organizations, but it's useful to talk about how we fit into campus politics more generally. Inclusion in this mythical "campus-left" is subject to change depending on how much you play along with others' rigid expectations. Spare Rib's inclusion in this group has fluctuated a lot, so here's my advice: Work on what drives you, not what you think everyone else wants you to do. You'll be much more fulfilled this way.

[7] "John G. Kemeny," Office of the President, <https://president.dartmouth.edu/people/john-g-kemeny>.





Bath tub Elegy

By: Lauren Zhu

Art by: Kaitlyn Anderson

Design by: Anonymous



sweat sticky,

untangle my

the water ripples around
your skin, arching in the

memory of your shape,
i lean myself against you

gives of your smooth
and sinking arms

all of our
conversations

end in an act of sculpture,
we mold our plush bodies together,

teach me the lingering

closure and promised
contentment,

difference between poetic

my last light lover
as the water cools

bounds of this doubtful prelude,
longing for you,

this little heat
of our close bodies,
our sleepless memorials,

soap slickened hair
with your ghost fingers



in an effort to stay back,

lead to the past, scrub my back with calluses
knit around your knuckles like a glove
listless and unlistening in your wrestling

fodder and empty bitterness,
your willful forgetting.



mother who has
left, mother that i've left
long gone

the ghost of these last
breaths passed between
the base of our bellies

This poem takes shape in a contrapuntal, a poetic form in which multiple poems are twisted together. The name is reminiscent of the musical “counterpoint,” where multiple independent melodies weave together, no single melody more powerful than another. A contrapuntal is a counterpoint of poems, where the piece can be read straight across, in columns, or in any way the eye wanders.

Dear— a ghazal, after Agha Shahid Ali

BY: CHLOE CORDASCO ART & DESIGN BY: RAEGAN BOETTCHER

when you're joy-blue and empty on your book tour years,
come down and please, give me our ghosts from the sore years—

A living saint in mesh and white conducting water and
wind, ringing in our blush-ears, marking these poor years.

Put me back in the dark, I dare you. Red, orange,
sunlight fire. My beau will be revenge for years.

Drown myself in the blue bottle of her perfume
so I might live forever, wearing jade, ore, years.

Color us in the grass—blood and paint are lovely
but so are we. Nothing can replace our bored years.

Beat her down to her core self and see if it sticks
see how long she'll last—apocryphal—weeks—or, years.

There's a candle on my soul—pink, like her hair.
From the glittering bottle, we—violet—pour years.

Who is it that I claim to be—Ishmael? a child?
A fraud. No more than she was—we were—in more years. 🍎





SPEAKING UP OR SPOKEN FOR?



By: Jillian Darcy-Rosario Art by: Ashley Xie Design by: Lauren Kang

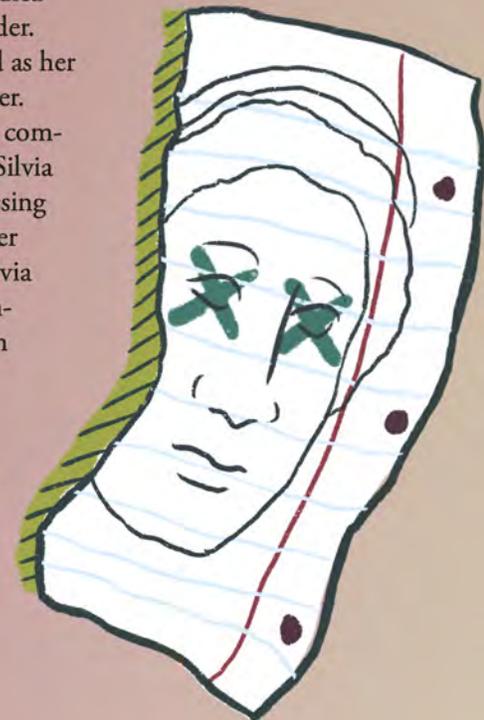
I often question the extent of my independence. An independent life hinges on writing our own narrative, proclaiming who we are and acting in accordance with our desires. The existence of independence is a product of freedom from some other. There is no independence without rejection of a certain external power. Independence is a separation, a splitting off, a once together and now irreconcilably fractured. Our oneness and subservience to the governing powers which permeate our lives - political governance, patriarchy, social mores - are sources of dependence from which I question my distinction, to not be entirely subsumed within the systems of some other entity's creation, but rather to establish my life by my own order.



In the ancient world, a woman was defined by assigned silence. The Greek philosopher and historian Plutarch writes in the *Moralia*, "Not only the arm of the virtuous woman, but her speech as well, ought to be not for the public, and she ought to be modest and guarded about saying anything in the hearing of outsiders, since it is an exposure of herself; for in her talk can be seen her feelings, character, and disposition" (Plutarch *Moralia* 142c-d, transl. Babbitt). Speech is a means of expression, but even more than that it is a means of survival. The success of humanity in being able to dominate an ecosystem of organisms and forces stronger and more powerful than humans stems from our ability to speak with one another. Communicating ideas fosters progress through employing multiple people to act collectively rather than alone by understanding each other. Plutarch's dogmatic explanation of feminine propriety alludes to society's contempt towards women speaking. The most highly regarded women in society know to withhold their vulnerabilities. They have been conditioned to present themselves as a mere outline of a figure, rather than a woman complete with her

personality.

The narrative of femininity can be framed through the suffering that permeates women's lives. Very few Roman women are noted in history but the well-known ones who had enduring effects on Rome are depicted as passive objects manipulated and harmed by men. This precedence begins the mythological foundings of Rome; the rape of the Vestal Virgin Rhea Silvia who then gave birth to Romulus after whom Rome is named. Livy writes, "The Vestal was forcibly violated and gave birth to twins. She named Mars as their father, either because she really believed it, or because the fault might appear less heinous if a deity were the cause of it" (Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, Chapter 4, transl. Roberts). The king then imprisoned Rhea Silvia and attempted to kill her twins. No longer "chaste", which the role of Vestal Virgin demanded, positioned Rhea Silvia against societal order. Not even claiming a god as her perpetrator could save her. Despite the crime being committed by a man, Rhea Silvia is punished for transgressing beyond the bounds of her feminine place. Rhea Silvia suffers a violent rape, imprisonment, her children being taken away and purportedly killed; an unchaste, unvirtuous Vestal Virgin threatens power; women are defined by what society dictates.





Livy deepens the connection of rape and the foundation of Rome in his narration of the rape of Sabine women. Due to the lack of women in Rome during its beginnings, king Romulus feared that Rome might die out. Neighboring tribes, such as the Sabines, denied Roman men as husbands, compelling Romans to use force to abduct Sabine women as their wives. In this account, the continuance and success of Rome entirely hinged on the abduction and rape of the Sabine women; the lineage of all Romans can be traced back to the raped Sabine women and the Romans as the perpetrators. The virile strategy to preserve the Roman kingdom is hailed as a heroic, national origin story, glorifying the actions of men acting with greater purpose for the state. Male power exploiting women is regarded as honorable, rather than horrific. Pivotal to Rome's mythical origins, the rape of Sabine women prevailed throughout the course of Roman history as a source of pride in Rome's perseverance and dominance. Despite the violence these Sabine women experienced, pride comes from the actions of the men, rendering the experiences of these women unimportant, and thus unheard, to the Roman citizens.

The establishment of the Roman republic, as told by the historian Livy, again expounds on the theme of rape catalyzing political change. Livy recounts the rape of the noblewoman Lucretia. According to Livy, who describes the events leading up to Lucretia's rape, the Roman king's son, Sextus Tarquinius, the perpetrator of the crime, first speaks to Lucretia and says, "Silence, Lucretia! I am Sextus Tarquinius, and I have a sword in my hand; if you utter a word, you shall die' ... Tarquin began to confess his passion, pleaded, used threats as well as entreaties, and employed every argument likely to influence a female heart. When he saw that she was inflexible and not moved even by the fear of death, he threatened to disgrace her, declaring that he would lay the naked corpse of the slave by her dead body, so that it might be said that she had been slain in foul adultery. By this awful threat, his lust triumphed over her inflexible chastity" (Livy *Ab Urbe Condita*, Chapter 58, transl. Roberts). In the aftermath of her rape, Lucretia kills herself, asking "what can be well with a woman when she has lost her honour?"

Due to Lucretia's status as a virtuous woman in the upper echelon of Roman society, the Roman populace became enraged; the monarchy was too dominant if they could go so far as to rape Lucretia, and thus the king was killed and the Roman republic began.

Although the actions inflicted on Lucretia played a pivotal role in Roman history, Lucretia as her own, singular entity was silent. How can one demarcate who the individual Lucretia is from the lifeless mass acted upon by others? Her individuality is not lost – it never existed. From the beginning of her appearance in Livy's history, she must first be silenced. Livy re-articulates the status of woman; this narrative is dominated by the man, there is silence for a woman. In Livy's account, a woman's speech is death: Lucretia's first and only words explain why she is about to take her own life. But what is the value of life with no voice? When Lucretia does speak it is to explain her death, as a woman is worthless without societally-defined feminine virtue. Livy describes how Tarquin's words initially fail him. Tarquin only prevails in raping her when he leverages society's burdensome shame as a threat. The very nature of his words lacking power is a cleverly crafted political argument made by Livy. As described by Mary Beard, "To become a man (or at least an elite man) was to claim the right to speak. Public speech was a - if not the - defining attribute of maleness. Or, to quote a well-known Roman slogan, the elite male citizen could be summed up as *vir bonus dicendi peritus*, 'a good man, skilled in speaking'" (1). Livy, like many other Romans, held a strong disdain for tyranny; power resting in one man's hands was a dark mark in Roman history. Thus Livy highlights the power of words and one's voice by emasculating Tarquin through his inability to enact his desire through speech. Lucretia silently submits to the rape because she is strictly bound to the status by which society has defined her. She proceeds to kill herself because she has no life having to bear the weight of societal ignominy. Her life cannot nor is allowed to exist outside of these confines.

In these texts, women are either tacitly virtuous in their alignment with socially acceptable behavior, or women suffer silently bearing the weight of a society in which their voices are not accepted. Even poetic texts which are deeply

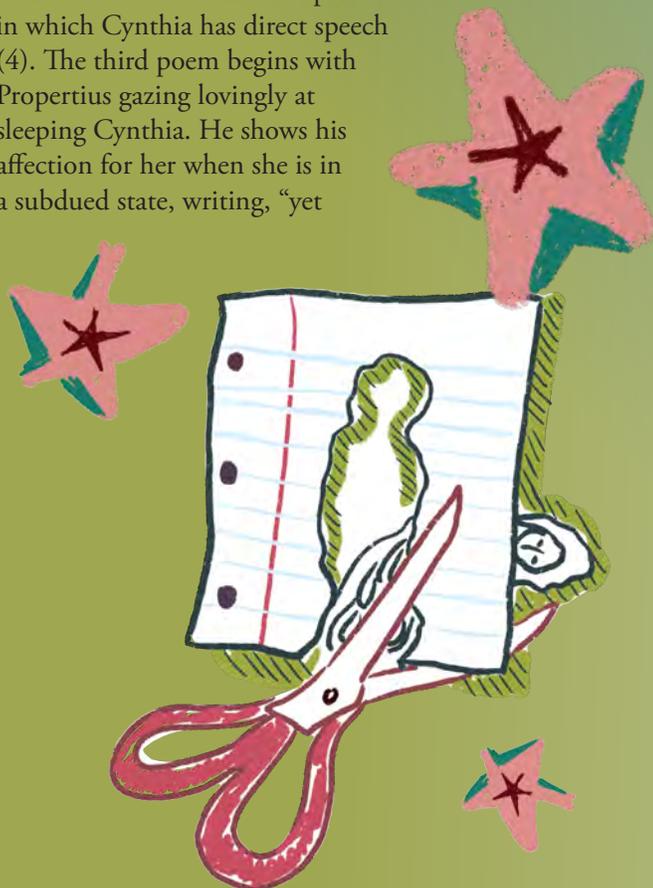


personal can expose the larger external forces shaping the culture of the time. Take for instance Cynthia, the object of affection in Propertius' love poems, the *Elegies*. While Cynthia defies the gendered, social order because Propertius' infatuated love of Cynthia allows her to hold power over him, she is described as evil and dangerous; power is so unnatural to the female sex that she must be depicted as an alien, a foreigner, rather than a true woman. Propertius describes for his readers the gendered paradigm in which he operates; in order for a woman to hold power over a man Propertius must depict her as cruel, insane and even witch-like. Cynthia yields influence over Propertius, as described in the fear Cynthia instills in him. Take just the first poem of Propertius: he writes, "Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis, / contactum nullis ante Cupidinibus," (2) [Cynthia first took miserable me with her eyes, I who had been touched before by no Love] where cepit with ocellis here mean metaphorically "bewitched wretched me with her eyes". Contactum can mean both touched, pierced and corrupted, (3) allowing it to take on a softer meaning, alluding to the gentleness of love, and also a violent one, referencing the unnatural and perhaps destructive power and influence loving Cynthia has on Propertius. In order for her love to be potent, its tender qualities are overpowered by its violent and deceptive nature. Cynthia's love is not womanly but rather monstrous; society cannot rationalize women only holding power in any other way. In the third poem of Book One, Cynthia has a voice for the first and only time in Book One. In fact there are only four occasions before the fourth and final book of Propertius in which Cynthia has direct speech (4). The third poem begins with Propertius gazing lovingly at sleeping Cynthia. He shows his affection for her when she is in a subdued state, writing, "yet

I had not dared to disturb the sleep of my mistress, fearing the savage abuse I had experienced before." As Cynthia speaks, she describes her sadness, "Would that you might pass such nights, rogue, as you are always forcing unhappy me to have...and from time to time in desolation I complained softly to myself over the frequent long delays in loving others; until Sleep with his pleasant wings pushed me to fall: that was the final cure for my tears" (5). As the poet, Propertius decides how Cynthia speaks, and he only voices her pain. She longs for Propertius to come back home and not leave her alone, without him she has spent the night crying and in pain over the absence of her lover. Cynthia's potency comes not from her own voice, but rather the cruel power she sadistically holds over Propertius. Her words and power are all created by Propertius; he assigns her words, actions and their effects. Propertius holds total control over his depiction of Cynthia despite his many references to Cynthia's power over him. Ultimately, Cynthia lacks a voice because her narrative can never be her own; she is a creation molded and introduced to the world solely by Propertius as auctor [author, creator] (6).



I do not know where I begin and others' expectations and rules end. I feel sometimes that reaching my conception of "mineness" in life is just out of reach. By being part of a world larger than I will ever know, part of a human history in which I am miniscule, there exist structural orders I cannot overpower; these monoliths of human society are already written. But in between endurance and destruction lies defiance. I singularly determine my actions to not participate, to resist having my story written by a voice other than my own, knowing that this act of defiance threatens. I threaten this endurance, constructing the possibility of a new narrative, our own order. 🍎



¹Beard, Mary. *Women & Power*. Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017, pp. 17.
²Heyworth, Stephen J. *Elegi*, by Sextus Propertius, 2007, Online ed., Oxford University Press; Oxford Classical Texts, 2015.
³"Contactum." Logeion, University of Chicago, 2022, <https://logeion.uchicago.edu/contingo>
⁴Breed, Brian W. "Portrait of a Lady: Propertius 1.3 and Ekphrasis." *The Classical Journal*, vol. 99, no. 1, 2003, pp. 35–56. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3298080>. Accessed 23 Feb. 2024.
⁵Heyworth, Stephen J. *Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius*. Oxford University Press, 2007.
⁶"Auctor." Logeion, University of Chicago, 2022, <https://logeion.uchicago.edu/auctor>

Mental Notes

By: Avery Lin
Art by: Lillia Hammond
& Rachel Roncka
Design by: Rachel Roncka

[4:01am] Rise victim again to corporeal upbraiding
congealed at the hairline, whisked from equivocal unconsciousness:
incapable of transcending or subjugating these prosaic nuisances
to the inconsequential or the mechanical

...Must shower, tripping in the spurious dark through the
mine of Whole Foods crumbs and ravaged cardboard to the
stoic glass tomb, an irreligious vessel of delirious rumination,
anti-transformative stasis and the tortured crystallization of the same;



Lather the mind with the ingenuous stench of jasmine cloying
with the quixotic promise of oblivion, wafting in the
conviction of this inexorability of noxious habit
(my canned latte, the sham antidote to exhaustion, waits in the fridge),
slip out burnished and subdued, steam-pummeled;



Unspooling erratically on the mattress thoughts scattering
from the mental bank, crystallizing into signs I won't interpret.

[7:57am] The sun is ingratiatingly cheery today,
insinuating that

I am late again!
through the exposed window pane
(I have stopped draping it, it ridicules my time), an apathetic
witness to a cynical city and my lonely world
stashed forty stories above painstakingly constructed
confusing mental drama with life;



I crinkle papers in a pretentious bag,
frenetically arrange scrupulous thoughts with meek prefaces
scheme how to speak spontaneously with apt reticence

...Squirming with earnesty, avoiding eye contact,
scoring my palm where no one's restive gaze falls with the
latent anxiety of a tryout.

[4:01pm] The school is assuringly behind again,
its self-importance belittled by the sardonic haze of the Hudson river;

I am barrelling in an anonymous car
towards the lofty home and its thorny cradle



that ennobles this insincere quitting
I will work twice as long tomorrow
romanticizes the hackneyed fantasies
I will emerge enlightened from a yoga retreat
legitimizes the blindered thinking and indulgent wallowing

...Submit to the tub with tepid relief,
scrape the underbelly of the porcelain shrine



...suppress the primordial visions of a carefree youth
when did it become like this?
indulge in the shallow solace
embrace the now in the name the future!
inculcate the permeable mind with the worthy aim of optimizing,
mature the girlish escapism into empowered womanhood:

Starting tomorrow I will annihilate these trivial neuroses
find inner peace in a meditation book,
deliver the dormant child from pathological assiduity



Find the absurd joy the perverse beauty in this debilitating system
Be grateful, and but unlock your potential!

[7:57pm] I saw a film for school
about three city urchins bluffing towards a cataclysmic end
with their greasy smirks and malignant banter, their tragically
misguided masculinity but all I could think was
how arrestingly alive they are how magnetically they move,
these condemned kids spared from the farcical tragedy of controlled life:

Who would never self-impose internment
besides a sun-bleached window,
time flattened to the tapping of keys
to a numbing mental buzz in a sterile room
only mind no body
too busy to behold the sunset
is the coffee working?
life transpiring outside unwitnessed



Who would never wonder
how can I ever
reach a higher level of self-deception?

[12:31am] *Sometimes I wish*
that I didn't have to preface statements try so hard to be
authentic affect all these smiles cling so hopefully
to the optimist's rock
*believe unconditionally in **the** my future,*
in myself

[1:11am] I'm so close to being the **girl** woman
I'm always becoming;

I glimpse her sidelong in the others'
alluring self-possession, in their
effortless empathy and endearing confidence,
that attractive disposition of being at home in oneself,
not this blistering tension



[1:12am] *But how many setbacks am I allowed
before I transcend pass the precipice
at which I'm always arriving*

[1:13am] They'll murmur in the echo-chamber in the ether
that I had all the tools (so self-aware!) but lost the manual;

Write impressive prose about why I didn't just embrace the cyborg
like all the other smart ones (change the script if I couldn't accept it)
wonder if there was anything actually wrong
or just another attention-seeking literary schema?

[6:01pm] *Mental Notes:*

Go to sleep! get up early

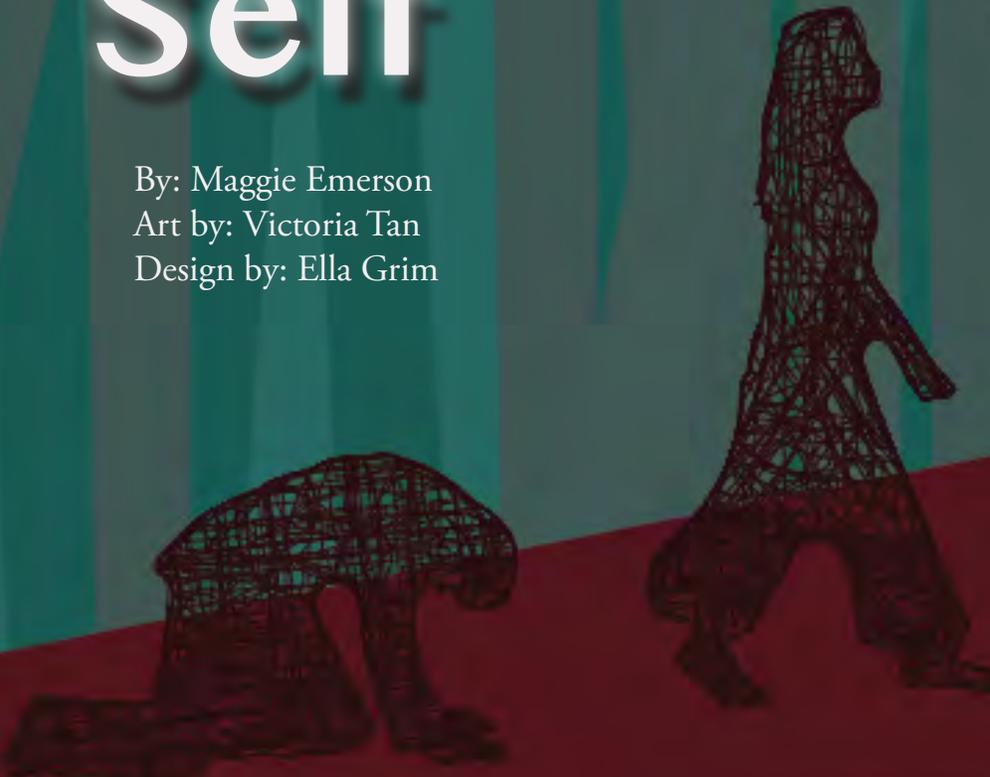
Don't drink coffee! don't be neurotic

Clean room! edit poem 🍏



Shadow Self

By: Maggie Emerson
Art by: Victoria Tan
Design by: Ella Grim



Deltas of flesh formed by the tide of my tears
Salt reservoirs pool in my ears like sediment
I tend to lie down when I cry
Or maybe I tend to cry when I lie down
Hung on the door is the strangest portrait
We move in tandem, she and I
Her pupils stretch and deepen as she stares

I should recognize her

I feel her familiar despair.

On nights when sweat pours from my body
And the bedsheets coil around my limbs
She watches me thrash, slick and restless
She pierces my dreams with
Feather-light fingers encircling my wrist
Each time she leads me to the mountain's base
My feet are bare, the ground coated in snow

I should feel the cold's ache

I feel nothing.

Dense trees loom, circling us in shadows
She knows the path but I cannot fathom it
So I trail behind her willingly, desperately
Mottled daylight scatters in front of us
As we climb the sun descends
Bleeding into the ridges ahead each day
Her mouth splits into a soundless shriek

I should understand her fury

I feel only her sorrow.

An indigo shroud above us, stitched with stars
Perforated by the dark contours of unfamiliar peaks
Surrounding the summit I intimately know
Each night, the cliffs sing softly to us
A lone set of footprints trailing the two of us
She drifts past me, tears seeping from her eyes
Tears seeping from my own

I should stop her before she reaches the edge

I let us go. 🍎

for a price

by kate ginger
art by lauren kang
design by lillia hammond

i'm facedown in the snow and
your hands never felt kinder
under my skin
remember when you scorched my back
and told me i flew too close to the sun
should have listened to you, daddy
instead my shoulder blades bulge into wings
and i land on the moon
in a crater of forgone conclusions
how dare you s h a t t e r me once,
and pocket my underwear
ice in the fireplace
the price of forgiveness



i'm lost again
i can't remember the shade of your eyes
metaphorically in your arms
fingers
laced
with
poison
the color of
infatuation
the feeling of
biting
your lip the taste of
burning
don't dear diary me
then make me "daddy" you what—
. about the dishes stacked
once s t a c k e d
in the cupboard
s h a t t e r e d on the kitchen tile don't you remember
forgiveness is a vial of blood
and misplaced intentionality

i put you back together
black hole baby
i'm sorry for my un welcome tears
i m h o l d i n g onto you holding me
why can't i leave
a bruise

i'm drowning—
you need me to be
born again,
wings and all
this time
be careful of the sun
you said
remember when
you hurled my regret
into the gaping hole in your chest
you're picking up shards of glass
from that night
when everything s h a t t e r e d
busted on the rim
of desire
your hand brushed my cheek
and yanked a chandelier from the ceiling

i'm ripe and rotting
in a pile of crushed cans
and soiled dreams
mangled by love, coddled by guilt 🍎



If I ask you to envision the end of the world, what do you see?

Is it a wasteland? An icy, frozen landscape like the film *Snowpiercer* (2013) or the end of Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*? Or perhaps you see the opposite, a parched and scorching desert stretching to the horizon, like in the Tom Hanks film *Finch* (2021). Maybe, like in Cormac McCarthy's haunting novel *The Road*, unexplained, cataclysmic disaster prompts a disintegration of society and rampant human cannibalism.

Maybe the aliens invade. (Often, they are thinly disguised, racist allegories for non-white or non-Western "alien" others). Or maybe, like we've seen in the recent Netflix films *Don't Look Up* (2021) and *Leave the World Behind* (2023), it is humanity's obsession with wealth, social status, and media influencers that prevents us from averting the ultimate disaster when it strikes. Take your pick. Choose your own disaster.

Are there survivors in your end? Is there that one man – usually a white, middle aged, heterosexual, cisgender man – hell bent on surviving against all odds? If you can't be the man that saves the world, these films and stories promise, you can at least be the last man in the world. Both plotlines allow for a performance of that gritty, hypermasculine, single-handed heroism that has become synonymous with survival.

Most of these end-of-the-world stories — and perhaps your own visioning — present the end as a product of a decisive moment. A singular disaster. A clear divide. Before and After. A definitive step off the precipice between sane and insane, between calm and chaos, safety and danger, peace and war, health and sickness. The ice-nine is dropped. The bomb explodes. The aliens attack. The mega-asteroid hits.

These visions of apocalypse¹ are lies.

Consider the following lines of Franny Choi's poem "The World Keeps Ending, and the World Goes On."²

By the time the apocalypse began, the world had already ended. It ended every day for a century or two. It ended, and another ending world spun in its place. It ended, and we woke up and ordered Greek coffees, drew the hot liquid through our teeth, as everywhere, the apocalypse rumbled, the apocalypse remembered, our dear, beloved apocalypse—it drifted slowly from the trees all around us, so loud we stopped hearing it.

In her fourth collection of poetry, *The World Keeps Ending, and the World Goes On*, Choi reframes the end as a collection of historic and ongoing atrocities that have and still are causing death, destruction, and a slow crumbling of the world as we know it. She invokes the multitude of apocalypses marginalized people and people of color have been subjected to for centuries: "the apocalypse of boats [...] the apocalypse of the bombed mosque [...] the apocalypse of the leaving [...] the apocalypse of pipelines legislating their way through sacred water [...] the apocalypse of the settlement [...] Border fence apocalypse. Coat hanger apocalypse. Apocalypse in the textbooks' selective silences."³

Choi provides us with a poetic and historically situated re-definition of the end of the world. An end made

1: I use "end of the world" and "apocalypse" interchangeably in this essay. I do not mean apocalypse in the biblical sense, but rather in the more general sense of "a disaster resulting in drastic, irreversible damage to human society or the environment, esp. on a global scale; a cataclysm" (Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "apocalypse (n.), additional

sense," September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1200073148>).

2: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/151513/the-world-keeps-ending-and-the-world-goes-on>

writing

Apocalypse.

By: Ella Grim

Art by: Anonymous

Design by: Anonymous

of hundreds of smaller ends. An end which is pervasive and global. An end driven by layered and complex systems of patriarchal, settler-colonial, racist, western empire.

When Choi visited Dartmouth in the spring of 2023, she spoke of her literary ancestors—Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Amiri Baraka, Octavia Butler, and Ursula K Le Guin, among others—and the way she roots her work in the knowledge of being in the aftermath of calamity. She talked of her own vision for her work, one in which speculation permits abolition and within which we all hold a deep responsibility as future ancestors to those who will inherit our earth and our systems when we are gone.

When we compare mass media visions of the end of the world to Choi's alternative and radical view of apocalypse, there are a few glaring misalignments.

The sole survivor figure, that brave hulk of a man, contrasts with Choi's "we" and "us." Choi invokes millions of people stuck together in a cycle of apocalyptic endings, from historic genocides and displacements to ongoing disasters like the dehumanization of immigrants, restrictive abortion access, and climate change. In mainstream apocalypse media, the victim of the end is most often a white man, or, increasingly in the past few years, an affluent white woman. Choi's apocalypses center the experiences of people of color, of immigrants and refugees, of Indigenous communities, of misogyny-affected folks, people who have been pushed to the margins, brutalized, and dehumanized for centuries. Mass media's version of the end places the blame on often-poorly-explained crises that have an environmen-

tal or non-human dimension: asteroid strikes, nuclear winters, inhospitable climates, weapon-wielding Martians. Choi's endings are inflicted by humans and onto other humans. She frames our world ending disasters not as something out of human control, but as a direct result of human actions with a foundation in greed, capitalism, ignorance, and hate. Mass media's apocalypse takes place in one moment, and then we see the aftermath. Choi's visioning collapses this binary, placing us right in the middle of the end. We are living and breathing apocalypse daily.

When we consider current events, it is easy to see which version of the apocalypse is more accurate.

There are no cannibals. But there is the ongoing genocidal slaughter of thousands of Palestinian people in the name of settler-colonial empire. The earth is not a singular icy wasteland or vast desert. But climate disasters have become so frequent that the headlines about forest fires and superstorms and years-long droughts are no longer startling. There are no menacing extraterrestrials. But our media and our leaders attempt to frame entire groups of people as alien. Walls are built, restrictive immigration laws instituted, people sorted into arbitrary and divisive nation states.

We are living a plural apocalypse, one comprised of many localized disasters and world ending events.⁴ There is the apocalypse of the train crash in Ohio. The apocalypse of the children in the mines. The apocalypse of book bans and the queer suicides. The apocalypse of Line 5. The apocalypse of the pandemics. The

3: For copyright reasons, I can't reproduce Choi's poem here in full, but I urge you to pause here and read it in its entirety on the Poetry Foundation website.

4: By "world ending event," I mean any event that forces people to radically restructure the way they conduct their day to day lives, most often in extremely difficult or life threatening situations.

apocalyptic genocides. A million, splintered world ending moments coalesce into one huge apocalypse, driven on by Western imperialism and late stage capitalism. The world is crumbling at our fingertips—just not in the ways mainstream media has taught us to see apocalypse.

We like to believe that in those blockbuster, end-of-the-world, survival scenarios, we would rally. It is easy to critique the characters on the screen, point out what they are doing wrong, and think about how we would do better. We'd gather supplies, build a shelter, trek through a dangerous wilderness to make it to the place where the last humans are rebuilding civilization. We wouldn't go into that cave, or trust that stranger on the side of the road. We would do better, be smarter. We would survive.

(And, side note, if you're one of those people whose response to Bumble's "What's your zombie apocalypse plan" prompt is "die lmao" and you'd rather just let the end come than take action, then you've succumbed to nihilism, an outlook that arises from a feeling of alienating detachment provoked by capitalist social conditions. Nihilism is a nifty trick that capitalist patriarchal empire uses to quell rebellious thinking in the face of the multiplicity of apocalypses by convincing us that at some level, nothing will save us, so we can fuck around and do whatever we'd like. This mindset breeds complacency and inaction in the face of gross injustices. Luckily, nihilism is reversible! Read on, I have solutions for you.)

We like to think we'd take action, when the world ends. We like the idea of survival, of saving ourselves and maybe a few others, of starting over and ridding civilization of its errors. We like to think we could lead the charge to build a better world. But we are living through an ongoing series of apocalyptic events with a startling amount of complacency and inaction, especially from those of us who hold privileged positions in society and in the globalized world we inhabit.

A similar complacency plays out in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, which follows a young Black woman, Lauren Olamina, who lives in a gated community in a near-future California. The world around Lauren's family's compound is rapidly disintegrating;

new hallucinatory drugs fuel destruction by gangs of pyromaniacs. Unrest in the streets makes traveling to work impossible for Lauren's father. Agriculture has collapsed, and the little food the compound can grow is constantly stolen. Famine spreads. Company towns spring up near the coast, promising food and security but trapping workers in a state of debt and indentured servitude. It is clear from the outset of the novel that this world—which bears so many echoes of our own—is close to total collapse. Already it has eroded to the point where life-as-normal is next to impossible. Lauren's father urges her to have faith, to wait passively for things to improve. Many of the other members of her community share this complacency. But Lauren resists. She sees the world is crumbling and begins to prepare. She reads widely, devouring books about medicine, shelter building, and agriculture—anything she thinks will help her build a different future. She begins to write, developing her own religion based around a principle belief: God is Change. She packs a bag and prepares to leave the safety of her community to spread her message of revolution. When her compound is raided and burned, she is ready. She survives, gathers a group of followers, and begins the long and difficult work of restructuring society around values of collective care, liberation, and survival.

In many ways, Butler's universe mirrors our own. We are living in a similar crumbling of society. And many of us—like Lauren's father and community—are stuck in vicious cycles of waiting, hoping, and praying for things to change, or for someone else to change them for us.

Much of this complacency is tied to how we are taught to think about the end of the world. So much of the mainstream media we consume—from blockbuster films to bestselling books to the news articles we read each morning and the social media posts we swipe through—builds this idea of the end as something distant and definitive. We are taught to worry about the end for brief moments: As the credits roll on the movie screen. When we read that page-long soliloquy. In the seconds before we scroll to the next headline, the next post.

Much of the disaster media we consume doesn't urge us to take direct action. It startles, sure, or informs. But it doesn't grip us, doesn't force us to pay constant attention to our lived reality, doesn't force us toward action.

Why? Because mainstream media is deeply and irrevocably tied to capitalism and the status quo. To inspire or urge us into meaningful, sustained action would be to undermine the very world order that permits things like blockbuster movies and clickbait headlines to exist. We cannot let this media be the only media that informs how we think about the end of the world. We cannot let this media be the thing that shapes our actions, attitudes, and mindsets about apocalypse.

When I say “we,” I’m being slightly inaccurate. There is, at least in America, a very racialized and classed component to complacency. It is much easier to ignore the cacophony of apocalypses if you are racially white, economically comfortable, a cisgender man, straight, able-bodied, and “educated” through traditional schooling systems. To put it simply, the fewer everyday apocalypses affecting you, the easier it is to tune them out. Most apocalypses are identity dependent, and people who live at the intersection of many oppressed or marginalized identities are more likely to be able to resist complacency simply because they do not have the choice to ignore injustices that directly affect them. It is harder to push against the forces of both comfortable societal privilege and mass media brainwashing in order to arrive at a revolutionary mindset.

This concept can be extended globally as well, with Americans and citizens of other wealthy, Westernized countries struggling more with resisting mass complacency. I’ve found the way social justice influencer @ismatu.gwendolyn frames our existence “in the heart

of the empire” to be extremely helpful lately. She mentions the “addictions” each of us who live lives of relative comfort in privileged places have in order to be able to tune out the atrocities happening globally, but mainly in places we don’t have to live within daily. She doesn’t specify what these addictions are, but it’s easy to generate a list. We’re addicted to our technology. To our overpriced drinks. To our collectable junk. To our projectable image. More and more, to drugs and alcohol and anything else that numbs out the pain we see around us, that pulls us out of the real world for a moment.

For white and otherwise privileged people in America, and for anyone who lives within the relative comfort of imperialist countries, learning to resist mass complacency and beginning to take both radical responsibility and radical healing actions takes time and effort. It is not an overnight mindset switch. You’re not going to wake up radicalized just because you’ve read this article. I’m not urging you to go join a commune or quit your 9–5. Instead, I’m asking you to begin to engage with media that reenvision apocalypses and survival.

One way we can resist the far-off, monodisasterous end-of-the-world ideology mass media would love us to embrace is by engaging with alternative media—movies, books, poetry, art, reporting—that encourages a different kind of end-of-the-world vision. Much of this alternative media is deeply feminist. It is written or directed by and focused on centering the experiences of marginalized communities, telling hopeful stories of collaboration, resistance, and flourishing that resist the



stereotype of the heroic white male survivor (sorry Tom Hanks). This alternative media provides both a starting place for reworking our mindsets around apocalypse, and a constellation of hopeful visions for the future—ones we can take inspiration from and adapt to find place-based, community centered solutions in our own daily lives.

I want to end this article with two media recommendation lists. “Better end of the world media” is a great place to start if the concepts I’m discussing feel new, intimidating, or scary to you. These stories push against the myth of a far off end of the world, instead showing how our current reality is slowly crumbling down around us (or envisioning how it might

continue to dissolve in the coming decades). Like the blockbuster movies we’re used to, these stories are also engaging and fun to watch. As you read, draw parallels between the worlds they depict and the one we are living in today. What is similar? What is different? How might we need to rework our existing society to avoid these new end-of-the-world scenarios? How does our reality impact the messages and outlooks of these stories, and what interests do they serve?

The second list is a collection of “radical dream projects that urge us to take action.” Many of the pieces in this category are speculative in nature. They dare to dream big, to imagine collaborative communities that resist disaster and build communities based on trust, care, reciprocity, and love. This list is a great place to start if you’re already engaged with feminist



and social justice work and the ideas I've been talking about resonate or make you say "well duh." This is the media that we can draw from as we begin to take direct actions within and for our local communities, as well as for social justice movements worldwide, now and in the years to come.

better end of the world media

The World Keeps Ending, and the World Goes On,
by Franny Choi

- A collection of poetry focusing on reframing our understanding of apocalypse as a force that is historic and ongoing. Choi also has some deeply hopeful poems that envision a future where transformative justice has replaced our current carceral and military state.

MaddAddam Trilogy, Margaret Atwood

- Atwood's end of the world-building in this trilogy reveals the deep wounds that industrial capitalism leaves on society and makes it easier to see how interlinked catastrophes lead to a slow crumbling of civilization. She subverts the "lone man" survivor narrative with her depiction of a community of survivors who follow ecofeminist principles.

Tender is the Flesh, Agustina Bazterrica

- This deeply horrifying cannibalism novel probes at the way government and mainstream media sway our moral compass and enforce a status quo that permits truly horrifying acts of violence.

Parable of the Sower, Octavia Butler

- A speculative vision of resisting complacency and finding ways to survive in a world rapidly disintegrating under extractive capitalism. Strong focus on community survival over individualism, and on the necessity of radically restructuring our belief systems in order to build a better society.

Beasts of the Southern Wild (2012)

- A beautiful film centered on a futuristic community living under extreme climate change, classism, and racism. Pairs well with *Parable of the Sower* as a piece of media that helps us see intersecting injustices and envision hopeful, revolutionary solutions.

Severance, Ling Ma

- A biting satiric pandemic novel (written pre Covid-19) that critiques both the "lone man" survival narrative and how trapped we are within corporate America.

Bird Box (2018)

- A thriller film with a happy ending—one that briefly gives us a glimpse of what collective, community based survival might look like.

Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements

- A collection of short science fiction stories by writers of color that extend Octavia Butler's legacy of envisioning future societies that break from our current exploitative world order.

radical dream projects that urge us to take action

Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer

- A collection of essays that braid Indigenous wisdom with scientific and environmental analysis, urging us to rethink our relationship with the natural world and underscoring the necessity for reciprocity and community in our efforts to change the world.

How To Survive the End of the World (podcast)

- Autumn Brown and adrienne maree brown's podcast on survival, sisterhood, community, and how we find our way through endings together.

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice

- From how-to guides to building care webs to manifestos on accessibility and disability justice, this book provides practical guidance for building communities that serve everyone, not just those who can most easily access them.

GRIST (climate justice news platform)

- Hopeful, informative, and solutions-driven reporting on climate change and intersectional environmental justice.

Afterglow: Climate Fiction for Future Ancestors

- A beautiful and diverse collection of short fiction that envisions place-based, community-centered, collaborative climate solutions.

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Nonprofit Industrial Complex

- A great primer text for understanding how capitalism impacts organizing work, especially for those using a nonprofit model to advocate for change. Discusses both the issues with nonprofit organizing and ways that nonprofit models have been used effectively or subverted to generate positive change. 🍏

Cookie

By: Reily Bai

I am young and burnt on the skin,
I look a little charred from the sun. Me and my two sisters, we all are.
We are young and we practically live outside in the summer.

The pool; I am diving on the sides and flipping off the boards and speedwalking
on the deck, I am an elastic band. The day is warm but the pool is not.
My fingers turn blue and wrinkly.

Our dad tells me if I swim some laps, I'll warm up. I don't know
that my dad is not cold because he is a bigger person. Maybe
he doesn't remember what it was like to be withy and thin himself.

Skin on bones. I am shivering and my teeth rattle
on each other. I like the sound
they make as they click, clack,
click clack.

We are home, I am in our cul-de-sac rollerblading
then on a scooter
and then a bike.
We like to go fast down our driveway
and I like to win. I win often.

At night, we are chasing fireflies. I watch them
glow and fade and glow and fade.
We drop them
into our crinkly plastic water bottle with the label
ripped off. Most of the time
we let them go.

I don't ever sit still. I am on a big blue yoga ball at
dinner. My family of five
is seated around our rickety wooden oval table.
I bounce, bounce, bounce
with my porcelain bowl in hand. It has small chips along the mouth,
black rings on the inside. I like our metal spoons with the parallel ridges.
The cool metal is tasteless, the cool metal tastes of home.

When there is no ball, I stand up and I pace around our house in circles. From the table to the kitchen area to a study room to
the front door with the big carpeted stairs past the small hidden bathroom back to the kitchen.
Round and round; whale in a tank. That is what it is like when you are skin on bones.

My mom and dad scoop three servings worth of food into my bowl. Rice, chicken, lettuce. Udon, beef, broccoli. Glass noodles
and fish and eggplant and noodles and tofu and beans and spinach and potatoes and trip and mushrooms and pork rib and
duck and hotpot,
and I am skin on bones.

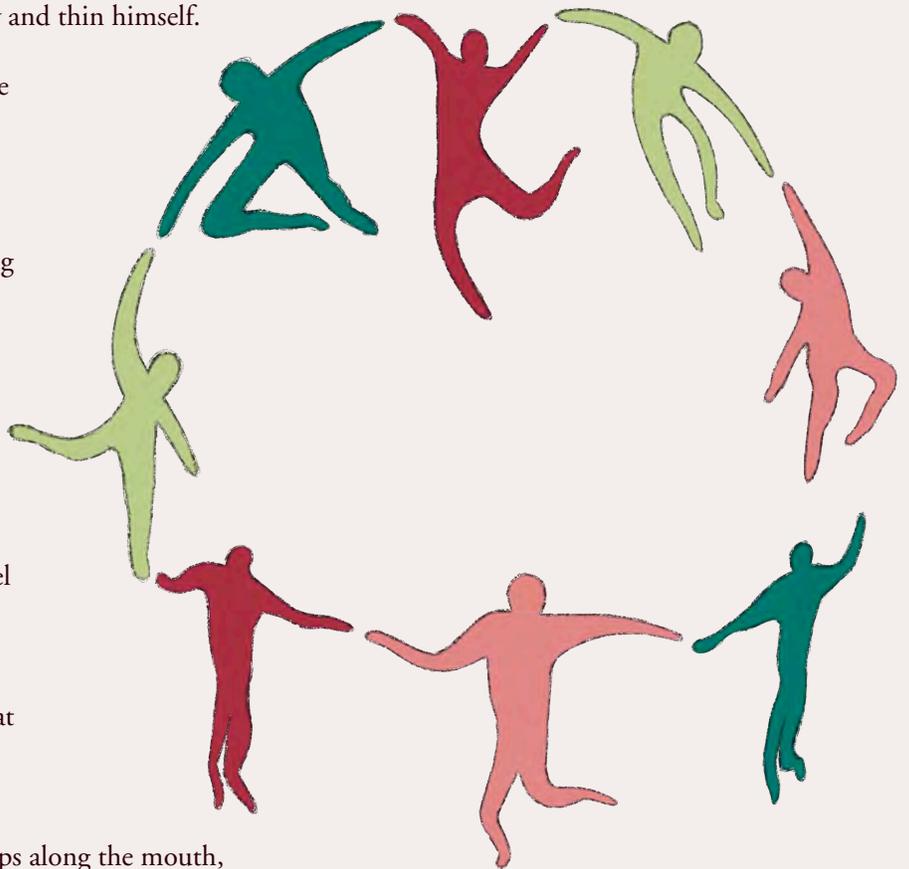
"I'm fuuuuuulll," I whine but my mom and dad make me sit until I finish my entire bowl. We don't toss food in this house.



Art by:
Raegan
Boettcher



Design by:
Addy Reid



I don't know what it means when I'm with two friends at a sports banquet, they speak of cookies. We're walking on the grass with our paper plates, one says, "I can't eat another cookie because I already had one." The other agrees. I think, just have another cookie?
I probably ate three cookies that evening. Probably more. It doesn't matter to me, always skin on bones.

I don't know what food really means until I come to college, when I look at a nutrition label for the first time. Why are there so many "added sugars" and what foods have protein?

Or maybe it was earlier, I just never realized. When the pre-pubescent six pack on my burnt skin sank back into my body.

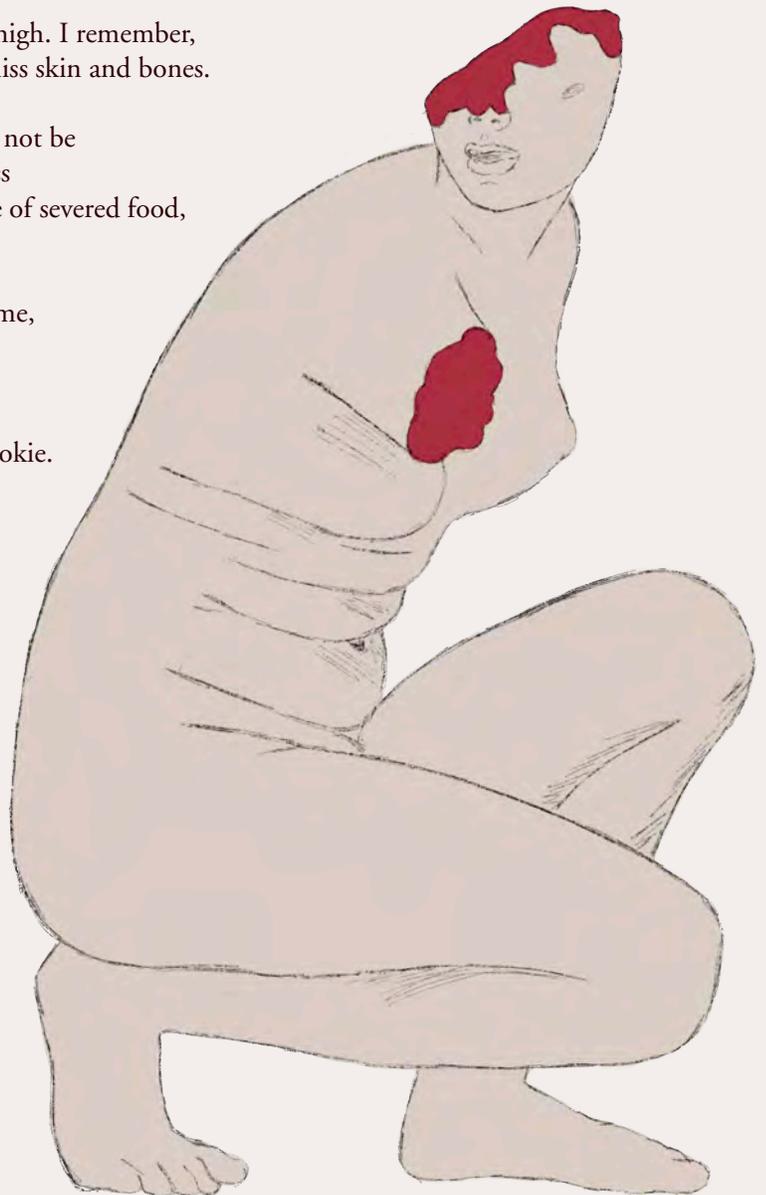
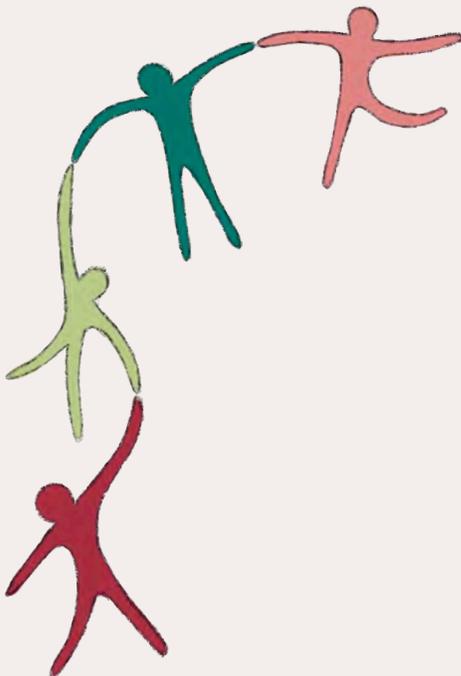
And so I learned what it feels like to carry weight that keeps you glued to the ground. I pinch the skin circling my waist or maybe it is fat. Hooola hoop. Once I tried to hoola hoop and play the piano at the same time. The white mark is still on the piano. I want the hoop off now.

When I sit I feel it fold over itself like origami except it's flabby. I wonder if this is what it means to be a woman. Aphrodite, soft at the edges. But I turn to Achilles. Envy. Glorious, golden strength.

I learn what it feels like to be skiing and afraid of flying too high. I remember, I used to dream of lifting off. There was never "too fast." I miss skin and bones.

I know what it feels like to be out of breath running now, to not be taut like a rope, to be conscious of what you're eating, to miss home cooked food, to start using a knife to create a massacre of severed food, on your plate, to figure out food.

I used to be half an hour late to dinners. My mom yelled at me, my two sisters love food and our parents said, "Why can't you be like your sisters?"
"Eat, eat!" I used to eat because I was told to but now I get it. I get it and I get why my friend said she couldn't have the cookie.



A fear of feeling/ the falling rain

Path 1: The House

I am Korean American,
But not Korean.
Pungent kimchi, passing judgment on its crunchiness
Carefully sliced pears, lifting towards my mouth
White fans blow
Even though the screen door is open.
It is still here,
And peaceful.
The unnatural kind of contentment
That wanders the back of your mind.

In this house I am a vacationer.
Basking in transient (fake?) belonging
Coughed up into supermarkets
Where my grandmother - Halmeoni (I still can't pronounce it right)
Is stared at, pushed, prodded
As she pushes, prods
Her cart forward
Oh how she braves this treacherous landscape
Returning home with stolen (bought) treasures
And outlandish (Korean) delicacies
With the scars (alienation) of a hero

I survey the world
Through the window of my grandparent's house
Watching the forecast:
Today it's the "Chinese Virus,"
Tomorrow "The Atlanta Shooting,"
The next day, a chance of "hate crime in Koreatown"

I'm no meteorologist,
But how many words are there for hate?
I don't need a forecast to know
That it's not safe out there.
Halmeoni, I'm sorry
But today looks like a good day to bundle up
And stay inside.
I'll wait for you
to come back (please come back)

Don't forget
The kimchi
And the pears
And to keep your head down
That unassuming persona (armor)
That keeps you alive.

Outside, the storm rages on.
When I shut the blinds,
It is almost enough
to ignore it.



Path 2: The storm

I am outside and it is raining. *is raining*
The water is filling up my lungs. *my lungs*
I cannot recall why I walked out into this storm.
Was it to save you, Halmeoni? *it does not wait*
Did you finally get lost wandering those
(stupid) ethnic aisles?

The storm does not wait for me to catch my breath.
It paints pictures on the sidewalk, *the us*
And tells me the names of the women
Who were killed *who saw them as*
By a man who saw them
As temptations.
With daggers of water
Falling from the sky
Are you next, Halmeoni?
Please, do not let your face join
The rest
Of them.

The rain, it tells me
of centuries of violence *of violence*
of pain

And anger *to catch*

And I am surprised to find

That that pain and anger

Are also my own.

Is the water coming from the sky

Or my eyes?

I can't quite tell.

Still, there is something freeing *freeing*

About standing in this storm

Almost as if I am part of it *part of it*

I cannot speak your language, Halmeoni,
But I can stand out in this violent storm,
And thank you for doing it for me
For so long
And I'm sorry that I didn't
Find the courage sooner.

I am drenched

Hair falling in strings around my face
But not the pretty face you thought I was.

I will run around wildly

I will cry recklessly

I will stomp puddles until they join
with the rain.

I put my face up to the sky,

And it is blindingly, beautifully
gray. 🍎

BY: SAMANTHA KANG

ART & DESIGN BY: LILLA BOZEK

Design Letter

With the arrival of the first snow, we came together to find a theme that we felt resonated with us and with the campus as a whole: precipice.

Discovering a precipice can sometimes carry a negative connotation: teetering on an invisible edge, dangerously close to that terrifying free-fall. However, we believe that these moments of uncertainty and horror can make us stronger as individuals and as a community. Our commitment to one another and our refusal to back down from the dread and exhilaration of discovering what's beyond the cliff's horizon rejects the negativity of precipice, and instead imagines a world where free-fall is the start of our flight.

Spare Rib as an organization is on the precipice of change. With the current climate on campus and in the world, our new publishing schedule, and the uncertainty going forth into the world, we believe that this theme encapsulates the energy we feel and use to connect in the present.

Change and uncertainty can be overwhelming. However, we can navigate these unprecedented emotions together through art, collective education, and community connection.

Our color scheme incorporates dark purple hues of uncertainty and intensity and light colors of nature that balance that existential terror of standing on the edge.

We want to give our heartfelt gratitude to our amazing staff, who brought this publication to life with every letter, stroke, and splash of color. We wish to extend this gratitude to all of our new ribbers and are so excited to see their work evolve over the next few years.

We send our deepest love to our graduating seniors and wish them the best with whichever horizon they wish to encounter in the future.

With love,

24W-24S Design Leads,
Milanne, Lillia, and A

SOCIALS

INSTAGRAM

@SPARERIBZINE

WEBSITE

SPARERIBDARTMOUTH.COM

SPOTIFY

SPARE RIB DARTMOUTH

OUR STAFF

ART: created art for articles

DESIGN: created layout for each page

EDITING: gave peer writing feedback

WRITING: authored an article

*****: acted as a department lead

AUDIO ZINE: edited audio for spotify

ABBY DE LEON '27 Marketing*
ADDY REID '27 Design
A.S. '27 Art, Design*
ASHLEY XIE '24 Art, Design **AVERY LIN '27** Writing,* Editing, Audio Zine
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ELLA GRIM '25 Writing, Design, Editing, General Manager*
JILLIAN DARCY '26 Writing
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SAM PAISLEY '25 Cover Art
SERENA SUSON '25 Editing, Community Development*
TIFFANY CHANG '23 Editing
VICTORIA TAN '27 Art
VICTORIA WANG '27 Writing

THANK YOU!



☀️ INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST ZINE AT DARTMOUTH ☀️
VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 2 24S EDITION

The Precipice Edition



check
out our
website

Thank you for reading.

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