

B.E.T.C.H. RAG NO. 2



♀ TABLE OF CUNTENTS ♀

page #

piece



- 1 BETCH Rag 2 Introduction
- 2 Trigger Warning
- 4 The Bush by Andrea Nelson
- 5 Working Mother by Ashley Jazz

6 A Female Antifa's View from the Struggle by Rhie

8 The Double Whammy: Being a Brown Woman in a World

of Misogyny by Dana Ll'Arab

10 They Came and Burned All the Crops by Your Mother, Your Sister,
Your Daughter, Your Friend

14 White Trash by A. Stanton

15 Aftermath by Arwyn Fox

18 Girl is a Four Letter Word by Arwyn Fox

19 Fat Girl by Curves Aplenty

22 Trash by Anne Noel

24 Dear John by Oryx

27 Barefoot, No Bootstraps by Judy Train

33 Gestalt by J.R.

35 Comic by Cory Trouble Skuldt

WHY HELLO THERE, How are you? What's your name? How did you get here? 1

This is the 2nd issue of the .B.E.T.C.H. Rag zine, and it's about navigating space. We're seeking to boldly go where few have gone before, and we want to go there again and again. We want to explore our lives, the way we participate in them, the way people view us, the way we view ourselves and the world around us.

We live in a patriarchal society which values the experiences of white, heterosexual, upper class, male bodied peoples above all else. In this society we learn to devalue and ignore the experiences of people who do not fit into that privileged group. We especially learn to devalue the experiences of ourselves. Instead of sharing and learning from each other, we go blindly through a fucked up world. But we can share our lives and learn from each other. We can break through the various forms of oppression we experience to create solidarity and real alternatives to the cultures of domination around us. Let's dive deep into each other's lives. Let's learn to open up, to heal, to explore and articulate our thoughts.

This is you, this is me and this is she. The poetry of our lives. Enjoy.

XOXO
B.E.T.C.H.





TRIGGER WARNING

Some things in the zine may be triggering for you or your friends. They will have trigger warnings on them. I usually do one of 2 things when i see a trigger warning

1. don't read it whatever it is
- or 2. read it anyway and feel triggered and freak the fuck out

Here are some helpful hints I've compiled from friends of mine and from new things I've been trying for dealing with triggers....

- make sure you're in a safe space (i.e. not the bus or work) where you can have time alone if you need it
- talk to a friend, get someone you trust to be there (or be a phone call away) when you read/watch something triggering and then talk about with them or just cry in their arms
- only read a paragraph or sentence at a time, slowly. check in with yourself about how your feeling and what you need and stop when you start to feel triggered. pick it up again when you're feeling better, repeat the process
- after crying and feeling freaked out or overwhelmed, listen to some hot booty jams and dance around your room
- follow up a serious/triggering piece with something fun and light hearted, OR something angry and powerful OR something positive that ends well, whichever is going to help you feel more relaxed and/or empowered
- go on a run and run off the trauma
- punch a pillow
- listen to calming music while reading (however you define calming music, that makes you feel more serene and alright)

-write a letter, to the person who wrote the piece or a person who assaulted/harassed you or to the world, it's not a letter you have to send, in fact you can burn it right away if you want

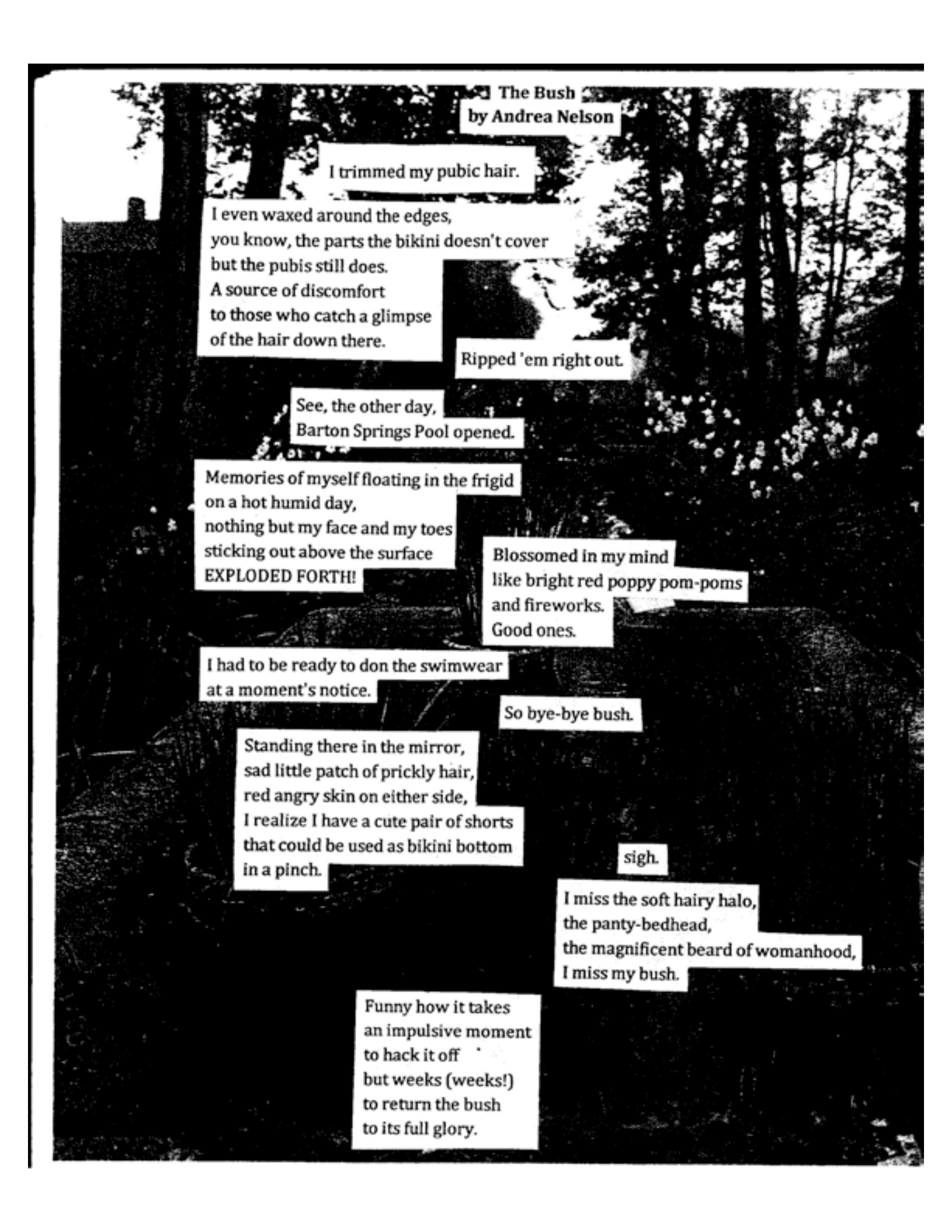
-ask a friend to tell you some jokes (I usually go the text message rout) or keep a list of jokes around to read

It's easy to blame ourselves for feeling like shit. It's easy to fall down that hole where the shitty things that have happened replay in our minds. It's easy to take our anger and frustration out on the people trying to help us. We are rarely taught positive ways of coping (or communicating) in our society, so it's no surprise so many of us do these things. I hope this list gives us the tools to empower ourselves to ask for help when we need it, space when we need it and read what we want.

love
away
and B.E.T.C.H.

"It is brave to feel/ it is brave to be alive"
- Sleater-Kinney

3



The Bush
by Andrea Nelson

I trimmed my pubic hair.

I even waxed around the edges,
you know, the parts the bikini doesn't cover
but the pubis still does.
A source of discomfort
to those who catch a glimpse
of the hair down there.

Ripped 'em right out.

See, the other day,
Barton Springs Pool opened.

Memories of myself floating in the frigid
on a hot humid day,
nothing but my face and my toes
sticking out above the surface
EXPLODED FORTH!

Blossomed in my mind
like bright red poppy pom-poms
and fireworks.
Good ones.

I had to be ready to don the swimwear
at a moment's notice.

So bye-bye bush.

Standing there in the mirror,
sad little patch of prickly hair,
red angry skin on either side,
I realize I have a cute pair of shorts
that could be used as bikini bottom
in a pinch.

sigh.

I miss the soft hairy halo,
the panty-bedhead,
the magnificent beard of womanhood,
I miss my bush.

Funny how it takes
an impulsive moment
to hack it off
but weeks (weeks!)
to return the bush
to its full glory.

Working Mother

Most days, I feel like starting a family is filled with a lot of requirements. Never mind that the average person, seeing you in the supermarket with your daughter, has no idea what it takes to keep your family together. I feel like they are judging me. Does she really discipline her 1 year old?? Is canned fruit really good for a baby? Doesn't she know microwave food is unhealthy?

It doesn't help that the grocery store is my main destination on a weekly basis. Being a stay-at-home-mom is not big on social activities. Especially the way we do it. Most stay-at-home-moms I've met seem to do it because they can afford it. A mom told me just yesterday: "When I started staying home with my daughter, I had such a spending issue! I was used to my entire income being spending money! Boy, was that an adjustment." I smile, but keep quiet, hoping she'll infer that I understand, and then drop the subject. She chats on, about needing a new car, but not wanting to get a brand new one, like her husband wants her to. The truth is, I don't understand.

My husband and I share a car. Most days, I stay home to save on gas. I do not stay home with my daughter because we can afford it. I stay home with her because I don't want to throw her to the daycare sharks.

From stories of children being locked in freezers, and forced to drink Tabasco sauce as a punishment, day care horror stories are everywhere. They alone would be enough to keep me frightened of placing my precious daughter in a stranger's care. However, this last cold fact of reality is the one that keeps my home with her, claws out towards anyone who even suggests putting her in child care: 1 in 3 children are molested before the age of 12, and that is just REPORTED cases. The majority of cases go unreported.

Knowing firsthand the kind of repercussions that can have on a child throughout their entire life, I end up feeling like there is no job more important for me as a mother, than to protect my daughter from this greatest threat to her development and sense of safety. My space is formed only by how I protect her space.

So I embrace the insanity, the monotony. I play peekaboo for the millionth time. I happily accept the stir crazy days. Because I know that to fail to protect her would make me truly crazy. This feeling of stagnation will pass, but her sense of security will be with her forever.

Ashley JAZZ

If I am telling you that you are hurting me,
and you tell me I am overreacting;
you have not heard what I have said.

Rainy

Sunny

If I am telling you that you are hurting me,
and your eyes glaze over because I am "being an emotional girl";
you have taken my right to have my voice heard away.

If I am telling you that you are hurting me,
and you say it's "just a joke"
What I am saying is that it is not funny.

If I am telling you that you are hurting me,
and you interrupt before the thought is finished,
you are merely distracting yourself and trying in vain to distract
me.

These are tactics of war.

If I am telling you that you are hurting me,
we are friends;
were we enemies, my voice would be the least of my arsenal.

If we are to stand together in opposition of racists,
and we are linked arm in arm united in this class war,
if we are to call each other comrades,
our fight should be far removed from internal struggle.

If I am strong enough, good enough, to fight beside you,
why then is there struggle to be your equal?
How can my life be safe with you if my thoughts are not?

Once, my voice was strong,
there was an existence in which I stood before the world
proclaiming my truths to whomever would listen, come what may.
A community in which I belonged,
wherein I found respect.
And in my own little way, I became aware,
I sought axioms unattainable.

A Female Antifa's View from the Struggle
by Rhie

I found myself, lost myself, stumbled and continued.
Accepting oneself is traumatic at best.

And along the way I retreated, **AINFI**
pulled away from the world in which I was most comfortable,
even as I was navigating truths I had yet to expect.
And I observed that there were others in the world,
with less of an ability for their voices to be heard.

I found fulfillment in using my voice
to speak realities that others found difficult to relate to,
to speak out against the unjustness of the world,
to make people uncomfortable.

It was easy to get caught up in the rush,
and easy to stop speaking for myself,
easy to forget that I am facing the same struggles everyday,
easy to retain my training and allow my rights to be taken.

And it is easy for you,
to forget that I am equal,
to forget that I am a person,
deserving of the same respect that we fight for for others.

And it is hard to hear these things about ourselves.
Hard to hear that we are not always living up to the ideas which we
fight for.

But we are friends, comrades,
and if we cannot give to one another
that which we are trying to achieve for others in the world,
then we will fail.

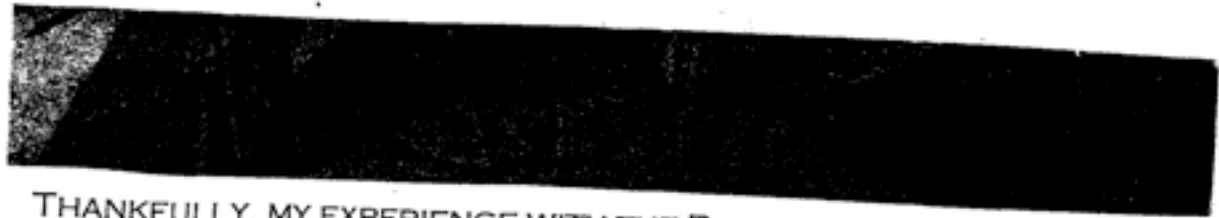
I come to you asking that you fight with me,
that you stand beside me,
that you take a breath and do what's unpopular,
because if we can't do this for each other;
if we, who make ourselves aware,
choose instead the path of blindness
to avoid these growing pains,
then our movement is doomed.

THE DOUBLE-WHAMMY: BEING A BROWN WOMAN IN A WORLD OF MISOGYNY

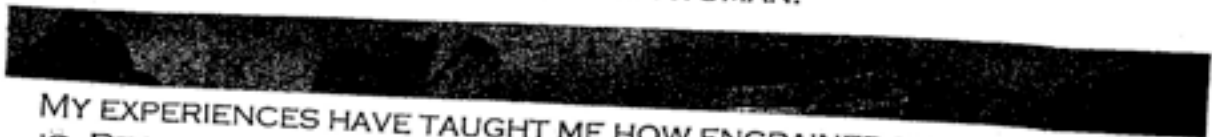
BY: DANA LL'ARAB

BECOMING AN ACTIVIST HAS GIVEN ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A BROWN WOMAN IN THE WORLD WE LIVE IN. I AM PALESTINIAN, AND MY VOCAL AND VIGOROUS POLITICAL ACTIVISM HAS OFTEN ENRAGED RACIST, FASCIST, SEXIST REACTIONARIES IN MY COMMUNITY. AT FIRST, I ASSUMED THAT BEING A PALESTINIAN CAUSED THIS OUTRAGE, WHICH IS NOT OUT OF THE ORDINARY SINCE OUR STRUGGLE IS ALWAYS VEHEMENTLY OPPOSED BY MANY FORCES OF INJUSTICE. HOWEVER, AFTER A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS, I REALIZED BEING A WOMAN WAS JUST AS OFFENSIVE TO SOME PEOPLE AS BEING A PALESTINIAN.

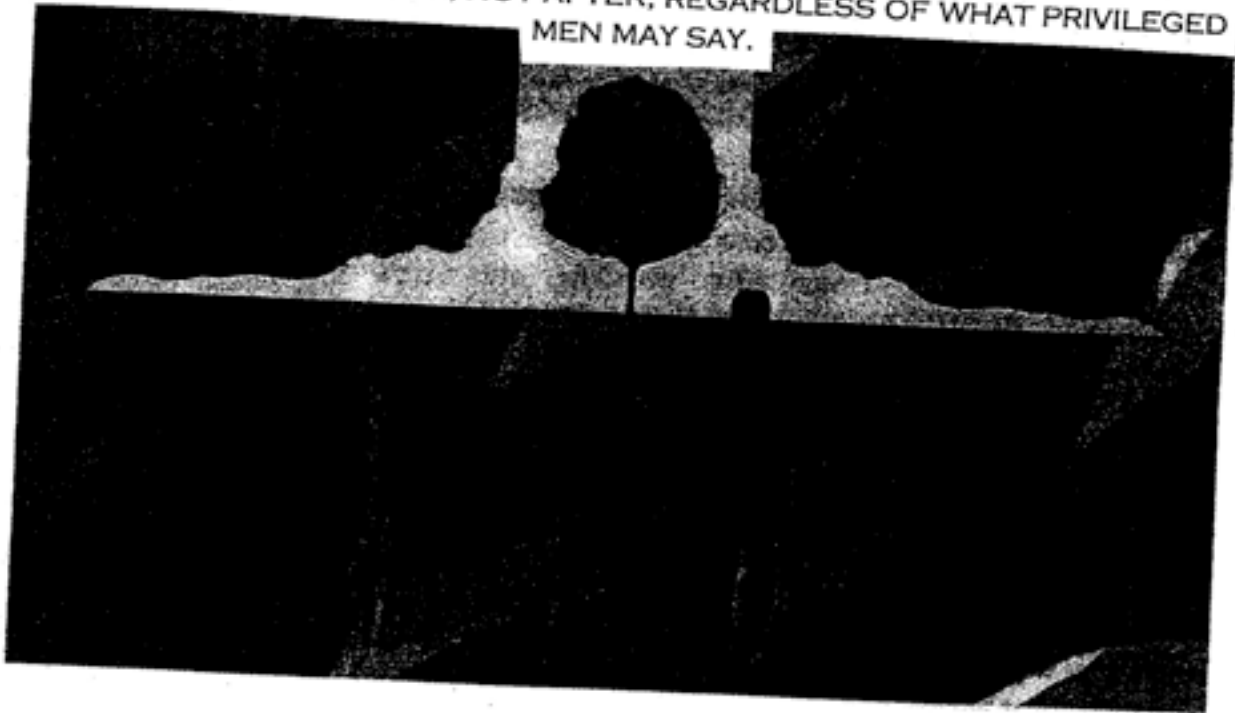
FOR INSTANCE, I WROTE ARTICLES IN MY SCHOOL NEWSPAPER ABOUT TOPICS THAT INTERESTED ME: MAINLY THE ARAB WORLD, DOMESTIC POLICY ON RACE, AND THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE. I FACED RACIST SLURS, THREATS, AND OTHER OPPOSITION OF THE WORST KIND. MOST OF IT DIDN'T REALLY SURPRISE ME...UNTIL I FACED INSULTS AND ATTACKS BASED ON MY GENDER, RATHER THAN MY WORK. THE RIGHT-WING NUT JOBS OPPOSING MY ARTICLES DIDN'T ATTACK MY ARGUMENTS, THEY CALLED ME A WHORE. THEY DIDN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE OF MY OPINIONS, THEY JUST SPREAD RUMORS THAT I HAD ONLY GOTTEN MY JOB AS A RESULT OF SLEEPING WITH THE EDITOR. IT WAS IF THEY WERE SAYING, "YOU'RE PALESTINIAN, YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO TALK. WAIT A SECOND, YOU'RE A GIRL? WELL YOU ARE DOUBLY BARRED FROM VOICING YOUR OPINION!"



THANKFULLY, MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE PALESTINIAN/ARAB COMMUNITY HAS BEEN A POSITIVE ONE IN THIS REGARD. A COMMUNITY COMPRISED OF ASSORTED LEFTISTS AND RADICALS, THE PALESTINIAN/ARAB ORGANIZATIONS WERE ALWAYS HAPPY TO SEE YOUNG WOMEN BECOMING ACTIVE IN POLITICAL ISSUES. YES, SOME MAY HAVE NOT TAKEN ME SERIOUSLY AS A RESULT OF MY GENDER (AND PERHAPS MY AGE), BUT FOR EVERY PERSON WHO DIDN'T, THERE WERE TENS OF PEOPLE INTERESTED TO HEAR WHAT I HAD TO SAY. SOME ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVISTS HAVE TRIED TO TOKENIZE MY PRESENCE ON OCCASION, BUT THIS HAS BEEN MINIMAL. THE LARGE MAJORITY OF THE ARAB/PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN GENUINELY APPRECIATIVE, OPEN-MINDED, AND UNBIASED IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH ME DESPITE THE FACT THAT
GASP I'M A WOMAN.



MY EXPERIENCES HAVE TAUGHT ME HOW ENGRAINED MISOGYNY REALLY IS. PEOPLE FEEL ENTITLED TO CRITICIZE A BROWN WOMAN MUCH MORE THAN A MAN OF ANY RACE. MY ACTIVISM HAS ALSO AFFIRMED THAT SEXISM IS TIED TO OTHER FORMS OF OPPRESSION AND SHOULD BE ERADICATED *IN TANDEM*, NOT AFTER, REGARDLESS OF WHAT PRIVILEGED
MEN MAY SAY.



They Came and Burned All the Crops

By: *Your Girlfriend, Your Mother,
Your Sister, Your Daughter, Your Friend*

WARNING: Contents are triggering.

Choking on sobs. A moment of clarity.

Oh, my busted lip. I'm crying, someone hit me.

Someone took everything.

I'm hurting, it hurts.

"Do you want to go to the hospital or not?"

I moan in thought and grumble.

I am wide awake with a puffy face.

I am wide awake, shaking, shrunken.

Where the fuck am I?

I know where I am but this can't be happening.

Not this, not again, not like this.

Don't leave me in this room.

Don't leave me in here alone

with my own shit staining my dress, they stole my underwear, my
beaten body in this cold room.

Don't leave me here.

Restraint makes you crazier. I buck harder.

Police take their time to get to the hospital
only to tell me that I am not taking my rape very seriously.

I ran away. Fuck you, pig. Fuck you.

I knew it didn't matter. Nothing matters.

There is no justice for women like me.

I showered. I scrub and scrub
in the scalding water.

Get the blood and shit off of me.

I am sobbing,

screaming in the back of my throat and
choking on the shock.

Get the blood and shit off of me.

Take it back.

11

Deep sleep, vivid dreams.

I jolt awake.

A soft rain patters on my window.

I stare at the fading day, waking up.

The truth is still there when you wake up.

This is your nightmare.



I step outside and vomit in the dewy grass.
There was nothing to throw up, just a stomach lurching forward.

Empty but too sick
with the thought of moving on.

You snort at my "need to talk to you"
until you see me.

You see my lip.

I sit on the floor

looking up at you with my wet, red face

"I can't be with you anymore".

The tension, hardness in my shoulders return.

"I don't know why I showered"

I will go back to the hospital after I sleep more.

Weary sleep, pure black.

I jolt awake.

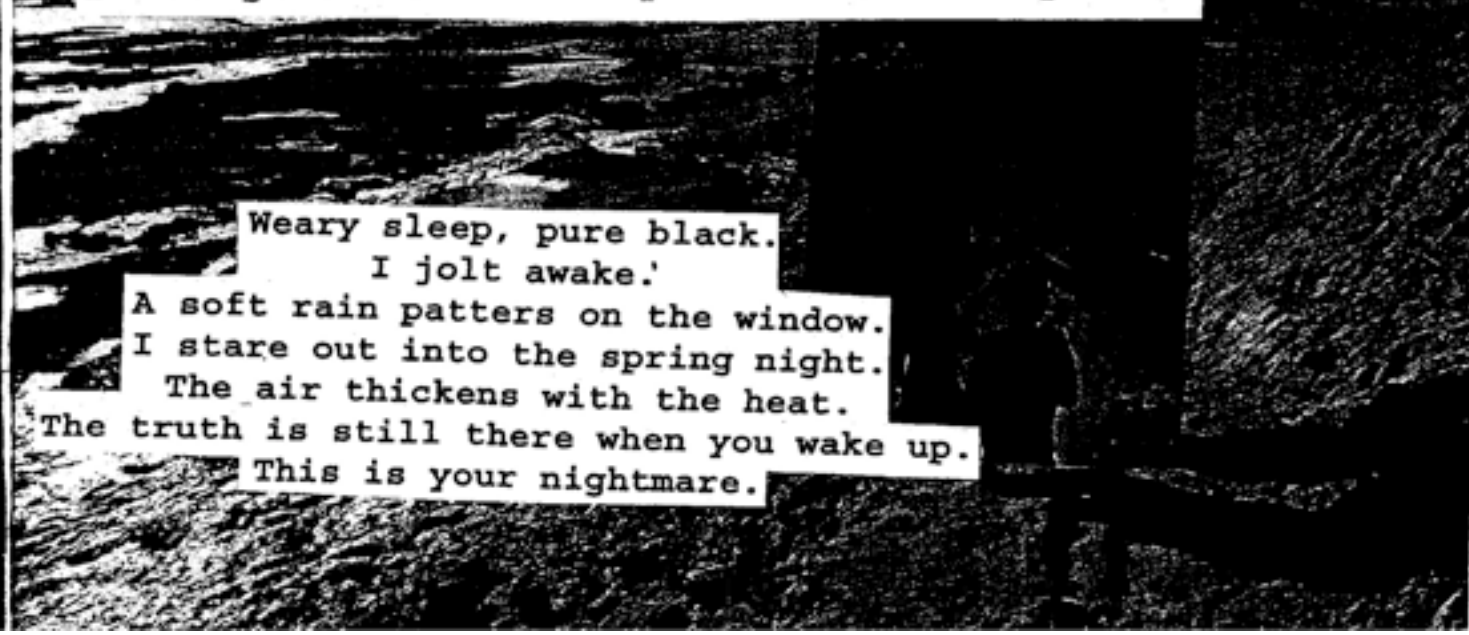
A soft rain patters on the window.

I stare out into the spring night.

The air thickens with the heat.

The truth is still there when you wake up.

This is your nightmare.



The cuts and bruises don't lie.
Broken blood vessels,
finger mark bruises everywhere,
just everywhere.

Then comes the ink,
cold on my vulva and asshole.
Cuts, scrapes on my inner lips.

Cuts around my asshole, forcing me open.

Dry, prodding cotton in my vagina.

Dry, prodding cotton in my asshole.

"Let's just hope you didn't
contract any STDs and you're not pregnant.
You can leave out the back door."

Plan B, antibiotics and
a weird hug from the SANE nurse*

After a week apart, we had sex again.
You were careful with me. I loved you.

You stopped being careful with me.

Crawling in and initiating.

I froze

and tried to live in the love I had for you.

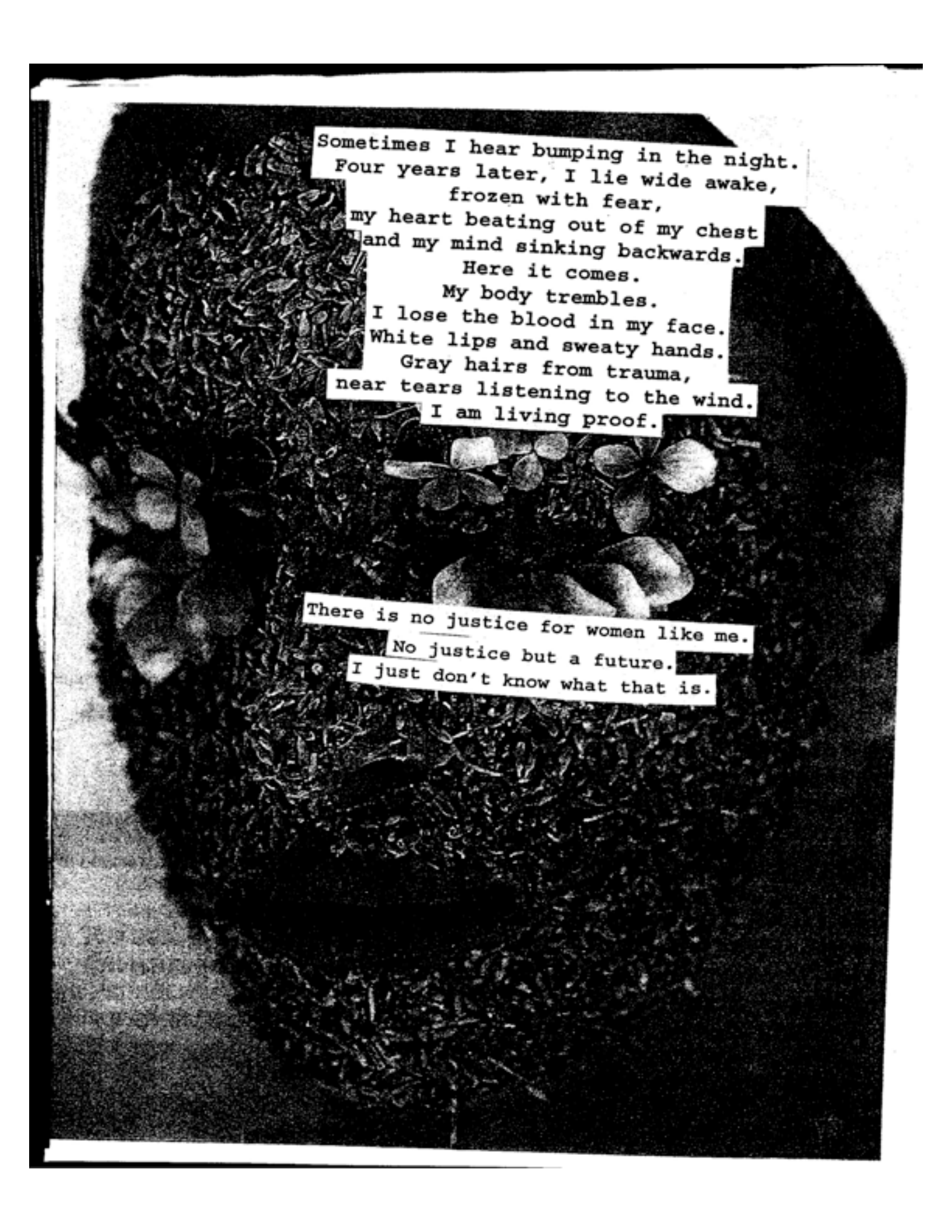
Leaving my body.

"It's like a part of you has died
and it's never coming back"
explained the state-appointed counselor.
I nearly broke in half.

Every night, every two hours.
Wide awake, searching for the door
and crying in the dark.
Drinking, driving, burying myself.
Leave my body.

I'm leaving this place, I'm leaving you.
I can't live like this. I will die like this.
Leaving my body.

12



Sometimes I hear bumping in the night.
Four years later, I lie wide awake,
frozen with fear,
my heart beating out of my chest
and my mind sinking backwards.

Here it comes.

My body trembles.

I lose the blood in my face.

White lips and sweaty hands.

Gray hairs from trauma,

near tears listening to the wind.

I am living proof.

There is no justice for women like me.

No justice but a future.

I just don't know what that is.

WHITE TRASH

I WANT TO CALL IT A MINORITY BECAUSE IT ISOLATED ME. AND IT LACKED IDENTITY. I WOULD NEVER BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. I WOULD NEVER KNOW ABOUT SAVVY CITY THINGS. I WOULD BE ALIENATED BY WAITRESSES AND STRANGE FOOD. I WOULD NEVER FIND OUT...YOU KNOW-ABOUT THE WORLD AND STUFF. I WOULD BE THE VICTIM OF SOCIETY. I WOULD PUNCH THE CLOCK AT THE KWIK TRIP AND WAIT TO DIE. I'D HAVE 3 HUSBANDS OR THE CHILDREN OF NONE. CELEBRITY NEWS. FREE OVER-SIZED MEN'S T-SHIRTS. RACISM. METH. NO RESPECT.

IN REAL LIFE, I SURE AS SHIT DON'T HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE, SO THAT'S ONE THING.

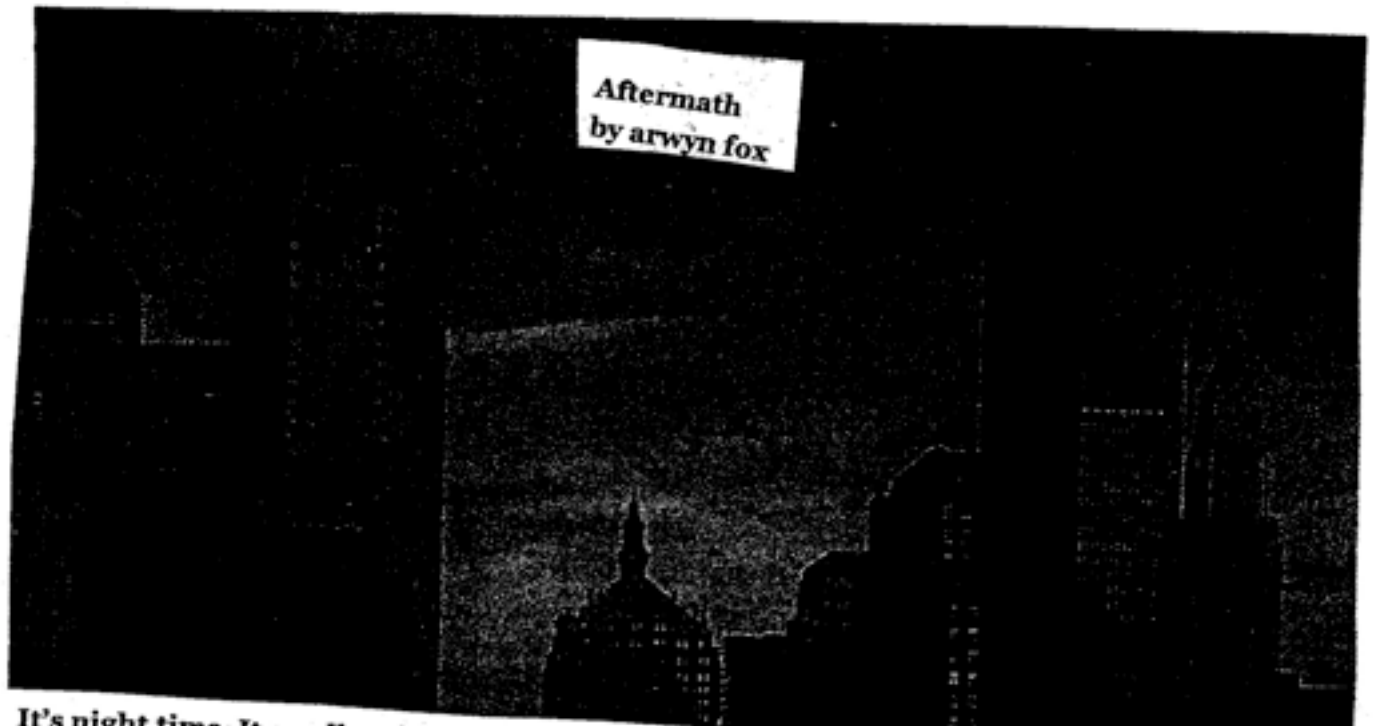
I WAS TOO SCARED OF COLLEGE, BUT I ESCAPED THE BUBBLE OF FEAR SOMEHOW. I WAS MYSELF. SIDEWAYS GLANCES FROM GRANDMA. "I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D BE A SENATOR'S WIFE..."

NO CLAIM. NO BURNING OF PEAT MOSS OR OMINOUS CATHOLIC CALL & RESPONSE CHURCH SERVICES OR SECRET SPAGHETTI SAUCE OR QUINCEANERA OR TEXAN PRIDE OR FORBIDDEN MILK AND MEAT AT THE SAME MEAL OR JUNETEENTH. JUST HAM & MARGARINE SANDWICHES ON HAMBURGER BUNS SERVED HELP YOURSELF STYLE ON PLASTIC STACKABLE BAKERY RACKS AT THE WEDDING OF A WEIRD DISTANT COUSIN OF YOUR EX-CON STEPDAD'S HELD AT THE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS 4TH BUILDING.

I SHOULDN'T BE SHITTY. GREAT UNCLE JAMES' GRILLED CHICKEN THIGHS BASTED IN WHITE VINEGAR AND SALT IS THE JAM. AND I HATE THOSE UPPITY FUCKS WITH PERFECT ELOCUTION ON THE CLASSICAL STATION. AND JUST-PICKED TOMATOES FROM THE LITTLE PATCH IN FRONT OF GRANDMA'S TRAILER-SLICED AND SALTED WITH YOUR LEFSA AND GRITS & EGGS. FISHING AND NATTY. IT TOOK ME TOO LONG TO FIND THAT SWEETNESS.

A.STANTON

Aftermath
by arwyn fox



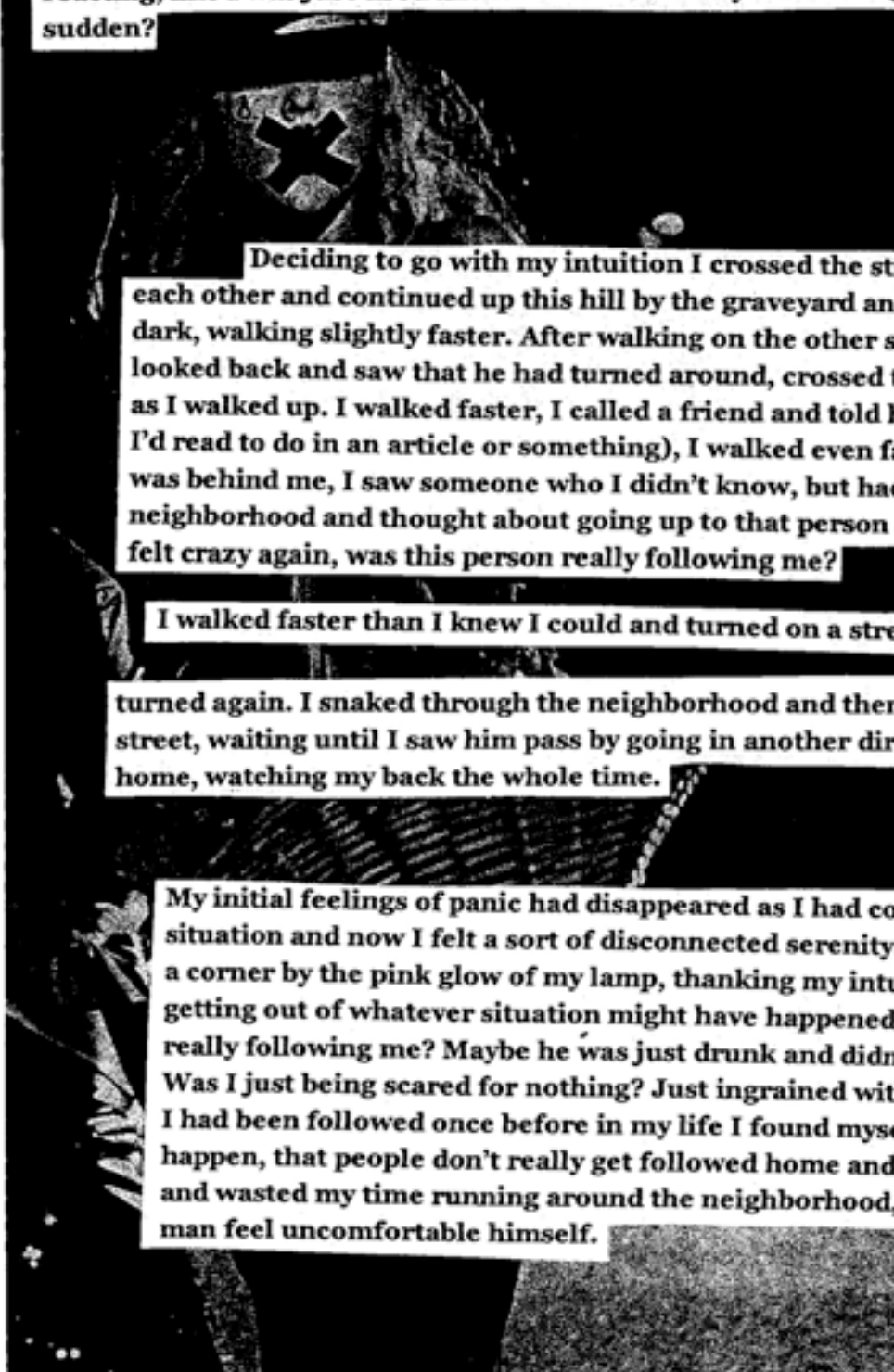
It's night time. It smells crisp and wintery, but I feel hot, looking for my bike helmet and my mace and being so aware of how late I will be for my date. I'm on my bike going faster than I like to go down the hill and my heart is beating faster and faster and this car almost hits me and I'm so angry. I'm so angry I don't feel comfortable leaving my house without mace, and angry that I don't feel safe anywhere, and angry that I can't protect my friends or even myself. I ride past the police station and want to throw up. Wrapped up in my head things speed past me and everything feels like it's going to attack. I don't want to go on a date, I don't want to be alone in the street, I don't want to even be outside.

trigger warning this story deals with being followed home

About 2 weeks before that night I was walking up that same hill. I had eaten dinner with some friends and taken the bus back to my house, but it was late enough that the bus wasn't going ALL the way back, just half way, 2 miles. I walked along well lit streets where there would be people and cars. I took the pony tail out of my hair because I've always heard pony tails make it easier for people to grab your hair when attacking you. I walked fast, close to the street, I paid attention to my surroundings. I looked confident, held my head up, acted like I knew where I was going. All these things my mom and other women have told me to do all my life to avoid getting assaulted.

I was approaching the only hill on my walk, with only a half mile left before I was finally home. I was tired and full and sweaty and my backpack was heavy and I was walking slower and slower.

At the top of the hill there was a man walking down, dressed somewhat stylishly, but walking funny like he was sort of drunk or something. Inside of me something went off, like an alarm, one that I've only had go off 2 other times in my life, one of those being when I met someone who turned out to be an FBI informant. I felt like I was over reacting, like I was just tired and it was late and why was I being so scared all of a sudden?



Deciding to go with my intuition I crossed the street so we wouldn't walk past each other and continued up this hill by the graveyard and park where it was super dark, walking slightly faster. After walking on the other side for a couple minutes I looked back and saw that he had turned around, crossed the street and was behind me as I walked up. I walked faster, I called a friend and told her where I was (something I'd read to do in an article or something), I walked even faster. For several blocks he was behind me, I saw someone who I didn't know, but had seen before in my neighborhood and thought about going up to that person and asking for help, but I just felt crazy again, was this person really following me?

I walked faster than I knew I could and turned on a street that wasn't mine, then turned again. I snaked through the neighborhood and then back towards the main street, waiting until I saw him pass by going in another direction before I finally went home, watching my back the whole time.

My initial feelings of panic had disappeared as I had concentrated on getting out of the situation and now I felt a sort of disconnected serenity. I sat on the floor of my room in a corner by the pink glow of my lamp, thanking my intuition and feeling so capable for getting out of whatever situation might have happened. And then I felt stupid, was he really following me? Maybe he was just drunk and didn't know where he was going? Was I just being scared for nothing? Just ingrained with a fear of men? Despite the fact I had been followed once before in my life I found myself thinking that it didn't really happen, that people don't really get followed home and I had imagined the whole thing and wasted my time running around the neighborhood, and maybe even made that man feel uncomfortable himself.

As I ride my bike on east 5th, finally away from cars and noise, I think about everything I do to avoid being assaulted. The things I do everyday to minimize the attention I get. The items of clothing I want to wear that I don't feel safe in. Carrying a knife and now mace everywhere I went. And now, should I just not go outside at night? And what about during the day? Even walking down the street during the day I was honked at, harassed and approached by men I didn't know. What I should I do? Sit in my house by myself because other people feel a need to remind me that I'm a target? Sometimes I do. Not tonight. But sometimes. Sometimes I play my headphones so loud they hurt my ears so I won't hear the honking.

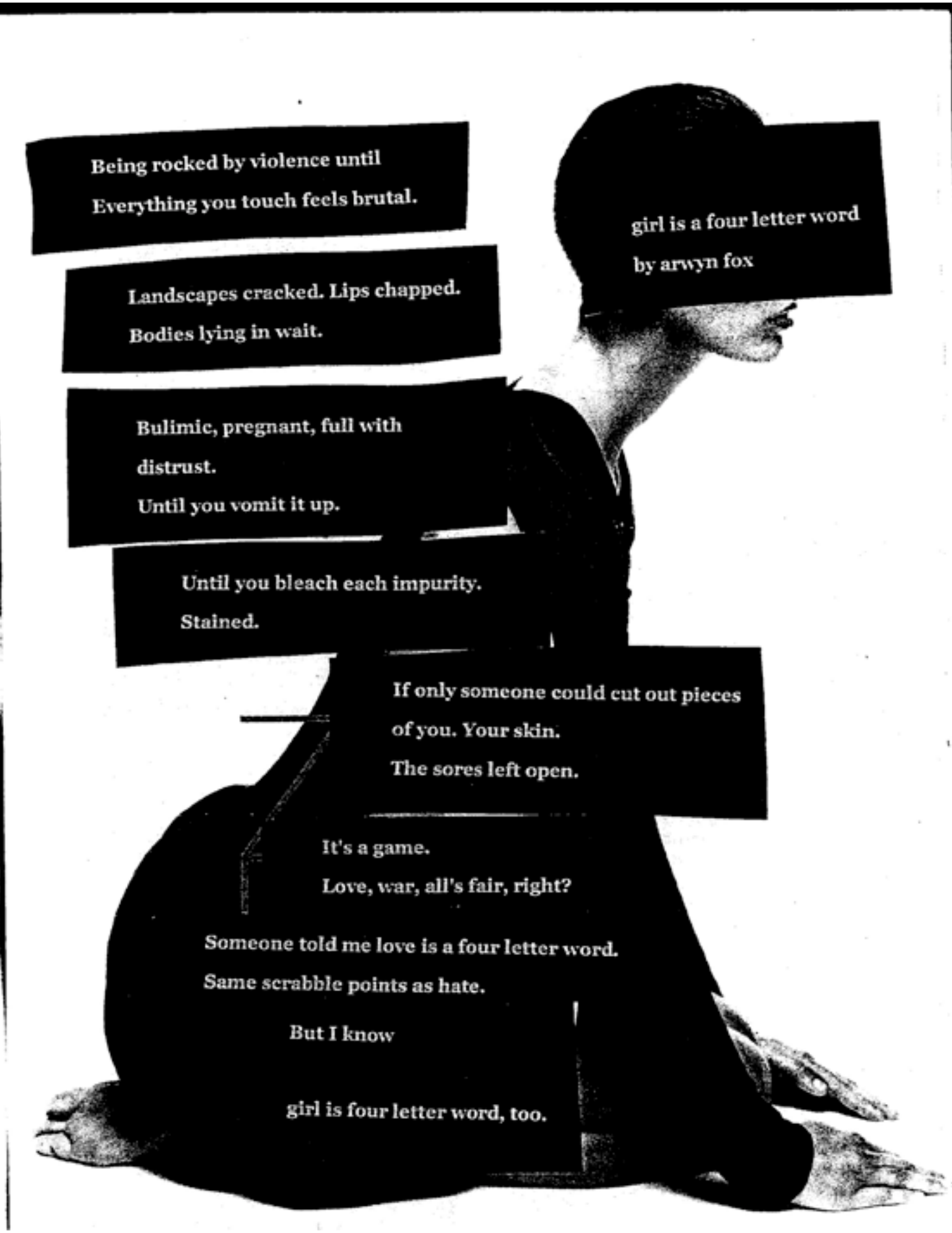
I get to the bar and I want everyone to get the fuck out of my way. I feel like a live wire. Is there any reason I wouldn't have thought that man was following me? When so many of my lady friends have been harassed and assaulted (by both people they know and strangers)? When I'm reminded that some asshole wants to fuck me (regardless of how I feel about it) everyday? When these assholes at the bar act entitled to my space and my time? This isn't just the aftermath of one incident, because there never was just one incident. Because every traumatic thing has a way of bringing up all the other traumatic things, other assaults and violations of my boundaries boiling to the top and overflowing.

But I'm here, I'm at the bar and slowly I forget being so on fire, so angry and sad and scared. Some days I am reliving and some days I am. Some days I don't want to go outside and I don't. And some days I go outside even though I don't want to. The space in my head filled with the things I do to feel safe and the knowledge that nothing guarantees safety.

When I get home I'm slightly drunk and exhausted. I've forgotten the trauma and now I feel giddy and ready for sleeping and dreams. My best friend is already asleep in my bed with my cat next to her and blue christmas lights above her. I crawl into bed and she wakes up just enough to ask how my date was. The blue glow of my room is so different from the bar, from the street and from the rest of the house and I fall asleep.

At a young age in my life I learned a lot of things. I've learned I can travel alone, I learned how to figure out the bus schedule anywhere. But I still would never hitch hike alone. I've learned I can stay anywhere, find shelter anywhere, sleep under trees or on top of buildings, or by a river. But I still would never sleep in the open alone. I learned how to take care of myself, how to get help when I need it, how to watch out for my friends and ask them to watch out for me. I've learned that if anything happens to me it is my responsibility and not that of the person attacking me. I've learned to be aware, to be afraid, to watch my drink, to watch my back. I've learned the names of the women who have been killed on the street, in camp sites, at bars, in their homes. I know the statics, the stories of my friends, my own history.

So what now? What now when I walk down the street? When I wake up? When I go out? I've never learned to accept how it is, to not let it get to me, to not be angry at the amount of fear I've been taught. I don't know if I ever will.



Being rocked by violence until
Everything you touch feels brutal.

Landscapes cracked. Lips chapped.
Bodies lying in wait.

Bulimic, pregnant, full with
distrust.
Until you vomit it up.

Until you bleach each impurity.
Stained.

If only someone could cut out pieces
of you. Your skin.
The sores left open.

It's a game.
Love, war, all's fair, right?

Someone told me love is a four letter word.
Same scrabble points as hate.

But I know

girl is four letter word, too.

girl is a four letter word
by arwyn fox

Fat Girl

By Curves Aplenty

For as long as I can remember my Mother and Grandmother told me that I ate too much.

"You need to diet, try not eating bread" and

"You can't have any of that" and

"Do you want to start exercising together?"

For as long as I have been aware that my sisters were both rail thin, for as long as I had been aware that I had a body, I learned to feel shame for any part of myself below the neck.

Pictures of a nine year old hiding her body behind her sister so that there are no pictures. As puberty burgeoned you can see the shame unfold in me. My shoulders shrink, I mumble quietly. I am 13 and insist on wearing pants in the Texas heat.

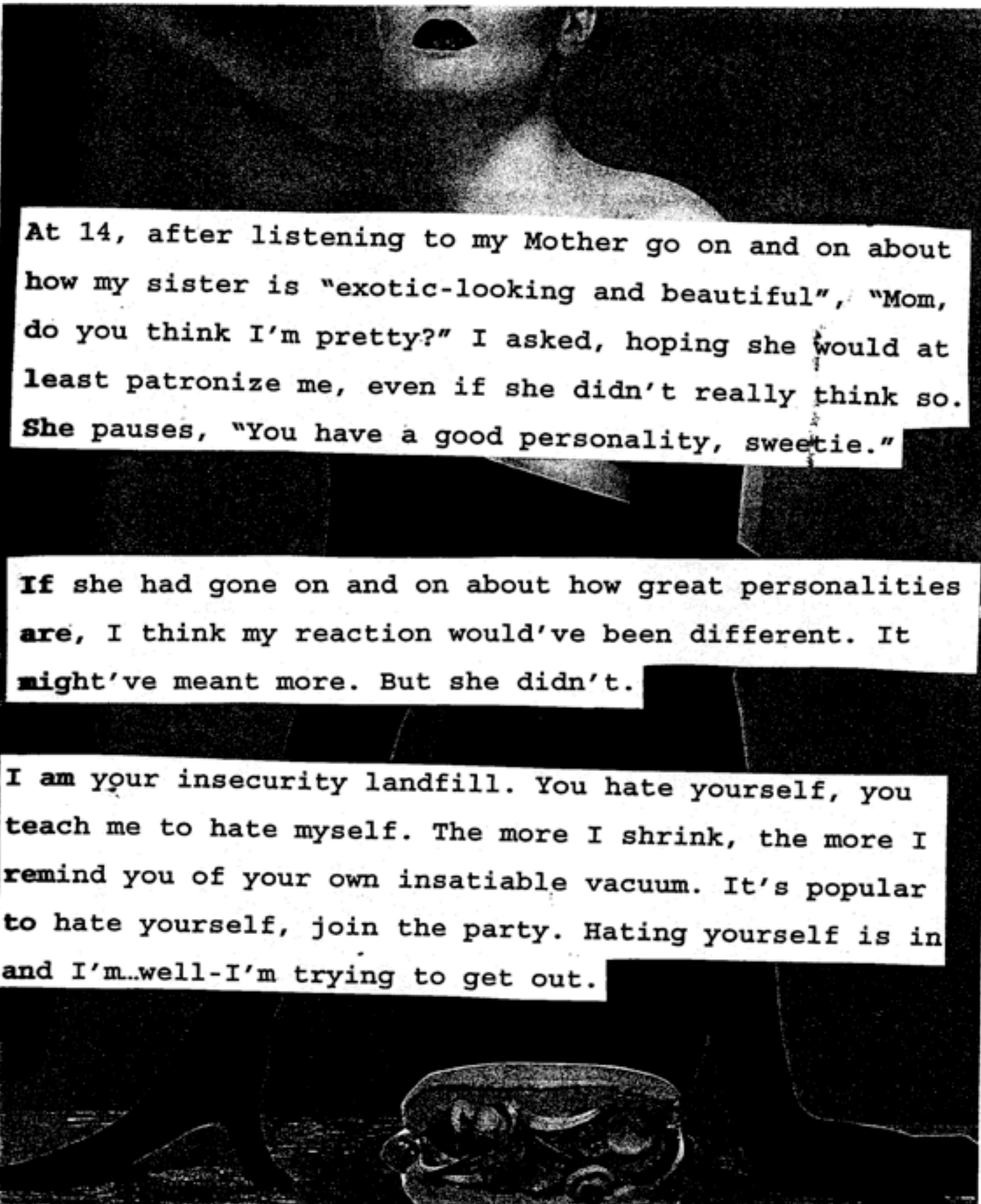
I wear shorts swimming. I don't go outside much.

My Mother arbitrarily bars me from eating things.

She shows me her own sacred rituals of self-hatred.

The weighing, the binging, pluck, shave and still hate what looks back at you.





At 14, after listening to my Mother go on and on about how my sister is "exotic-looking and beautiful", "Mom, do you think I'm pretty?" I asked, hoping she would at least patronize me, even if she didn't really think so. She pauses, "You have a good personality, sweetie."

If she had gone on and on about how great personalities are, I think my reaction would've been different. It might've meant more. But she didn't.

I am your insecurity landfill. You hate yourself, you teach me to hate myself. The more I shrink, the more I remind you of your own insatiable vacuum. It's popular to hate yourself, join the party. Hating yourself is in and I'm...well-I'm trying to get out.

TRASH BY Anne Noel

Trash.

I thought being thrown around by your brother was bad enough
being shown a life I never wanted
this I could have done without

Living in a white trash town
following the white trash ways
and just to top it all off
this i could have done without

down goes the cheap vodka you solely survive on
I join you for drinks
but have no idea whats really going on

merely seventeen
just as tainted and torn as i'd ever be
but pure and more precious than youd think
till one evening with too many drinks

The fact that youre an alcoholic doesn't give an excuse
to drag along your cousin by sexual abuse
bring me down to your hellacious frame of mind
and scar me till the end of time

what happened next didn't help much more
blamed for it all
my body and mind were sore

merely seventeen
just as tainted and torn as i'd ever be
but pure and more precious than youd think
till one evening with too many drinks

feeling like a piece of trash
even more than before
I took things into my own hands

Exes threatened to shatter his knees
but of course on someone else, I couldn't depend
promise broken and I had no choice

got to the bus stop at three am

$$x^3 + 3xy + y^2 + 2xy - 7xy^2 +$$

I'm never coming back to this place again

got to the bus stop at three am

I'm never coming back to this place again

$$(x-y)^3 = x^3 - y^3 - 3xy(x+y)$$
$$(x^3 - y)^3 = x^3 - y^3 - 3xy(x-y)$$

got to the bus stop at three am
I'm never coming back to this place again

$$x + (2y)$$

I'm trash, I'm trash, I'm trash
why must I learn everything the hard way

Dear John,

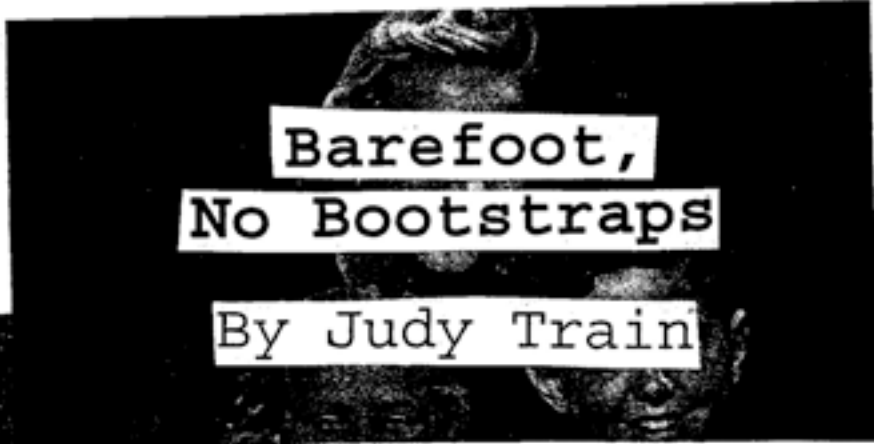
i've been feeling sort of strange lately. Thinking about the way i interact with people and with myself. A lot of my self esteem still comes from what men think of me, even though i've done a lot of work on myself. And even though i sometimes hate men, i don't know what to do, you don't deserve the responsibility of my whole sense of self weighing down on you. i want to break this pattern i feel so insecure in my partnerships, wondering how long someone - you - will maintain interest in me. How long before

you will think i'm too fat,
too fucked up, too sad. i
want to talk to you about
these things but i'm afraid of
sounding crazy, like an overly
emotional girl. i'm afraid of
depending on you too much for
emotional support, of making our
relationship too serious. i'm
afraid of smashing the pedestal
you may have put me on. Or
shattering the image i've worked
so hard to create of what a
strong, capable woman i am.
i don't want to be vulnerable,
opened up for all to see, to
feel, to truly know. The thought
alone makes me want to throw up

i'm worried i won't be fun
anymore. That you'll hate me.
Or, just as bad, want to be the
one who saves me, the hero. That
you'll devote so much time to
me. i want to be your equal,
but i can't find anything, any
real way to relate without exposing
too much of myself. It all becomes
some fucked up game we are
suppose to be okay with. But it is
so much work to hide so many sides
of myself. And just as much work to
get the courage not to hide. All i
can do sometimes is open my legs
and shut everything else. But even
that never makes you happy. i
can hear the voice "it's like
you're not even there". i'm not.

xoxo


orlyk




Barefoot, No Bootstraps

By Judy Train


I was raised by my single Mother and visiting, weekend Father. We played around condemned houses, playgrounds and parks. One huge backyard. Ghost stories, pretend, make your dollhouses underneath the chair. Mom's shoe is the doll's car. Our neighbor friends' Dad works at McDonald's, he brings home all the happy meal toys. There are toys, imagination, food, electricity. Mom is not always around but we can take care of each other.



We are put through awful daycare systems. The cheapest and least regulated. Made to eat off the floor with our hands behind our backs. Being thrown in a closet or sexually harassed by young boys. You get what you pay for.



I started to slowly awaken to my family's humble means. Each year shed more and light to the gaps in what my peers had and what I had.



I was homeless in the 5th and 6th grade after our house caught on fire. We were never homeless for very long. I really settled into my identity as "that girl".

As puberty festered, my classmates and became increasingly concerned with what we were wearing, what we were eating; we started counting each other's money.

I started to define my dress as "different", running with other angry kids, stuffed into duplexes, sharing beds with their sisters. Crazy colored make up, tights and whatever hand me downs ended up in my closet.

Parading my alienation didn't quell the sting of being carted away with the other 5-10% poor kid population of the school to be lectured about pregnancy and drugs. Or handed "Coats for Kids" applications and being pulled aside, despite my good grades, to be counseled by someone a few grades ahead. It was all so insulting.

I went to the Fine Arts Academy for high school. I rode the city bus, made A's, drank coffee and smoked cigarettes. Pretty soon, I had dropped out, was riding the city bus, still drinking coffee and still smoking cigarettes. It was time to graduate.

My Mother had kicked me out of the house at 17. She had been on a bad run of pills and was in a traumatizing relationship with a crack head. She closed the garage door on my sister and me while we were barefoot.

I lived away that summer. I worked as much as I could. When I moved back in that fall, she started kicking me out arbitrarily. No rules yet always breaking them. I decided my job and finishing high school required a stable home.

My 17 year old apartment was not incredibly stable but it was a place to lay my head. I went to an alternative high school for pregnant teenagers, dropouts and people who wanted to get the fuck out of high school. I

lived with 3, sometimes 4, punk boys. The apartment had long lost the domestic touches I tried to impose and I lived in a dump. But a dump that was mine, until we got evicted.

We lived with Jesus' parents for a month and found a house newly remodeled, ex-gangsters grilling, people following you, asking if you're a prostitute and how much for your pussy, a tejano bar and the occasional gunshot. Home.

School, coffee, work, drink. Repeat. Teenage blue collar.

Around graduation, many restaurants hold private parties for the bourgeois grads to have their own parties (this is an additional party to the dinner you go out to with your family). The restaurant I worked at shut down for a private graduation party. The woman who was in charge of this particular party was giving us, the restaurant employees, instructions. As she started to detail how to handle the guestbook, a former classmate of the Fine Arts Academy walked through the double doors. This was his party.

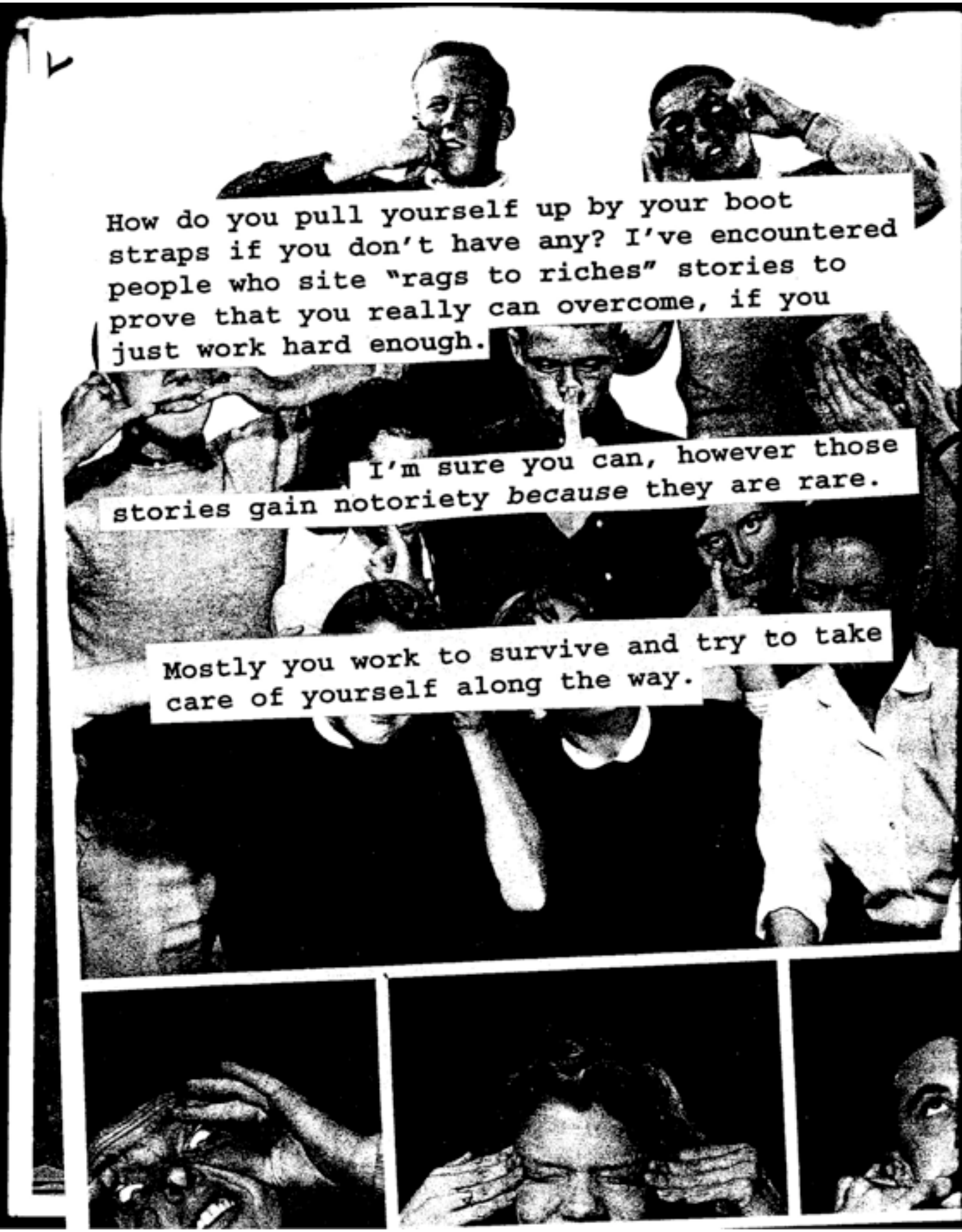
"Oh hey, I didn't know you worked here." he politely stated. "Yep" I said quickly. I wanted to fall through the floor, sneak out and run, anything to not have to pay service to a peer of mine. But there it was, looking me in the face.

You have parties, parents that throw you parties, a mother, a home, your college all picked out and a very comfortable life ahead of you. My back will continue to hurt, I will continue to scramble and cope. "Well, feel free to come to the party whenever you get off." he smiled and went on to greet his family and many guests. Feel free. Feel free?

I went outside on my smoke break to say hi to some other former classmates but the line was very clear. I was getting a stinking smug from the parents and elders of the party that "the help" was mingling with their promising youth. I get it. I'll leave.

I've done things. I've been to school some. I've moved around. I want to travel. At my very core, I don't see anything wrong with the way I live and have lived. It is more the treatment I get that bothers me. The look down the nose, awkward guilt and discomfort in knowing the reality of my life.

I don't think my shoulder has completely grown back. I was getting so angry, trying to go back to community college recently and prove my minority status to an industrialized institution that doesn't even really promise financial security. I think about how much SAT tutorials cost (hundreds! thousands!) and the like. The true cost of "finer education". The grooming and extra boosts and extra time it takes.



How do you pull yourself up by your boot straps if you don't have any? I've encountered people who site "rags to riches" stories to prove that you really can overcome, if you just work hard enough.

I'm sure you can, however those stories gain notoriety because they are rare.

Mostly you work to survive and try to take care of yourself along the way.

By: JR

Sometimes I'm angry at my body, and not just in the recovering-from-fucked-up-socialization-around-beauty-standards kind of way. So many of my experiences are directly related to how OTHER people view it, judge it, interact with it, or violate it. This zine is about what it's like to move through space as "you" - here's what I have to say...

Some basic pieces of information about me that you might or might not pick up from looking at me: I identify as female, as a mixed-ethnicity Chicana. I'm short, curvy, and have dark hair, brown skin. A few tattoos, a few piercings. I'm a survivor and an anarchist.

These basic facts tell you some things about me, but they are only pieces of the gestalt that is me - the collective sum of my experiences, my beliefs, and my truths to tell. So I'm annoyed, really pissed, that so few people I encounter are willing to look beyond these basic things that my body "tells" others. Not to mention that it's presumptuous for people to interpret my gender identity, ethnic identification, etc. one way or another just by looking at me, anyways...

I'm tired of being told that I'm not what someone expected. This has happened to me all my life. So I wonder, what have these different people throughout my life expected by looking at me? Did they expect me to be ineloquent or less intelligent because I'm brown? Did they expect me to be deferent or unwilling to create waves because I'm female? Did they expect me to be informed or naïve because I look younger than I am? Did they expect me to be less down or inferior politics or analysis because I'm not dressing punk enough? The list could go on for a long time.

I also want to talk about the subtle violence that is often part of my experience as a person of mixed ethnic background. I can't count the number of times I've heard either "What are you?" or "Where are you from?" or "You're so exotic looking" - the latter meant to be some kind of compliment. But really, these things just convey a sense that you are an Other, that you don't fit into the picture or that your presence is suspect.

When I was younger I used to just indulge people and try to convey the complicated history that is my lineage; often their interest would fade as I got into the details of country of origin vs. ethnicity. They probably really just wanted to figure out why I looked like something they hadn't seen before or something that didn't quite fit a mold. I've gotten less indulgent; when people ask me where I'm from I'll often say something like "Houston, but if you're really asking about my ethnicity, that's a different question..."

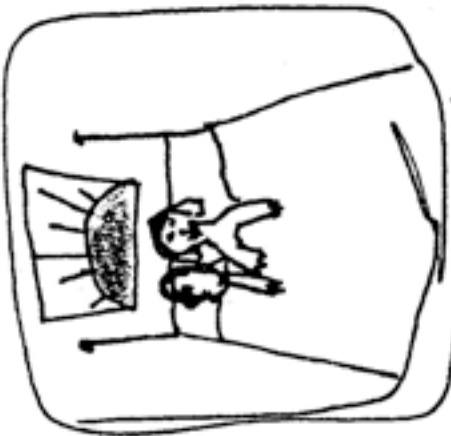
Sometimes I reflect on how I've internalized a lot of the Othering I've experienced. I've learned by habit to show different parts of myself to different people or in certain situations; it has made me pretty adaptive, but also guarded. I often feel like I don't really have a niche and that maybe I never will; that I am an outsider among outsiders. Admittedly, it's often easier to indulge



those "lone wolf" feelings. But along the way I've realized that I can fight those feelings, that I can carve out and re-claim spaces for myself and my comrades. I know I'm not the only one who has felt this way.

Love and solidarity,

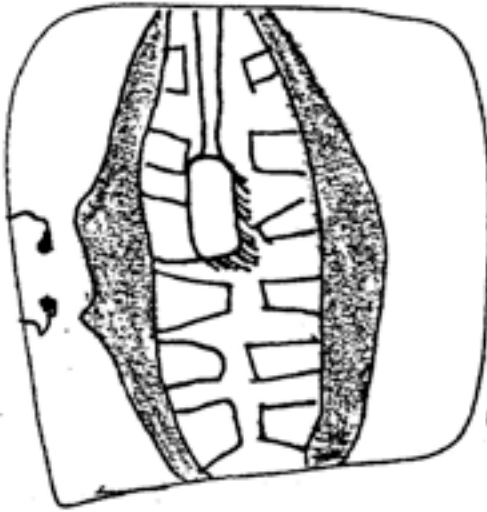
JR



EVERY DAY!
WAKE UP...



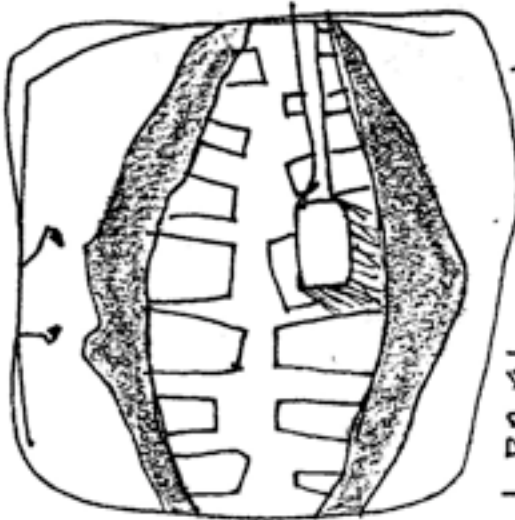
DRINK A MODERATELY
SIZED CUP OF COFFEE...



BRUSH MY TEETH...




AND DO A FEW THINGS
AROUND THE
HOUSE...



I BRUSH MY TEETH
AGAIN...



AND THEN IT'S TIME
TO GO TO BED.



B.E.T.C.H. needs you. There are many ways to get involved: We can always use help at events (tabling, zine release parties, breakfast houses, movie nights and discussions). If you have space we can use for events tell us! We also love hearing your suggestions for movies and discussions topics. You should also contribute to future zines with essays, comics, poetry, etc, or helping us lay out the zine!

If you're interested in joining the collective we'd love to talk with and get to know you better! Don't feel pressured to make a big time commitment right away; anything and everything is helpful. We want you around, even if it can only be occasionally.

Similarly, if you or a group you're involved with needs help putting on discussions or other related events exploring gender and feminism, we'd love to help out in any way we can.

If you are trying to start a ladies' group we'd love to talk to you. We can offer networking, advice, support or resources. Any group fitting our points of unity can use the name B.E.T.C.H., just get in touch with us. Either way we want to do what we can to build the network of empowered ladies across North America and the world and that starts with you.

Please get in contact with us through our email betchatx@gmail.com, facebook, or our website: <http://betchatx.blogspot.com>. We look forward to hearing from you and getting to know you better.

With solidarity and love and forever smashing patriarchy,
Your favorite thunder cunts

HEY! THANK YOU THANK YOU!!



**THANKS FOR READING THIS ISSUE
OF .B.E.T.C.H. RAG!**

**HEAPS OF SLOPPY LOVE TO THE FOLLOWING
FOR MAKING THIS AS GREAT AS IT IS:**

ALL THOSE WHO SUBMITTED THEIR BEAUTIFUL WORK

THE TREASURE CITY THEFT COLLECTIVE

**ALL OUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES, ESPECIALLY ARIEL,
DESMOND, JEN, AND SEAN**

AND GWAR, YOU NEVER LET US DOWN.

**WE ARE FOREVER INDEBTED TO ALL OF YOU
AND HOPE WE CAN CONTINUE TO WORK TO-
GETHER TO CREATE SAFER SPACES AND A
BAD ASS COMMUNITY IN AUSTIN!**



MISSION STATEMENT:

We aim to revolutionize definitions and applications of feminism, we challenge gender roles, beauty standards, and any other patriarchal bullshit while building fun, empowering communities in safe, positive environments. We support all people working towards liberation by fostering solidarity through strong ally relationships.

We are BEAUTIFUL, EDUCATED THUNDER CURTS FROM HELL!