At Wetlands, we seek to make our magazine accessible to all people. In line with this, we ask that everyone practice self-care when engaging with difficult themes. In asking that, we would like to provide a few 24/7 resources, should they become relevant and necessary:

National Suicide Prevention: 1 (800) 273-8255
Trevor Project: 1 (866) 488-7386
Rape Crisis: 1 (800) 656-HOPE (4673)
Eating Disorders: 1 (800) 931-2237
Trans Lifeline: 1 (877) 565-8860

Additionally, some on-campus resources include:
peerallies@pugetsound.edu
chws@pugetsound.edu
pugetsound.edu/report
Cover credits: Karlee Robinson

artist’s statement: I think that everyone has a tendency to underestimate the capacity of our peers and this piece was created to represent the multiple layers of our character, those undisclosed to the public, so as to suggest their existence and promote empathy. Often our peer’s perception can consume us in a sort of purgatory—we’re limited by their expectations. The top face was made to represent this single identity composed through the eyes of our peers and the bottom layered faces, our identity in actuality.
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As the opening of this issue, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who helped make this issue of Wetlands Magazine. The semester has brought outcomes that have surpassed my expectations and would have been impossible without the help of our staff and contributors. I would like to thank the staff for the countless hours we put into constructing this publication to not only be aesthetically pleasing, but also intentional in its content. On a similar note, without the beautiful submissions we receive from the campus community, the magazine would not have the power that can be seen within its pages.

The mission of Wetlands is to provide not only a space dedicated to sharing narrative accounts of institutional erasure but also a platform to build communities founded on self-love and collective empowerment in opposition to dominant power relations structuring our campus community. I see our mission of subverting white cis-heteropatriarchal supremacy being reflected in some manifestation throughout every corner of every page in the magazine. Over the years, we have been trying to break the segmentation of marginalized voices on our campus by continually pushing our staff and mission to address the bigger problems of systemic oppressions in our community by taking a more intersectional approach. While these changes can be tracked within the evolution of the magazine, I think this issue has taken an additional step in reaching these goals. This issue showcases and addresses the voices of people of color in a way that has not been seen previously in our publications. In addition, I think voices of the broader Tacoma community are beginning to emerge within our content. Due to our mission, I proceeded with a plan to extend our submissions to the community at the Washington Corrections Center for Women, in Gig Harbor. Through slowly opening up submissions to different facets of the Tacoma community, I hope for Wetlands to continue breaking through the disconnects between campus community and the greater Tacoma area through our shared experiences.

Along with the new voices surfacing within our content, I think it is noteworthy to address the recurrence of trauma and sexual assault within all of our issues. While Wetlands Magazine will always function as a space for these expressions to be heard, I think that it calls our campus’s attention to prevalence of sexual misconduct that is still occurring in our community. While the material can be jarring and uncomfortable to read at moments, it is important that we remember that this is not exceptional and this is the results of the community we create here on our campus. While we hear the voices of those affected by the rape culture that permeates the university setting, the issue also contains narratives that push back against the complacency of an inadequate sexual assault policy that is symptomatic to the cultural perceptions around sexuality, gender, and race.

As you read this issue of Wetlands, I encourage you to think about your identity and positionality on this campus, interrogate your privilege and power, and help contribute to ongoing movements that work to improve the experiences of marginalized students. This past academic year, we experienced an upsurge of questioning injustices nationally in the structures that form institutions of higher education, and our campus community participated in this engagement in hopes for tangible changes in our university. As I am leaving the university after this semester, my hope as Editor-in-Chief is that this issue inspires its readers to participate in solidarity with your peers to dismantle the oppressive systems of power that are set in place while simultaneously building a community that truly embrace, care, and love each other.

Kailee Faber
Editor-in-Chief
Wetlands Magazine
moon is my favorite lesbian

By Denise Parry

At the anarchist book fair I stopped at the booth of the Committee to Abolish Outer Space. They thought I was one of them because I grabbed a “fuck the moon” button and continued to a long awaited presentation on Anal Terror. They didn’t know me. Didn’t understand the innuendo.

They didn’t know that the moon is my favorite lesbian. They didn’t know how much she loves, loves when the women’s rugby team practices at night, loves when we dream of roller derby, loves lovely lady goat farmers’ floral overalls, flannel wrapped warm, bowtied, femme.

I’m writing a letter to NASA on her behalf: “Please don’t send her any more men. They’re not who she wants.”

If the moon wore clothes she’d wear suspenders. Suspend our disbelief of the existence of darkness.

In all the nights of queer reverence. Nights of holding hands on trampolines, in the softness of rainbow blankets, kissing girls from the mountain tops, the best moments were with her above, My most consistent love.
This poem is about healing the trauma passed down through the women in my family. It’s pushed us apart, and perpetuated a cycle of abandonment and anger. For my mother and me, coming back together and remembering the history of women in our family has been an important part of healing.

howling
i leave
bristling my back
and walking with defiant strides
i go away from it all
it is a habit

of mine
not to push what hurts down
but to leave it behind
angrily
brusquely

with a quick goodbye
to say
you aren’t worth my time
i believe

that this leaving’s passed down

in the family line
like how
my mother’s mom
died
when she was too little to cry
or to say goodbye

she was hurt
and abused
by teachers and brothers and others who
supposedly loved
so she said to me
you aren’t worth my time
and yelled

and screamed
then i lift my tail
and i say goodbye
to her
to old houses
dark musty peel paint walls
cool summer inside
thick humming gardens

and deep smells of dirt
but deep feeling of love
i can not lose
sometimes it comes bounding up until
i am shuddering with it’s beating
in my chest so i
walk back
to her
along the lines
i left
to the mother i left
walking like me
scrape kneed
now
un-bristled spine
defiant stride
my own kind.
White Feminism

by Natalie Balkam, Kaitlyn Carney, Natalie Scoggins

All feminism is not created equal. That is to say, while the general goal of feminism is to promote equity across all identities, some self-proclaimed feminists isolate gender as the sole cause of inequality, while ignoring how other factors have a huge impact on where people stand in society. There are so many different groups of people in the United States that splitting the population into just “men” and “women” leads to gross generalizations. Because whiteness is often considered the default in the U.S., mainstream feminism often fails to actually recognize that whiteness; it ignores the impact of race (and other issues) on gender equality and discourse. Hence, white feminism.

White feminism in the western world can be traced back to roots in colonialism and neoliberalism. The rights and personhood of white women were considered above those of slaves, indigenous peoples, and other non-white peoples. The vast colonization by European countries was followed by the rise of the United States as a world power; the U.S. implemented its own form of colonization as it spread industry and started involving itself more in foreign affairs. The exploitation, orientalism/exotism, rampant sexual and physical violence, and overt racist policies all arose from and contributed to the U.S.’s rise to power, and while most of the above do not explicitly refer to gender, they affected millions of women. If western feminism throughout that time (the majority of the 20th century) had included those women, there would likely have been more action taken against these policies.

Celebrated first-wave feminists such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton deliberately excluded Black and indigenous women from participating in women’s suffrage movements. When the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920, Black women were technically allowed to vote, but many were actually prevented from voting until the 1960s. Native Americans regardless of gender were not allowed to vote until 1924 under the Indian Citizenship Act, and were prevented from voting in some states like Oklahoma up until the mid-1950s. Barriers often still exist for people of color, especially women of color, when it comes to voting.

Second-wave feminism was born out of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, addressing topics like workplace discrimination, reproductive rights, sexuality, and family. However, these issues were often simplified by assuming that all women faced the same issues and were a homogeneous group. Postcolonial feminist scholar Chela Sandoval described this feminism as hegemonic as it primarily addressed the most privileged women—white, middle to upper-middle class, heterosexual—and either ignored or outright erased the contributions and struggles of women of color.

The label of white feminism can also be applied to the push for more women in positions of political and economic power. These positions have historically been occupied by white men, so when women become senators or CEOs many consider this a feminist victory. Usually because of class and opportunity, these women are white and uphold the same colonialist and hegemonic practices as their male counterparts, exploiting and abusing workers. This neoliberal idea of privatized freedom can do more harm than good.

After the struggles with voting rights, gender inequality has increasingly become a topic in U.S. politics, but the oft-celebrated steps forward for women’s equality frequently fall into the same traps as historical and pop-culture feminism. Take Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, for example, and consider that she has been promoting racist policies and rhetoric since she first entered politics decades ago. She has been officially endorsed by Planned Parenthood, which attests that Clinton has made huge strides forward for women’s rights and equality, but when analyzing her policies, there is a good deal of contradiction and ambivalence on issues of racial injustices. That is not to denounce Clinton entirely, but while her being a woman would make her a notable president right off the bat, but for voters to choose her just because she is a woman ignores the racial inequities in our own country, exemplifying white feminism. Clinton as President would be a feminist victory through a white feminist lens, but it’s important to note that it would also be a victory for someone who has admitted to committing war crimes such as supporting the implementation of dictators in countries for the sake of so-called global democracy.

In 1963, the Equal Pay Act was passed by John F. Kennedy, aiming to eliminate the gender pay gap. While it became illegal to outright pay women less for work, the pay gap still existed and continues to exist as a point of conversation among even the most introductory level feminists. The “fact” often cited is that women make 77 cents for every dollar a man makes, which is sometimes an appalling statistic for those hearing it the first time; however, this only applies to white women and white men: Black and Latino men earn less than white women, and
Black and Latina women earn significantly less than their male counterparts, according to 2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics data. It is also notable that the Equal Pay Act was passed before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 2014, Congress was 80 percent male, but also 80 percent white, neither of which are representative of the general population. When women’s issues and reproductive rights are a topic, men should certainly not be making the bulk of the decisions, which is a focus of many feminists. However, the differences between the experiences of white women and women of color are sometimes ignored when advocating for better congressional balance—for example, forced sterilization is a much bigger problem historically and today for women of color than for white women. The combination of experiences and viewpoints is essential. To gain only white women in political power would be a victory for white feminism, but not intersectional feminism. White feminism is perpetuated in many introductory gender studies courses, both in the teaching of the history of feminism/feminist movements and gender theory. Introductory gender studies classes often begin with readings such as “The Feminine Mystique” (Betty Friedan) and works by Judith Butler, which are taught as basic and necessary readings for general gender theory. The problem with readings such as these however, is that they essentially ignore other components of identity such as race and class in its analysis of gender. If texts such as these comprise our so-called “fundamental” understandings of feminism, then these texts form a foundational belief that feminism and women’s studies can be separated from other marginalized identities in understanding structures of oppression.

Narratives and theories from intersectional experiences shed light on aspects of our culture and society that are not highlighted and generally ignored by white feminist voices. Theorists and authors such as bell hooks and Audre Lorde, while briefly talked about in courses, should be more heavily emphasized in courses, as they offer insight into intersectionality. Both hooks and Lorde a more full insight in their theories surrounding gender and other aspects of identity, which in turn lends to a more full understanding of how we can continue to deconstruct systems of oppression.

Feminism, as it is portrayed in the media, is very topical and superficial. There is more to feminism, and in extension, to be a feminist, than to simply slap on a shirt that says, “This is what a feminist looks like.” There are certain mindsets and ideals that are essential to be considered a true feminist that the media mostly fails to even recognize, leading to the phenomenon of “white feminism.” Essentially white feminism fails to take into account the everyday struggle of any other group of women, other than white women, in the ever-growing inclusivity and equity battle of modern day feminism. As user TheWhistlingFish on blog site, kinja, states, [w] hat people don’t seem to get is that “White Feminism” is feminism for white people, and never exclusively feminism by white people. It’s more about who it benefits exclusively than who is perpetuating it exclusively. It’s really not as much of an accusation as people are making it out to be, more like a word for the institution we’re trying to separate ourselves from. White feminism capitalizes on the entire feminist movement and commodifies it down to sellable t-shirts, stickers, etc., making feminism “trendy.” Is this a bad thing? In theory, no. Bringing more attention to the feminist movement, and hopefully more supporters, by spreading ideas and starting critical conversations would be great. But that’s not how white feminism operates. White feminism is a slippery slope that reduces the impact that feminism can initially have by misconstruing the real goals and ideals of feminism through this easily accessible internet world we live in. The commercialization of feminism only makes it a tool in the consumerist society that is so largely beneficial for people who are already white and middle to upper-class, who are the people who need it least. That’s why when celebrities like Shailene Woodley say that they don’t think feminism will work, because there needs to be “a fine balance” is problematic; they’ve bought into this commercial idea of feminism—white feminism. As stated in Huffington Post’s video, on the subject of white feminism, “[b]eing a white feminist doesn’t make you a bad person; it just means you have a lot to learn.
If people think that gender surgery is purely cosmetic, then they should take a look at my chest. Nothing about my chest is cosmetic. If I was in this for the appearance of my body, I think I would have to sue my surgeon. Sometimes I trace my fingers over my scar and close my eyes. I acquaint myself with the bumps, lumps, and texture of the long line that stretches from one armpit to the other. The skin along my sides begin to raise up and plateau across the middle. The scar flattens on the other side. I feel how the scar wiggles across my chest and I admire the imperfections. The scar on my chest feels like a foreign object. The nerves in my fingertips can feel my scar, but my scar cannot feel back. My hand loves my chest, but my chest cannot recognize my hand. All sensation and pain have left my body from armpit to armpit. My nipples are two crudely cut discs that were haphazardly sewn back onto my skin. Most days I think I could do without them. The skin above my scar actually seems a level higher than the skin below my scar. My chest is so thick that it pokes through my shirts, as if to remind everyone that it exists. Sometimes I think my scar is so large that I ought to give it a name. I certainly wouldn’t say that my chest surgery was cosmetic. It was therapeutic. It was poetic. It was necessary. It was a blessing. It was so many things, but it wasn’t cosmetic.
by Colleen McNeely

My body is a home; it is all of the solitude I need.
I am made of fire and mercy and glitter.
You are wax - you melt when your hands brush my thighs.
But my siren song sings so strong, who are you to deny
its sultry echoes? I found you broken and I molded
your body back into form, filling in your cracks with mud
and sand.

Your body is a home, and in it the slow stream of sand
counts down the time as I knead
the dough for the bread we will share, since the last loaf
molded.
We count the sparkles on the floor, leftover from our
preschool glitter
crafts long abandoned. It’s unfair of me to deny
the only warmth I wanted was that between my own
thighs.

My body is a home made of clumsy limbs and sturdy
thighs
that leave deep imprints never failing to make angels -
snow or sand.
There’s a newfound silence between us, and I’d try to deny
it, but who I am is not someone in need
of you. And no matter how many times you send glitter
to your enemies, the bridges still need to be remolded.

Your body is a home with blood stained tissue and peels of
long ago molded
oranges shoved into the crevices. The cushion of your
thighs
does not compare to the rotting litter
of your soft stomach I’d rather lay my head on. There has
been sand
in my eyes for days, but it won’t bother me until I need
to see. And if I saw your face, I don’t think I’d be able to
deny

my body as a home, with which I can deny
all of that that will not be molded
by my hands. We are in need, but we do not need
each other to be reminded of summer sun sticking sweaty
thighs
to leather seats and
teaching us that the only thing shinier than gold is glitter.

Your body is a home, and you should be in control, but the
glint her
eyes displays tells me she will not let you deny
her of her desires. And
she will try to change you, to rip away the limbs I molded –
one tiny toe, two tiny toes, strong shin bones, tree-trunk
thighs –
until you are left with nothing but an aching need.

My body is a home molded into deep crevices and
Mother Nature thighs with rights that you cannot deny
and need that won’t be satisfied by your attempts to repair
me with glue and glitter.

---

sleeping in separate houses

Comic

by Amanda Woolsey

"And in the fight comes
we have..."
understanding, here and there

by Denise Parry

There the Oregon coastal cold winds and colder people mean I always leave with my cheeks chewed to shreds, after sitting on ripped couches more covered by my insecurity than fabric. But I do that here in liberal arts classrooms too. My high school English teacher told me I’d escape, find people like me at college. But people here don’t usually get me either. Don’t have this background of small town sit down, wait for Jesus to fight the scientists and the evil gays. They’re stealing our children you know, look at the anti bullying laws our nation pushed down a hill by the liberals.

And maybe they’re wrong, but people here make it seem like we’re on an upward trajectory One where the midpoint is telling my brother that homophobic jokes aren’t funny with no fear of being disowned again. And not crying every time I cut my hair shorter, like I did the first time when I was terrified that it would make me too queer for my mother to still love me.

And the end point is where we’re all equal, understood, not being murdered, or abused, or thrown into the abyss at the heart of humanity or whatever the goal is.

But people I went to high school with are pregnant throwing gender reveal parties cakes cut to reveal camouflage or pink princess purple swirls and it doesn’t feel different now there than it did 20 years ago when I was given dresses and my brother was given guns.

Lots of people here still think that people like me are better off dead too, cause progress isn’t linear or geographically consistent, and the ability to understand is neither here nor there.
Leeches cling to my skin in clusters.
I feed them.
I sustain them.
Allow them to grow.

Their oil-slick bodies drawing silent attention.

I worry them: finger tips constantly checking their bloated figures,
checking their progress in consuming me.

They gorge themselves and multiply in ghostly window reflections,
and unseen mirrors.

And then, each night, I pinch them off meticulously pull them from
my flesh and rather than discard them,
I eat them.
What a waste to lose what they’d taken from me.

On my mirror I write: “Please be kind today”
As a reminder.
a view from the past

by Sophia Munic
Surviving

A kitchen wall in my childhood home was dented, brown herb printed paper curled around a fist sized hole. My brother knew that if he hit anything else it would be worse. Rainbows of bruises would cover the hardest hopeful parts of him like the peeling wallpaper covered mold. That’s what being a boy meant.

I knew that if I hit back for him it would be worse. He would get fists and I would get gentle hands ripping my softness apart and blood stains on my sheets. That’s what being a girl meant.

Whenever I see linoleum in the pattern of that kitchen floor, I think of blood splintered, drops dripping from fists louder than screaming. Their sweltering haze, brighter to my eyes than the room could allow. That’s what being loved meant.

I hid in a tree outside. I didn’t know if I would live. I didn’t know if anyone would I wanted to die. That’s what being a child meant.

Its nearly 9 years later and sometimes I can pick up shards of glass without my heart beating my soul over the memory of my mother nearly dying. Without a vision of her tears falling in the shimmering sink on the other side of the window, without hearing the shrillest wail, without reliving the moment of the sharp edge of a shovel trying to destroy everything I loved at age 12, without shaking, shaking, shaking.

Its nearly 9 years later and sometimes I can’t get out of bed on garbage day. That’s what surviving meant.
Gender dysphoria is a world shattering experience of being compelled to confront the hegemonic coordinates of gender within contemporary society. For trans women, this is a uniquely common occurrence. Being forced to use the wrong bathroom, being called the wrong name or gender pronouns, being denied access to hormones, being infantilized by healthcare providers, being denied access to women’s-only groups, being accosted on the street, being harassed at work, the sheer ubiquity of anti-trans violence, the absolute lack of legal protections in nearly every instance, and the fundamental operations of society all inform the reality that trans women live in a world that was made at our expense. All of these are moments of a world imposing a mode of domination that could only be termed cis-supremacy. It is a mode of domination into which all of us are enculturated into participation through the operations of a mysterious gendered alchemy that seeks to maintain itself as the only grounds for gendered embodiment.

From birth we are taught that there are two discrete gendered categories, “male” and “female,” two categories which are held apart from one another, absolutely, by way of anti-queer, transphobic, cis-supremacist socialization. This socialization teaches us, as Sandy Stone writes, that “genres are not to be mixed,” that the positionality of the trans person is impossible because the sheer enormity of our demands to inhabit bodies that are gendered correctly are rendered impossible by the operations of a society of cis-supremacy that aligns political and social power with the figure of the “properly” gendered body, and never with the body of a trans person. The experience of dysphoria reveals the ways in which the injunction against mixing genres is the result of a social order that demands only one gender per body, two genders per society, and the demands that each gender be attracted to the other, are not only “socially constructed,” but the direct result of power that is both social and political. Dysphoria exposes that the body is not a static object, independent of the world, subordinate to the mind; rather, the body is a fluid and dynamic thing, responsive in relation to the authority that would seek to define it, resistant to the categories that strive to contain it, and expressive of a set of experiences that can never be articulated in language.

Susan Stryker writes that “authority seizes upon specific material qualities of the flesh, particularly the genitals, as outward indication of future reproductive potential, constructs this flesh as a sign, and reads it to enculturate the body.” This authority is the power of cis-supremacy, its primary operation, the first instance of its presence, the very instantiation of anti-queer cis-supremacy. This enculturation is the socialization that teaches us that boys play with guns and girls play with dolls. It is how we come to know ourselves and how we come to know the world. Alongside other differential modes of experience such as race, ability, class, and sexuality, gender is productive of entire registers of existence that informs even the norms of citizenship that, for example, teach us that political engagement should be “respectful,” that we must make ourselves legible to those who have their hands on the levers of power, that we must appease those who oppress and dominate us in order to have a chance at a life worth living.

Policies of trans inclusion are written primarily by cis people, for the benefit of cis feelings, and to the end of cis self-congratulation. Just because this university now has “trans-inclusive housing” does not mean that trans people on our campus are somehow transformed into the social “equals” of cis people, because we are still forced to live through a world that makes us feel shame for our bodies. It is still “acceptable” for cis people to misgender us. It is still a fact that trans people are assaulted. It is still the case that trans women are interpreted by the police as prostitutes merely for walking down the street. Policies of trans inclusion do not change the fact that the productive operations of power still work to constrain the possibilities of gendered embodiment to “male” and “female,” without regard for genderqueer, nonbinary, and otherwise gender nonconforming people.

Gender is a technology of enculturation that transforms bodies into intelligible, discrete units of power, upon which social authority works, and from which it derives its staying legacy in the form of heterosexual reproduction. It is also the ontological experience of particular bodies which are made to inhabit the world in
particular ways. It is the phenomenological unfolding of a particular kind of experience in ways that are supposed to be communicable to other bodies, a technology of domination and control that renders bodies according to what Jacques Ranciere might term “a distribution in the order of the sensible.” It controls how we come to inhabit, experience, and know our bodies, what we are allowed to feel, how and when we are allowed to feel it, and what it is that such experience is allowed to mean. It crucially informs the economy of representation that determines what we are allowed to know and when we are allowed to know it. From media tropes of the “angry trans woman” to the specter of the “she-male” that haunted radical feminism, trans people are taught that our desires to inhabit a properly gendered body does violence to cis people. We are told that we have to be “nice” to cis women because they are our “allies” in the experience of gender, we are taught that we will never have a chance at a lasting relationship because our bodies are revolting to cis people, we are told that we are unlovable because we interpreted as freaks, disasters, or mutants and relegated to the outside of nearly every institution that purports to support us. What is needed in light of this alienation is a trans community capable of creating institutions of trans livability outside the control of cis people.

Until the time comes that no trans person ever has to explain their body to a cis person, we will still be social inferiors and foreclosed from “equality” with cis people, however mythical that “equality” might be. Trans people need to abandon hope in convincing cis people that “we are all the same” because until we come to define new standards of what it means to be a trans person we will always be playing into the hands cis people dealt us in the first place. Once again, this world was not made for us. Dean Spade writes that “we are impossible people,” made to feel shame for merely existing. The impossibility of our demands and our bodies is something that strengthens, rather than weakens, our claims to flourishing. Flourishing in spite of this world, we can create new ways of being according to which being trans would not be a mark of inferiority or freakishness, but rather would be the hallmark of a new world beyond the world outside of the control of anti-queer cis-supremacist authority. Beyond inclusion in cis institutions, we could have institutions that critically challenge norms of gender by fostering a relationship to gendered difference that embraces, rather than stigmatizes, transcendence, transition, transversal, and translation.

Until we have this new world beyond the world, we will only ever recapitulate gender in the terms of authority that seeks to define our bodies in ways antithetical to our ontological and phenomenological experiences. Until we have the political power to be independent of cis control, we will only ever be alienated from the dominating norms of gender that were never made for us. What is needed is a way to flourish in spite of the world, rather than because of it. What this means is that trans community must be understood to be in opposition to cis institutionality, rather than complementary to it. Our experiences have taught us that we are different. Unless we can reclaim that difference and recast it in our own, terrifying and beautiful image, we will never have the world we have always deserved.
Thanks Obama

Medium: Band-aids, syringes, testosterone vials, and alcohol pads.

by Tony Calabrese-Thomas

I made this piece using new and recycled materials involved in the weekly testosterone injections that I have been administering for myself since May, 2015, including band-aids, alcohol pads, syringes, and testosterone vials. While the phrase “Thanks, Obama” originally carried a negative meaning aimed at criticizing the work of the Obama Administration, I made this piece as an actual statement of thanks, as Obama was the first president to address trans health care in his 2010 Affordable Care Act, which banned sex discrimination in MOST health care facilities. While many aren’t familiar with these materials, they are a normal part of my life and my survival. I hoped that this piece could grab the attention of a viewer who was unfamiliar with the trans experience and make them think more about the politicization of the trans identity. Even if someone is not directly affected by trans health care coverage, support for their transgender peers involves fighting for our right to transition safely under the care of doctors who support us. More needs to be done to ensure that transgender people have all the care necessary to undergo the extent of physical transition that they desire. I hope that this piece will provide an opportunity for more members of my community to think about the important fight for trans health care coverage that still has so far to go.
Leelah

it was her
but it could have been me.

“remember her,”
everyone chimed in,
but she was an internet sensation,
and I sometimes I wonder
if any of them still remember.

I wonder if anyone knew her name
before she was gone
I wonder if anyone will remember her name
when it vanishes
and I wonder
if it matters.

it was her
but it could have been me,
and sometimes I wonder
if that’s the only reason
I remember.

I considered it once,
a long time ago,
and I got it in my head
that I’d never make it past 2014.

but I did
and she didn’t.

I never knew her
but I wish I did.

I never knew her
and neither did most of the internet
when they rushed
to defend her from her parents.

“we loved our son,”
the parents said about her,
“we loved him
unconditionally.”

they thought they did.
they say funerals are for the living,
and not for the dead,
but aren’t they at least about the dead?

sometimes I think I only survived
because I pictured everyone misgendering me,
misgendering my dead body,
my voice falling silent forever.

it wasn’t me,
it was her.
It was her who never made it
past 2014.

she was so close.
we were so close.

but we aren’t there.
I know why people forgot her;
I understand.
they needed to let her go,
let her fly.

but sometimes I wonder
if anyone else remembers.

TRIGGER WARNING: MENTIONS OF SUICIDE

dad

Every time I hear the word Dad
I cringe, I cry, I break.
Every time I think about family,
Images of happy white people
Shatter and a bearded smile
Flies towards me. Dad stabs me
in the heart.
You’re the reason I trust no men
You’re the reason I can’t relate to my friends
You’re the reason I hated myself for 19 years
Do you know what you did to me?
Do you even know my name?

by Anonymous
These photos, taken a year apart, represent two understandings of Ophelia.

The first time my friend and I did an Ophelia photoshoot, we knew we were trying to achieve a certain aesthetic that we had seen before — girl in a milky bathtub with flowers. But we couldn’t place a finger on what it was exactly about this subject or this aesthetic that we wanted to replicate until a year later.

A year later, when we decided to create a new take on the Ophelia photoshoot, we had took some more time to consider the implications of this image. Why, for example, had we (and thousands others before us) decided to portray Ophelia in this beautiful, delicate way? Was the only way we could wrap our minds around female mental illness by treating it as beautiful and delicate? It didn’t seem right.

The thing about Ophelia, Hamlet’s Ophelia, is that she’s not a rounded-out character. She is known more for her death than her life. But the fact that thousands of photographers and illustrators and directors are drawn to her still is no mere coincidence. Ophelia embodies questions of femininity, illness, sexuality, and adolescence.

The second Ophelia image features my friend Saba in a Mountain Dew bath with Dorito petals. We created this image in retaliation to our own first image. Though, not to discount Ophelia 1, who is created out of pure curiosity of form and femininity. That fascination still lingers. Dorito Ophelia, however, rejects this notion of fragility and mental illness masked by beauty.
the sailors curse the sirens
for their temptations, claiming that
they are alluring, irresistible, but never blame
their mates for jumping.
(it is still eve’s fault
for taking the apple from the tree.

a man cannot solve the sphinx’s riddle
for she speaks with the subtleties of a woman
who has had to talk her way out of
a brutal situation.
she sharpens and blunts her tongue
as needed, but she knows she has
no armor.

medusa turns men to stone only because
she reflects the gaze with which
they look upon her.
her snakes’ venom is made of
all the poisonous things they have said.

men are heroes of epics, of sagas
wherein they conquer terrible monsters.
they do not realize that these monsters
are only trying to save themselves.
I
When I was eight—
I stood with a half dozen pairs of bright eyes upon me and explained:
Gay was for boys,
Lesbian was for girls,
And “no Henry you’re not a lesbian if you like girls because it just doesn’t work like that!”

II
When I was ten—
The ’04 elections looming,
We were assigned to interview our parents on “big ticket” platforms:
  Immigration
  Capital punishment
  Abortion
  Gay Marriage ™.
(Bush was up for reelection this year and political commentators would come to say that
his backing of the Gay Marriage ™ ban was the cincher to his victory.)

On Gay Marriage ™ my mother said “it’s not an easy life”.

III
When I was eleven—
We moved to Taiwan a few weeks before school started, breathing felt like drowning and I
spent late nights on top of sweaty sheets under the rum-rum-rum of a crooked fan fostering
an irrational unprovoked fear.
There was no reason, but, more than anything
I feared I would be a lesbian.
(The word was so bitter on my tongue I couldn’t say it aloud; I would whisper it into the
night instead, hoping the darkness would swallow the word and my fear alike.)
I didn’t even like girls, not like that.
Not yet.

IV
When I was in middle school—
I had my first crush.
  He wasn’t much.
  I figured it was what I was supposed to feel.

V
When I was sixteen—
I fell in love for the first time.
  She was everything.
  I guess no one told me that abuse could come from a woman,
  Or that blame wasn’t always laid with a fist.
I was dubbed “straight-as-a-roundabout” that year.
  So there’s that.

VI
When I was nineteen—
I introduced my aunt to my boyfriend,
  She called me a liar,
  Angry that she had to explain what a lesbian was to her teenaged son for no reason.
  Never mind that I never said I was a lesbian.

VII
Then—
I started dating a woman who was not fully out yet. But I was patient.
After her husband’s suicide she wanted a father for her daughter.
  She was scared because “it’s not an easy life”
  But she made me happy.
And it was enough.

VIII
Now—
We’re looking for our first house together, something with a yard for her daughter.
Her mom ignores me at family gatherings, even when I speak directly to her.
Her grandfather asks me when I’ll be getting my MRS degree.
Yesterday her daughter asked if she could be the flower girl at our
wedding.
  I told her some day she could if she still wanted to.
to being what you did not foresee  by Rose Pytte

i will not be
the reflection i see
in your eyes
i will refuse
so talk to me now
and to ani difranco, too
and own up to the empty shell that is you.
i’ve grown as empty as can be
you would have heard
an entire mock-ocean inside of me
had i put my mouth up to your ear
soft and wet and yearning
((i know that this is what you fear))
mistakenly
to be filled by you.
the reflection i see
in your eyes
is mine to do with as i please.
that’s the trick
you didn’t catch
in your design
along with truths
squirm beneath my nails
where the floss doesn’t reach
in between my teeth

the truth that i have nothing
for you to take
that half the time inside my dreams
i am a man
that half the time lived on my feet
has been for loving someone(s) else
that i am more like honey bees
all three
worker and drone and queen.
loving
isn’t like how you promised it to be.
i want i want i want i want
i yearn
to feel
not how you promised it to be
not how
you told it to me
just how days and nights
and the time when the sky becomes lazuli blue
run yipping to my heart
with these windy arms wrapped around
a warm body
already knowing
how to love.

untitled

by Sophie Lev
Beauty come sail around
Drop your knees beneath the blood
that dripped from the purple petals

Your eyes follow
the movement
of my hollow vessel
I feel the gaps between my limbs
the wishful space so
foreign to my body
I feel your smile
feel your leer
feel my beauty begin to disappear

Beauty come sail around

My body my shell
Too far away to tell
No longer mine and somehow
yours
I feel the sharpness of your eyes
look left look right
always within your sight

Beauty come sail around
Drop your knees to the ground
beneath the blood
that dripped from the purple petals

Your gaze cuts
me into bits
Forms my body
forms my wits
Look away
before I become
more blood on the ground

**artist statement:** This piece is centered around the perceptions that frame our identity, as well as perceptions that mold our ideas of beauty. This poem highlights the male gaze, as it forms our personal reflections and connotations of beauty and self. I wanted to especially emphasize both the violence and the sexualization that this gaze forms and perpetuates and the utterly harmful and detrimental effects. As someone that is female-identifying, as well as a person of color, I have recently been reflecting on how the male gaze has affected my identity and views of my own beauty. Particularly as someone of mix race, I often feel exoticized (as reflected in the flower in this poem) and have felt that the perception of my physical appearance is largely grounded in colonial ideas of exoticized/erotized beauty. Ultimately I want this poem to be an emancipation and a liberation from former ideas of self-worth based on a male gaze, and towards a self-defining and empowering state of mind.
citrus sanguine

by Maggie Langford
poppies: a biomythography

by Hailey Snover

I freeze. I don’t breathe. Teeth clenched and with a prickle behind my eyes I begin to rock in my chair. It’s not a big deal. I am breathing again, but too fast. He was going to find someone eventually, but her—. I bite back my tears and wait for the fullness behind my eyes to ebb. Instead they overflow from the sea, and my feelings come pouring out wave after wave crashing inside my skull to the beat of my heart. Tears, hot and sticky roll down my cheeks and into my waiting hands. I push my knuckles into my eyes; bright red explodes behind my closed lids. As the crescendo inside subsides and the tide finally begins to lessen there’s nothing left. There are no thoughts. Out. Keys. Car. Reverse. Help me. Away. Freeway. Exit.

Lights rush past me on the sides of the road. The sky is a deep brick red. A haze seems to hang between the trees blanketing the street; wisps pooling under the lights of the streetlights like cigarette smoke. Oh, to drive off the road and into the lights of the streetlamps like cigarette haze seems to hang between the trees.


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the day i learned
to garden

by Sophie Lev
inspiration porn

by Jae Bates

Everyone look! Over there! It’s an oppressed person to gawk at!
Look, they’re alive despite all of our violent attempts to wipe them out
How resilient
How wonderful
Look, no matter how many times you tell it that it’s worthless
It never dies
How cute
I used to think that trans people were worthless
But now that I’ve met a real live one
I put the T in LGBT
Now I’ll welcome trans people into every bathroom in America
But when actually confronted with a person whose gender confuses me
I’ll still confront them and make a scene
And even though I know they’re sharing their story purely for
Solidarity
Purely for
Education
Purely for
Themselves
Purely for
Their communities
Purely for
Definitely not for
Me.
I’m still going to tell everyone their story later and
How it changed my whole fucking life! Wow! Look at me, not at them.
Let me take space to tell you how amazed I am that people facing violence are still alive at all, despite our best attempts

-silence-

I am sick of being your inspiration porn
Standing here and spouting my oppression while you jack off your millennial liberalism into a pool of cishet white tears that you cry after we have proverbial social justice warrior sex
Your “wow I can’t believe you haven’t killed yourself yet.”
I am sick of being your “I’m so moved”
Sick of being your “Good job kid”
Sick of being your mind changer
Heartfelt, tear jerker
I’m sick of you thinking I’m telling you this story for YOU
Don’t come up to me and tell me that you think it’s inspirational that
I talk about being raped
Maybe go out and change something about rape culture itself
Don’t tell me that you think it’s so great I created Trans housing
Maybe I wouldn’t have to if you could help end the violence
Don’t tell me that you admire me
Don’t fucking touch my arm, shoulder, or back
Trying to console me for the 20 years of pain and the next 50 to 60 depending on my age
Go fucking change something
Go disrupt something
Stop acting like my story is a respectable one
Stop treating me like I am your show pony
This is not inspiration porn
It’s my fucking life.

public service announcement

by David Bodvel
I haven’t checked Google Docs, but Microsoft Word doesn’t recognize “dysphoria” as a real word.

Just yesterday I read an article asserting that, somehow, it’s easy to mix up body dysphoria with gender dysphoria.

that can only be true if you’ve experienced neither one.

but even these words still live under the radar of the world, when you get off Tumblr, or even off campus, it’s like there’s some sort of “real world” out there that’s far behind these “progressive spaces.”

there’s a real world out there, where you won’t be accepted as you, as if to say the changes we make here mean nothing to the world.

but doesn’t it have to start somewhere? why can it not be here—it’s because we’re afraid.

lifting up minorities is scary because it brings down privilege.
I hear a lot of love for the conversations, but it takes so much more than talk, and besides, why should basic human rights even be a conversation?

because to some, there’s no way to prove the existence of such things as dysphoria, because as Microsoft Word will tell you, it’s not even a real word.
the times i got drunk

by Elsie

There was the time
I cried watching Tangled,
Because goddammit, Disney,
I’m never finding someone
Who’s going to die for me
And look so good while doing it.

There was the time
I fellated a bottle
Of Mike’s Hard Lemonade
Because I felt the need
To prove something, I guess.

There was the time
I went into the kitchen
To get a snack,
And I was alone,
And I wondered if I was capable
Of existing alone,
If I was capable of being
Without anyone witnessing me.

There was the time
My body buzzed like a bee
And my mind was the beehive of panic,
And in the shower I tried to pry
The blades out of a razor,
Because I couldn’t stand
Being the person that I was.

There was the time
I told my friends
I maybe liked girls,
And I cried a little,
Because my nerves turned to relief
Like a glacier breaking into water
Under an Arctic sun.
I cried a little, because
It didn’t matter to them.

Any why would it matter?
Why did I ever think
They wouldn’t love me
For who I am?
he was my boyfriend

by Shanna Williams

so I was taught it was ok
when I said no
and he said yes
it meant yes for both of us

he was my boyfriend so when
he wanted my body
I gave it to him
no questions asked

he was my boyfriend
so it was ok
it was some kind of love
he called it true love
he said, “if you love me,
you’ll let me fuck you”

I would come up with excuses
that I shouldn’t have to need
“I have a headache”
“I’m too tired”
“I’m still sore from when you fucked me an hour ago”

I was taught that consent is easy
you say yes or you say no
but it got blurry when I would
agree to let him use my body
to masturbate

it hurts to know that I had sex
for weeks and months and years
when I didn’t want to
because he was my boyfriend
and I was taught that my body
no longer belonged to me

when he told me i owed him my body
in exchange for the gas money used to visit me,
i didn’t argue.

it wasn’t until months later that i did the math:
$2.16 a gallon, 12 miles,
20 miles to the gallon.
hardly worth the condom he brought.
Narratives of Biopolitics at the Northwest Detention Center

by Arda Bulak

Introduction - “there was a carving on the visitation booth that said ‘I want my dad back’”

On February 6th, 2016, I witnessed as a coalition of activist organizations conducted a People’s Tribunal on the Northwest Detention Center (NWDC), which passed judgment on the detention center for the following crimes: incarceration of Immigrants, Labor Exploitation, Profiting of Detention, and Dehumanizing People. The tribunal consisted of testimonies (or narratives) presented by former detainees, families of detainees, and guest judges who conducted interviews inside the detention center which were read aloud in English and Spanish to the audience. Using these narratives, my goal is to understand this form of state power through the Foucauldian lens of biopower- a modern conception of state power that regulates and administers life and death.

Neoliberalism, Biopolitics and the NWDC - “It felt like a Jewish Concentration Camp”

At the intersection of state and private interests - Tacoma’s own Northwest Detention Center is a facility privately owned by GEO Group and contracted by U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain undocumented immigrants while being processed for deportation. At full capacity, the NWDC houses 1575 beds; and through a contractual “Bed Mandate,” ICE guarantees some 800 of those to be filled. As of 2015, GEO group renewed a 10-year contract guarantying an estimated annual revenue of $57 million for GEO group through the NWDC. Considering the federal appropriations quota of 34,000 immigrants to be detained nationally, in addition to GEO groups claims to over 104 different facilities containing over 87,000 beds- the NWDC comprises only a small slice of the broader for-profit neoliberal apparatus of detention. Analysis of this premise: that the detention of thousands of undocumented persons (whom posses little or no legal representation) is relegated by the state (with tax-payer funds) onto a private corporation which in turn generates millions in profit for its stockholders- must goes beyond neoliberal critique. I argue, the NWDC co-exists with an even more insidious formation of sovereign power- Biopower.

Biopower is a concept of political sovereignty developed by Michelle Foucault which describes a logic of power by which the state orders life and death in society, or in other words,“fosters life or disallows it to a point of death” Crosscurrent with modernity, the biopolitical state focuses on the admistration of populations through a rationality of human and natural sciences to create a normative subdivision of populations. By choosing who lives and who dies, the NWDC is an institution of class domination which systematically creates conditions to “immunize” itself of another racially sub-ordinate group(s). By distributing populations in terms of value and utility, and having the power to measure, appraise, and heirarchize them, biopower is what situatiation modern class domination and also racism.

Thus, in understanding modern racism- biopower becomes the mechanism that allows privileged groups to thrive while at the same time causing the biological deterioration and death of another group. At the NWDC, Latino immigrants are deemed as, “illegal,” which is a socially constructed normative category that justifies their exploitation and deterioration by the state- in this way biopolitics provides powerful insight into modern racism.

Entering the Detention Center - “I had no criminal record, I didn’t sell drugs nor did I murder anyone, I just wanted to work”

Narratives about how detainees ended up in the NWDC depicted how by hedging profits and institutional funding on detentaining latinos- the biopolitical apparatus utilizes market rationality to reinforce racial hierarchies. For example, Miguel recounted being the only one on his bus that the bus driver asked to provide a passport while traveling through Bellingham- he was explicitly profiled and turned-in to the authorities on the basis of race. Or in another case, Criselda recounted how her husband was picked up by authorities while dropping off their children at school one morning. Thus, tactics like racial profiling facilitate the biopolitical state into disciplining and controlling populations, but this notion is further problematized by mandatory bed quotas contracted to fill the private detention centers. For example, Mele, who was detained after getting two traffic tickets, recalled over-hearing the police officer calling to ICE through his walkie-talkie saying, “I think I got one.” In cases like this, the biopolitical administration of populations becomes infused with the market rationality of neoliberalism by which the state has incentivized the process of detention.
Living Inside the Detention Center - “They are not human inside the NWDC”

Regularly, narratives from inside the NWDC depicted the neoliberal logic of cost reduction and profit-maximization that facilitates the biopolitical exploitation and deterioration of the latinos in detention. A regular motif recounted food quality - Alejandro described all the food as tasting like “soy and always processed.” Ramon, speaking on behalf of a farmworker in his union, commented that it was not uncommon to see bodies thin from inadequate nutrition in the detention center. The food quality, which one could argue to be a petty complaint, is a method of cost-reduction by GEO group that leverages the maximization of profit against the nutritional deterioration of its detainees.

Criselda described the inadequate health care her husband received in the NWDC: “He has high cholesterol and the medicine that they give him is not helping him but actually worsening his health”. Reducing costs by limiting healthcare is again an example of how the biopolitical state systematically deteriorates the condition of detainees for profit. Even worse, most menial work done in the detention center (like cooking and cleaning) is done by the detainees themselves for the inhumane wage of $1 per day. These are only a few of countless examples among the narratives that depicted this correlation between disciplinary control and profit-maximization perpetuated by the neoliberal-biopolitical apparatus.

Resisting the Detention Center - “Keep fighting, be honest, and keep showing up to these demonstrations”

Among the narratives were pockets of humanization which depicted the possibilities of resilience amidst the condition of the detainees. Depictions of dissent warranted biopolitical repression: after submitting many complaints, one detainee named Oscar described being punished by getting denied food while the guards sat outside of his cell ate their food and talked about how good their lunches were. In 2014, more than 700 detainees went on hunger strike protesting the conditions in the NWDC and demanding better wages and more reasonable commissary prices. Thus, just as the body is targeted and deteriorated through administrative control, in the case of the hunger strike, the body also becomes the site of resistance to the biopolitical apparatus.

In a glimmer of affective resistance the narratives depicted above all else, solidarity. Despite the wages, narratives recounted how detainees share their meager earnings to buy food for those in most need- more tenured detainees helped new ones navigate the system- more educated detainees teach others english and help them write letters to their families. In addition, outside the NWDC stood many in solidarity with the detainees who came to speak, listen, and share their experiences. After telling his story, a former detainee, Mele said, “Talking about my history and experience is healing”

Conclusion - “No one should be detained, we are not criminals”

Looking at the NWDC we can make sense of how biopolitics and neoliberalism perpetuate class domination and racism today. Living in the age of progress and equal human rights, society maintains the distinction between legal and illegal members of our society. The state continues to administer hard-working members of society to the status of violent criminals solely on the basis of documentation (or lack-thereof). The state justifies the detention, deportation, and the construction of walls to sterilize itself from populations on the basis that they are a threat to the fabric of society. A legal system that is supposedly colorblind, explicitly and implicitly, partitions society into a highly racialized fashion. We can look at these realities through the overlapping analytic frameworks of biopolitics and neoliberalism- but at the same time, we must gear towards action, and be willing to reach deep into the polyvalent orders of power as to create substantial and retributive justice.

Latinx
by Gabriela Yoque
hand me
my anatomy
(sex)

by Sophia Munic

a ghost
no guest

by Ricky Mave

You grim grey man, please harrow not my head.
I am at home in halls of heaven's bloom.
You trespass past the haunts of hell, you tread
my dwelling and weave monsters on my loom.
No guest of mine! Be gone to sickly lands
which match yourself: more wound than healthy flesh
dark lustful rings adorning scaly hands
black eyes that wither all that's sweet and fresh.
Yet in your absence longing claims my heart...
I must confess I would not call you graceless.
A weary blush reveals I find your art
A welcome pause from pastimes bland and faceless.
Seduce me, I permit it, I demand it
You skulking, dour, hypnotizing bandit.
Never - until. by Mica Thompson

It wasn’t just that night.  
It was all those seasons - all those years.  
Years of soreness.  
Seasons of sadness.

I had never experienced the sorrow of being haunted  
until you waltzed into my life that one summer night  
with your fedora  
your sweaty skin  
and that damn guitar.

I had never felt the constant urge to look over my shoulder  
until the chill of that one winter morning  
when the waves in your eyes turned to fire  
and your hatred buried pieces of my light.

I had never realized how tightly anxiety could wrap  
until you stood pounding at my door that one foggy afternoon  
with your anger  
your threats  
and that fucking guitar.

I had never listened to the people who warned me  
until I was lost in the depths  
where it was too dark to hear  
the panic that trembled their speech.

I had never known the sensation of losing the word no  
until you snatched it out of my hands that one fall evening  
with your stolen watch  
your entitled limbs  
and that ugly cloud of body odor drenched in cologne.

I had never heard my devil laugh  
until I lay awake that one autumn night  
to discover the strings of your guitar  
singing on the other side of my window.

I had never smelled the rotting of my wings  
until you walked up behind me that one spring day  
with your dishonest smile  
your torn khakis  
and that wretched cloud.  
You still had the word no locked away that day.  
My word.  
You remain insistent on carrying it in your pocket.  
But little do you know, it will never be yours.

I had never seen the type of fear in my father’s eyes  
until he showed me how to change the locks that one summer morning.  
He was consumed by the weight of empathy and the apologies that should have come from you.

It was so warm that day  
but my heart refused to defrost.

Time continued to drift.  
You continued to suffocate.

I had never felt that type of emptiness in my soul  
until I was drowning in its familiarity.

I had never thanked someone that I loathed so much  
until I learned that the void in my spirit allowed space for revival.

And revive - I am.
Taking a Good, Hard Look at UPS Sexual Assault Policy

Re-Examination:

by Amanda Woolsey

Sexual assault policies are implemented by administrative bodies across college campuses all over America in order to protect students, assist survivors, and deliver severe consequences for the perpetrators; supposedly, for the betterment of the student body as a whole. Unwanted sexual intercourse results in a plethora of severe short and long term mental, physical, and emotional trauma, including but not limited to: PTSD, depression, severe anxiety, and chronic dissociation. The effects of sexual assault and rape can be long lasting and extremely damaging, as they permeate and detrimentally effect the daily lives of survivors. These long term emotional and mental traumas can make it extremely difficult for survivors to be comfortable in their own learning environment, engage with their peers, maintain healthy relationships with family and friends, and function properly in daily life. With the rise of a severe sexual assault epidemic in college campuses across the country, with 1 out of 5 women and 1 out of 16 men being sexually assaulted in college annually, the absolute need for a concrete sexual assault policy at the University of Puget Sound is of utmost importance. Sexual assault at the University of Puget Sound remains, as it should be, a topic of serious concern. The necessity for the implementation of a definitive sexual assault policy at this institution of higher learning that provides both a support network for victims and ensures that the perpetrators are subjected to unquestionable punishment has never been more pertinent.

With the nation-wide reintroduction of the "Campus Accountability and Safety Act" by a bipartisan group of legislators in 2013, and Martha Palmquist Cady’s admirable work in educating the student body about sexual violence through the Green Dot program, one would assume that our campus would not become foil to a "no means yes" mentality, and would remain transparent in face of fall-outs from other universities regarding their failure to address their sexual assault issues. However, upon further inspection into the University of Puget Sound’s sexual assault policy and its failure to ensure the safety of the survivors it swore to protect, it becomes increasingly obvious that our campuses’ strategy for dealing with the barrage of sexual assault is inherently flawed, and exacerbates the central issue at hand. The effects of rape culture have unfortunately been allowed to permeate the University of Puget Sound campus, and people are seriously hurt because of it.

The survivors of sexual assault are not protected, the perpetrators are not punished adequately, and are often allowed to walk free. In order to exact drastic change, the legislature itself must be examined and entirely reconstructed. Says Jordan*, a student at the University of Puget Sound and survivor of sexual assault by a member of the UPS community, “I did not feel particularly safe or protected by the university. Nothing changed from the investigative process into my attack, and the only support that I received from the school was mandatory meetings with the Dean of students about my academics.” Jordan’s* attacker was never apprehended or questioned, and faced no punishment in the wake of a serious allegation of sexual assault. The University of Puget Sound’s sexual assault policy, when approaching the topic of punishment and apprehension of perpetrators, states, “In imposing sanctions, the decision maker will consider the nature, frequency, and severity of the offending conduct, the resulting harm to other persons or to the campus community, the respondent’s past disciplinary record at the university, and the likelihood of future harm to other persons or to the campus community”. A perpetrator’s past disciplinary record should not play any role in determining the severity of the sanction imposed; if the person did in fact commit an act sexual violence, they should be punished based on that fact alone. The hesitance to remove perpetrators from the community and academic environment shows a serious lack of compassion or resolve for the mental and emotional security of the students on this campus. As a small liberal arts school with only 2,555 undergraduates, the possibility of seeing one’s attacker either on a daily or somewhat frequent basis is high. Rather than entirely nullifying the possibility of a survivor re-experiencing their trauma and eliciting their triggers, the school chooses to allow for the perpetrator to not only continue to go to the school but be involved in campus activities, perhaps due, in part, to the hefty tuition deposits that every students pays at every semester. Additionally, the integrity and the manner of the questions that the University of Puget Sound asks the student survivors during the investigative process must be seriously re-examined. When asked if the university blamed them for the attack in any way, “Jordan said, “They asked me if I was drunk. Then, they suggested that I blacked out because of the alcohol, and not because I was roofied. I’ve been drunk before. I knew this was something different.” These leading questions, especially in a delicate situation such as this, are absolutely appalling and must be addressed in a serious conversation about discourse with survivors. For the university to suggest that the survivor misremembered the attack in what was supposed to be a counseling session is absolutely uncalled for and borders on victim-blaming.

Understanding the severe emotional, physical, and mental consequences of surviving unwanted sexual coercion, the administration at the University of Puget Sound should do everything in their power to ensure that this campus provides a safe environment for learning and growth. This school needs to dole out appropriate punishments to the perpetrators of such appalling non-consensual violent acts instead of allowing them to stay on campus and involved in the campus community. Suggesting that the survivor of unwanted sexual acts somehow misremembered the attack, or that they were to blame in any way is absolutely uncalled for and should not be allowed to happen in the investigative process of such brutal acts. The University of Puget Sound needs to take serious measures to reexamine and reconstruct the sexual assault policy to improve student safety, and educate faculty and student body on the severe consequences of sexual assault. Its time for this institution to treat sexual assault as the serious crime that it is.

*Names of those interviewed have been changed for the anonymity of the student.
brother

by Zoe Branch

find me
in furthest reaches of
closet dark,
draped in pilling sweaters,
crying on a tuesday night.

blurry vision
dizzy
dry palette
me
screams silently
and open mouth tastes like
ocean at eight years old.

blood on hands
feels real,
salty copper swims
in ears, fear
eats fingernails
so they can’t pick open
wounds wound
up in some
sick sense.

you always
know where where to find me,
turn on closet light,
part sweater sea,
hand me cool tap water
in recycled jelly jar.

stroke my hair,
count to ten,
and again
and again—

promise not to tell,
okay?
okay.
and again.

it is me

by Tony Calabrese-Thomas

Quote by David Wojnarowicz
Stand with Me
by Zeman Nathoo

My name is Zeman Nathoo. I am a senior at the University of Puget Sound. I’m from Los Angeles California, born of a Salvadoran mother and a Pakistani father. Growing up, I received incredibly limited and minimal education on sex, learning what I could from school, TV shows, movies, and about as much porn as you’d imagine a teenage boy would watch when his family was asleep. The only sexual instruction I was given was from my uncles/cousins on my mother’s side of the family. In their eyes, I was a young dude who should be “banging each and every piece of ass I could”. I was told over and over again that I wouldn’t amount to any form of manliness or worth if I threw that all away. This was the mentality I held over sex when I first stepped onto this campus.

I never had anyone tell me to check in with what my partner wanted, and I wouldn’t hear the word consent the way I know it now until my junior year. Rape was done by people who drugged others and used physical force. Rapists were people who we’ll call Anwin. I thought she was the dramatic typical public idea of a woman being attacked in a dark alley. Rape was done by people who drugged others and used physical force to get their way.

I’m going to tell you my narrative, my story surrounding sexual violence. I tell it to the best of my ability to remember events and not intrude on other’s narratives. There are minor changes to the narrative that do not remove the main points but serve as protection for the other individual involved as well as to avoid pointless triggering information.

In my freshman year, I met a girl who we’ll call Anwin. I thought she was a super cool attractive girl who knew her way around a dance floor. I tried hard to get to know her, hang out with her, hell in my mind I even managed to get a date with her once. Then at some point in the first semester, she stopped replying to me. I took that as an “I’m not interested” and moved on.

Cut to my second semester freshman year, I was a shiny new pledge of the Sigma Chi fraternity and was celebrating at our dance party. By celebrating I mean I was incredibly drunk and super excited to be a part of my new fraternity. I run into Anwin and she apologized to me about the lack of responsiveness last semester. I brushed it off and chalked it up to being her not looking for a relationship.

We broke off and somehow I found myself later on dancing with her, and making out. After a while I asked her if she wanted to go back to my place. She said her stuff was in one of the brother’s rooms, I volunteered to get her and her friends stuff as well as my own (I had my only condoms in my jacket and I wanted to be sure to have them in case of anything). The room itself was locked and as hard as I tried I couldn’t find the brother who lived in it.

From this point on in the night, things that were already hazy are now going to become somewhat hazier, save for a few very strong memories.

By the time I found Anwin, she was with some of her other friends and started telling me she was going back with them as her key card was with her stuff in the locked room. At the time I took that as “Oh shit, I’m fucking up my opportunity to hookup with this super awesome girl just because I couldn’t find her stuff. Shit!”

I somehow then convinced her to come back with me to my dorm, and on the way she started expressing some doubts. At the time, I was not confident, I was not secure in who I was. I was depressed, used to people getting tired and leaving me. Still very drunk at this point, I tell her to go then if she wanted to and leave me alone like everyone else, hoping she’d take pity and stay with me.

It worked and she said she’d stay with me. It was cold outside, so I offered her a jacket of mine. I let her hold onto it because I secretly wanted another excuse to hang out with her.

At some point I tried reaching under her shirt to grope her, she reacted very viscerally to this and I backed off. I eventually asked her to go down on me. She once again seemed hesitant and I explained that I wouldn’t judge her and it would be fine. After a little back and forth, she agreed and began to do so; I gave her tips and things to try. After a while, she seemed very frustrated with it all, so we stopped and we went to bed.

The next day, we awoke and got dressed. It was cold outside, so I offered her a jacket of mine. I let her hold onto it because I secretly wanted another excuse to hang out with her.

That was it. Not once during these events did I think what I had done was rape. I thought it was just a weekend hookup that was slightly awkward and maybe a little emotional, but did I think that I hurt this girl? Not at all, hell, I thought I was
on my way towards actually getting to do it again.

Cut to my sophomore year. I’m in Passages training and we’re getting the updated version of Green Dot training for this year’s new students. A line Marta said really stuck out to me: “Partner violence can come in the form of coercion due to emotional manipulation.” I found myself reflecting back on that night, during our conversation in the parking lot and became entirely terrified of what happened. I recognized for the first time that I had coerced her into coming home with me, emotionally manipulated her into staying... I hadn’t even begun to think of the rest.

The rest of my sophomore year was spent with me grappling with this idea that I may have assaulted someone—assaulted Anwin. Part of me wondered if she knew what had happened as well, mostly because I hadn’t been reported and every time she saw me, she seemed to find a way out of the area, in turn I chose to give her as much space as I could.

In order to understand more, I went to the full Green Dot Bystander training and began realizing everything I had done—how not only did I sexually assault her, I legally raped her because of the head wound I inflicted. Anwin’s name, others just knew I had done it. It was becoming more comfortable with owning it. Accepting it.

Because it happened.

I realized that I, like every other rapist, was the product of our culture. A culture that does not punish people who rape, and—at least for me—more importantly, does absolutely nothing to teach about rape and sexual assault. A culture that silences its victims, survivors, thrivers—all those who are affected by sexual violence. A culture that can’t stop for two seconds to say, “If it’s not enthusiastic, then fucking stop!”

Because I wish I could have prevented this. I wish I could go back in time and talk to freshman year Zeman, tell him what he needs to know, so that he doesn’t have to learn about sexual violence at the expense of someone else’s suffering. I wish that I had known how to read body language and that it should never take convincing to get a girl to go home with you.

But wishing won’t do shit.

Which is partly why I’m writing this. So that you, the reader, whether you’re a freshman or a senior, don’t have to make the same mistakes I have. Please go to a Green Dot training. A full six-hour one. The stuff you learn in one day there will stay with you for the rest of your life. Better yet, get your friends to go, your friends’ friends, teach your family, your younger siblings, and cousins. Get this information out there so that we can start this culture of empathy that realizes that sexual violence is a real thing. Never stop talking about it, because it’s the silence that kills us.

This is also meant for those who are like me, because I know you exist. People who have assaulted someone, but weren’t aware of it or even still aren’t aware of it. These people, who under any other circumstances didn’t mean to cause harm or pain and want to know how to help, I’m going to ask you to stand up. Stand up against this bullshit culture where we weren’t given a chance to be a decent human being and prevent sexual violence, so that others who don’t know better can know better. Others do not have to learn the way we did. Others should never learn the way we did. And it’s on us especially, because we perpetuated it.

I am putting my name here, so that I can hold myself accountable, to committing myself to ending rape culture and ignorance. I ask you all out there, to do the same, because our dialogues are all in the hypothetical, all in the scenario, never in reality. Our culture does not support those who we’ve wronged; this system thrives on the silence of the survivors, believing that we as perpetrators will stand by complicity as well.

Be brave. Speak up. Own your mistakes. Or else, I promise you, this vicious cycle will continue. You can help heal, you can help fight. You do not have to comply with the silence. You may never make things right or make things whole, but you can share your story, share your growth, and make a difference.

When Anwin and I spoke, I asked about what I could do, what would help her heal, she didn’t tell me to turn myself into the police (which for the record, I offered). Instead she told me to start making as much of a difference as I could. She wanted me to accept the fact that I raped her. Make it a part of my identity, a part of my narrative to the point where I can say that I’ve perpetrated in rape and sexual assault, but still condemn these actions because they are wrong, horrible, and need addressing.

So this is me. Doing that.

My name is Zeman Nathoo, I am a senior at the University of Puget Sound. I’m from Los Angeles, California, born of a Salvadoran mother and a Pakistani father.

I have raped. I am a rapist. Fuck Rape.
Bra Straps

by Maloy Moore

Is that you?
Hair, thicker than rolling currents over smooth stones.
   How I long to dip my fingers in.
So much babbling, and so little time.

You pull my hand across the dewy grass because we’re both late.
   At least I know I’m never early.
Are you looking at my lips? Or the little bit of food stuck between my teeth.
The apricot fuzz on my upper lip? Soft and hopefully sweet to the taste.

Was that you?
Did you know that yes, it was also me and I mean it in a way that I have never meant it before.
   I mean it in a way that I don’t want to scare you.
An accident meant to flatter leads to knotted guts.
   If only you knew that you held the key to the lock all along.
I watched you grasping it, sweaty palms and sultry eyes and I realized that you’re new at this too.

How could I ask you to tell your family?
   Pride is a sin, after all.
Not to mention that while I want to pretend I have no idea what it feels like to want to impress someone
   It stings to dangle disowning in front of my face.

Ink dripping down the skin, how long before it can be washed? How long before I’m ready for hot water yet again.
   How long before I learn the sway of your hips?
   Maybe I’ll never get the rhythm right.
   Maybe that’s okay.

Sometimes, I lose track of the words you’re saying because I like watching the way your lips form them.
   There go the pits again, twisting and wild because I’ve never lost focus like this before.
   I want to taste your words, resounding assonance between bouncing breath.

The difference between listening and understanding is everything.
   Can you understand me? Is it even possible?
   Do I make sense when I spit out words in a jumbled mess to impress you?
   At least you laugh at my wordplay.

   At least I can make you smile.

I have so many questions, and a little part of me is scared but
   another part just wants to ask you every single one
   so that I can watch your lips
   form the answers.
by Elayna Caron

I did this piece titled sisterhood in a state of anxiety and frustration. I have a lifelong friend that I grew up with, spending weeks at a time at her house. We are closer than sisters. I have always felt a kind of protective over her, this is why I felt conflicted when she called to tell me she was pregnant. I couldn’t do anything to help her because I had to be in school, but I still had to be strong for her so she could move on. While I’m aware this is someone else’s story, the bond of sisterhood that we share has left me with a lot of emotions I needed to release somehow. This is my reflection on what it means to carry life into a new world with the responsibilities we have.

growing pain

by Heather Miller

My Life: Beginning,
You are in my womb.
This love, a tender seedling.

My life: Busy.
You are growing up fast.
This love, a promising sapling.

My life: Lonely.
You are a woman now.
This love, a mature evergreen.
Refusal

Medium: Lithograph and screen print.

by Gabriela Yoque

I have been exploring the theme of women and sexuality with a greater interest in the intersectionality of both. Throughout history, women have been subjected to the idea of being the humble virgin as she prepares herself for a marriage where she is to please her husband domestically and sexually. Although times have changed, there are still preconceived notions of a woman's outlook on her sexuality. I seek to reject any lingering ideas.

Carnations are known to be a simple flower, cheap in comparison to others. However, there are a multitude of bright and vibrant colors for this flower, each with its own meaning. The meaning of each color usually has a courting connotation. I used printed petals of the "striped" carnation which means "no," a symbol of refusal.

I refuse any lingering ideas of what sexuality should mean to a woman. I refuse to be told that a woman should not be sexually active. I refuse to be told that women cannot enjoy sex. I refuse to accept that a woman who enjoys the pleasure of being sexually active is deemed a slut or a whore.

The striped carnation means, “I’m sorry I can’t be with you, but I wish I could.” Because if I’m with you, I will not be socially accepted as a “proper” woman.