

Hi there,

It's been 8 months since I wrote the last zine, and 9 months since stuff happened that was pretty traumatic. I'm not sure if I've processed everything, and I'm still very affected by everything. This is my last attempt at analysing this last relationship. I hope people recognise that this is really difficult to share/think about.

First of all, sorry about the Dworkin quote that introduced my last issue! I didn't know about her links to transphobic people/theory until recently!! I totally wouldnt have referenced her if I had known!!!!!! I feel like a total jerk. So, please don't think I was signalling my alliance to any transphobic "radical" feminists... I think that thinking/logic/school of thought is wayyyy fucked up!

Secondly, I have, as expected, been asked a lot of questions about the last issue.

For example, "Why did you write it?", "Why are you making such a big deal out of it?", "Did you imagine it?", "What is your problem with men anyway?", "Why let some issues with your ex- bother you? Get over it. It's in the past.", "So, you don't like having sex?", "Why did you put your name on it? Why didn't you keep it anonymous?", and, "You know this a real shock to hear about my friend. Why did you have to be so candid?".

Lately, I have identified that I spend my time pandering to people who aren't very understanding. So I'll answer just a couple of these. Let me say that these questions are pretty insensitive, and not very well thought-out. What I will say, is this:

To those who imagine I have fabricated this, as some have hinted at, I just want to make it clear that both issues were shown to him before I made them public. At the time I was still caring more for him than myself, so I showed the prototype zines to him, sat with him as he read through them in case he had questions, and said, "If you have problems with any of this, if it's inaccurate or you want me not to make copies of this, then I won't". He then gave me his "permission". Soon after that, he stopped communicating with me, was not apologetic or accountable, and now he has completely disassociated from me. I just want to be clear that I tried to be supportive to him when showing him my zines and gave him the option of it not going past him. I also supported him for almost two years before that, even though my self-esteem was being trampled by

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These are the lyrics for a new song from my  
vegan drug-free feminist hardcore band  
which describes what I always  
try to do in relationships.

When partners or friends ask me exactly  
what to do, how to act, what to say,  
in any sensitive situation,  
this would be my reply,  
if I was succinct enough  
to think of it on the spot...  
this is what I try to do, and hope for the same.

V.

"what do i do?  
"tell me to..."

Clear the head,  
to care about you  
Make the time, to learn  
Have the space, to grow  
And be happy, to know.

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## I SHOULD BE SO FUCKING LUCKY

-my privilege list -

I have the set of skills, access and literacy to educate myself about anything I want. I am 95% physically able, and have full function of my senses.

I am geographically mobile and have travelled to over thirty countries and lived in eight. I have perspective and opportunities that others have not been lucky enough to have. I am lucky to live in comfortable, first world societies, and have not had first-hand exposure to war, famine, or extreme poverty. I am surrounded by so many choices and freedoms.

I am really fortunate to be born to loving parents. Whatever mistakes they made, they made them out of wanting to protect me.

I have the capacity to help and support other people, and I try to fulfil this potential.

I have the option to gain employment to live above the breadline if I so choose.

I am proud to be a woman, and I look forward to when being a woman doesn't come with a lot of bullshit. I embrace the sensitivity that I have due to being socialised as a woman. I am proud to be Vietnamese, and own the burden of my history, and everytime I've experienced crap connected to my race and culture, it's contributed to the tough lady I have become now.

I have great, supportive friends, who forgive me for being a complete nerd, weirdo, jerk-head, who says inappropriate things, who has no tact or subtlety, who doesn't think clearly at the best of times and is pretty rude and blunt at the worst of times.

I would like to thank those people now. For educating me about things that I'm too clueless to understand by myself, for their insight, and for calling me out on my shit.

More importantly, thanks for teaching me what is okay to not-to-take, what is okay to talk about and not bury forever, and that I deserve to be treated with respect.

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his continually abusive, irresponsible sexual and bodily behaviour. I also continue to defend him and make excuses for him currently. I hope that one day people can give me the benefit of the doubt.

So... why write these at all?

I wrote the first issue because those pages went unanswered for so long, they sat in his email inbox for over 6 months with no reply, and I thought if I sent them out to the universe, then maybe someone could make some use or sense of them. I know that doesn't sound logical, but I was desperate not to be ignored anymore. I thought if I cast the net wider, then maybe my efforts - these questions/boundaries that were really scary for me to formulate - wouldn't go wasted. I hope that makes sense.

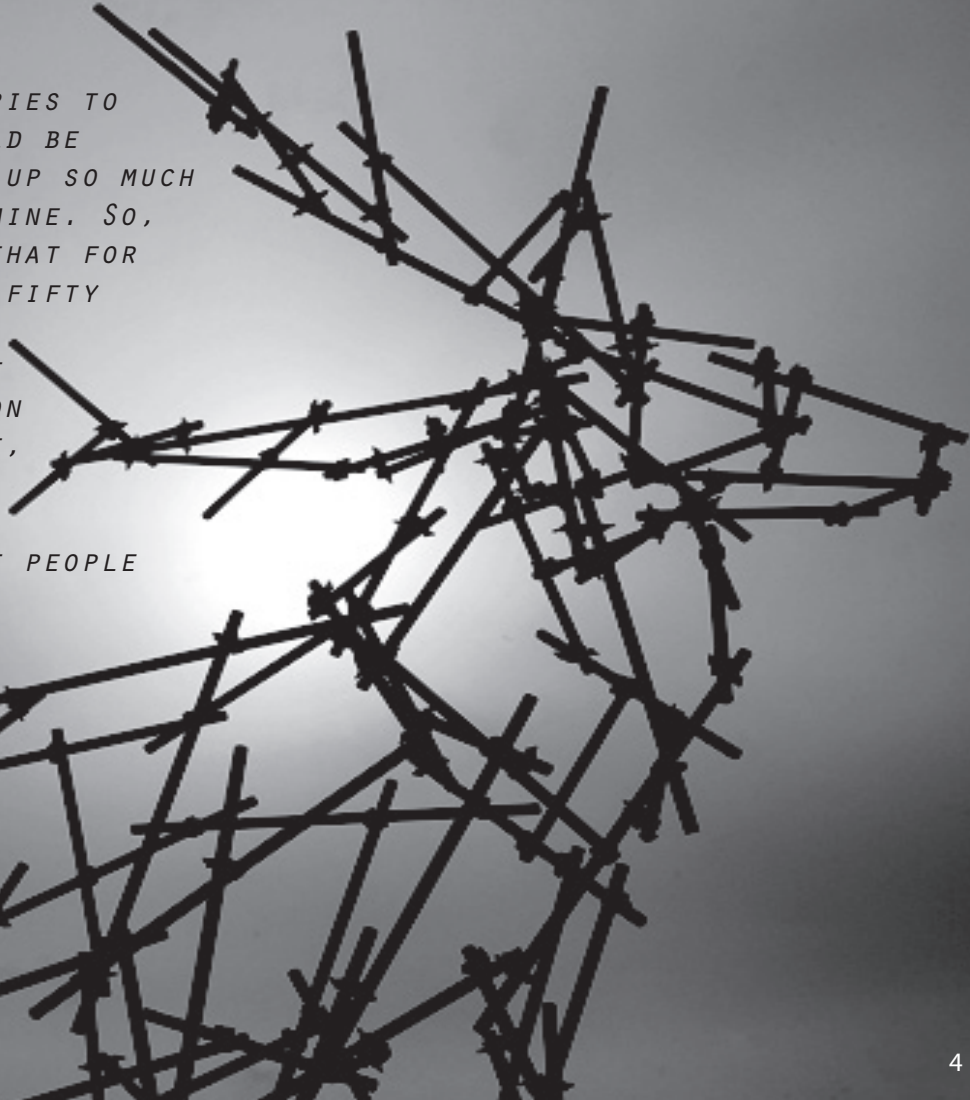
With the second issue, I recognised that something traumatic had happened to me, that the stuff I had been working to deal with for almost all my life, had resurfaced. That the person who I trusted the most in the world treated me like a piece of meat, and acted like a macho, uncaring stranger. There was a culminating point after almost 2 years of a fucked up power dynamic. And then... the silence that came after, the lack of recognition or support from whom I thought was my best friend - the fact that my life partner severed ties, friendship, contact, and support, instead of being accountable. That was the most scary thing of all, and the hardest part to recover from. The wound had opened, and I wanted to tell my friends that I needed help. But I didn't want to repeat myself and make myself relive events over and over, so I wrote it once, and then distributed it that way. Then one friend said it might be useful to strangers, so I posted it online, and have left it there.

So I guess I answered the questions I think were the most pressing. Please feel free to contact me with questions or criticisms, but I would definitely prefer enquiries about me, and not about him/his life. I have spent the last 9 months talking about/around/to him, trying to help him understand his responsibility, trying to help his friends relate/talk to him, trying to minimise harm to more young women via his omission, and trying to explain that I am now trying to focus on my own life, instead of his development. I am looking forward to a time when I don't feel so controlled, dominated and saddened by the thought of him and our history.

Please be aware that this zine could be very triggering. I recognise that I use very emotive, charged language.

Much love and take care, Anna Vo [annavo@riseup.net](mailto:annavo@riseup.net)

I REALISED I HAVE MANY STORIES TO TELL. BUT TO TELL THEM WOULD BE EXHAUSTING, AND WOULD TAKE UP SO MUCH TIME AND SPACE, YOURS AND MINE. SO, LET'S AGREE TO UNDERSTAND THAT FOR EVERY STORY TOLD, THERE IS FIFTY IMPLIED, FOR EVERY WORD THERE ARE HUNDREDS FROM THE SAME PLACE, FOR EVERY PERSON THAT SPEAKS UP OR CALLS OUT, THERE ARE MANY MORE THAT REMAIN SILENT. I HOPE THAT THIS HELPS MORE PEOPLE END THEIR SILENCE.



## GIVE ME AN "A"...

A few weeks ago, he asked a mutual friend to ask me if I wanted to be involved in starting an accountability process. This is after over 18 months of ignoring every request and process and checklist and conversation I have tried to have with him about my boundaries, about consent, and about his continued sexual assault of my body. He has not shown me a sign of emotion except anger when talking about him raping me. He now realises that his lack of accountability is limiting his band's career advances.

Below are the things I've asked him directly in terms of accountability, within the first days of calling him out. He did not fulfil them. Since then I've asked him to research what he claims to have - it's called 'sexsomnia'. He did not. I also think it's dodgy that he is still on Couchsurfing.org... and as a 'feminist'.

**1. Tell your friends the truth about why/how we broke up, instead of saying that "I couldn't support her anymore".** What happened was he broke up with me via email a few days after he raped me, a few days after he got angry and defensive when I tried to talk to him about it (I hadn't called him out yet either, I just said that I felt weird about it). A week later he sent another email saying, What I forgot to mention in the last email was that something happened with someone else.

**2. Initiate contact with me. Be accountable. Check in with me. Support me.** I lived in London for four weeks after I called him out, and in that time he did not initiate contact, support or make time to see me at all. For Christmas I called him and asked if he wanted to have a picnic in the park, I had bought food and juice, but within minutes of him showing up, he was hostile and insensitive so I had to leave in order to feel safe again. The rest of the time, I spent alone in a room in South London. I played a lot of guitar. The only other time we met up was the night before I left, where he had the nerve to say, 'I came here to say that maybe we could work things out. He meant our relationship. I felt a flutter of hope, but said, 'I'm moving to Berlin tomorrow morning. Is that really what you want, or is this your last attempt to control my movements and my emotions?' He paused, shrugged, then said, 'Control. Later that night, he really scared me. He stood over me at a bus stop, screaming at me loudly and gruffly, and I was cornered. I remained calm and said, 'Look at what's happening, look at this situation please, you are standing over me, yelling. So then he fell to his knees, and yelled, 'Is this what you want then?? Me to be on my knees???' to which I said, 'No, please don't be like that. I just want to talk on an even basis. You could just sit next to me...?' Needless to say, there was not much calm discussion that night, and we finally went our separate ways after many raised voices. Even still, for months after, I really thought/hoped that he was starting to open up to listening to me or caring about me because he had dropped me that one line about working things out. Since then, he has not initiated any contact or conversation with me, and never, ever asked me, 'How do you feel?', 'What are you going through now as a result of my actions?', 'Are you okay or are you still in trauma?'. His only contact has been, 'I feel unsafe going to shows because your [one] friend might be angry at me', where he paints himself as the victim of his own actions and negligence.

**3. Practice informed consent with girls/women who are sleeping with you, or who you are staying with. Don't call yourself a feminist. Don't call yourself an anarchist. You are sexist and you are racist. Stop charming younger women into your bed, with your faux-political, faux-queer stance, and your overt physical affection.** These are the things that fooled me in the beginning. While I stayed at his house for a week (I met him on couchsurfing.org), he held my hand while walking, hugged me continually when we first met, cuddled me for hours on the couch, spooned me, and I thought that this meant that he was into me... So eventually we kissed. After that he claimed that all of that affection was 'friendly' and was not indicative of a crush at all. He took no responsibility for leading me on and does not recognise how his behaviour fosters people's notions of intimacy and closeness, and can confuse a lot of people in terms of romantic feelings. Similarly, he takes no responsibility for leading other people on in the same way, the situation in the days after he raped me (but before he broke up with me) was with one of my best friends, who is much younger, telling her that he thought she was hot, and then spooning her in his bed while she was drunk and he was sober. Even now, he claims that he played no part in that, that it was completely her doing that something happened. This was two or three days after he raped me 'in his sleep'. I asked him later, 'What if you had raped her too?', and he said that wouldn't have happened, suggesting that even though he's asleep, he has agency and choice about who he 'sleepfucks'... There are so many other stories I could tell, but I won't. I believe that he is not a feminist because he views girls/women (esp. queer women, and women of colour) as something he can colonise. Eg. he said after our first kiss that 'I realised while we were kissing that meant that I probably couldn't be with \*\*\*\*, your housemate, too.'



26/7/12

MY FIRST NIGHT BACK IN LONDON. I FOUND MYSELF, WHILE MAKING MY WAY TO A SQUATTED HOUSE IN NORTH LONDON THAT I WAS STAYING AT, SITTING AT THE BUS STOP. AROUND THE CORNER FROM HIS HOUSE. THE BUS STOP WHERE I ENDED UP WHEN HE KICKED ME OUT, OR TREATED ME BADLY. THE BUS STOP WHERE A LOT OF FRUSTRATED CONVERSATIONS PLAYED OUT BECAUSE THERE WAS NO (AVAIL) PRIVACY AT HIS HOME. THE PLACE I HAD SAT, CRYING AND HYSTERICAL, ALONE AND CONFUSED, SO MANY TIMES. I TRIED TO COUNT THEM, BUT WOULDN'T. I LOOKED DOWN THE STREET AND EVERY PERSON ON A BICYCLE LOOKED LIKE HIM. I DON'T KNOW IF I CAME HERE TO THINK ABOUT THINGS, OR TO BE CLOSE TO HIM.

The worst thing, besides his silence, is the silence from all the people who I thought were my friend/s.

There has been an incredible amount of maternalism and paternalism from people who have contacted me to protect him, defend him and make excuses for him. But where is he in all of this? Why hasn't he been able to meet with me, to apologise sincerely for his negligent and abusive behaviour? When will he, a 30 year old man, finally take responsibility for the dynamics he perpetuates?

This is something I wrote for a document in Nov 2011:

### Why "community" accountability?

Rape and violence are symptoms of a community that perpetuates patterns of domination and systems of control, particularly by men. Patriarchy is the cause of these power imbalances. Any community that allows these patterns and behaviours to continue is colluding with acts and situations of abuse and violence. This includes reactionary violence, threats of pain or exclusion (when it is an exercise of power rather than an expression of people feeling unsafe).

Often bystander silence, denial, fearing to speak out when we see something that seems unfair, or calling people out on their abuses of power, is the most common contributor to dynamics that result in abuse, violence and rape. As members of community that want to prevent rape and abuse happening we need to be aware of our position in that community as members with the power to object to, discuss or call out unacceptable behaviour.

On a personal level, every person engaging in sexual activity should be aware of what consent means.

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## LOST IN TRANSLATION

I want to be direct, conversational and inclusive in my language, as most people who read my zines don't speak English as a first language. Also, I have little exposure to theory and education regarding gender or decolonisation. I've always focussed on the interpersonal: in my writing, lyrics, workshops, talks, and other work. I try not to use obscure -isms, sarcasm or irony, localised colloquial language, or cryptic references. **Please let me know** if you find my language/terminology inaccessible.

### WHEN I SAY...

**accountability**, I'm talking about the responsibility of a person who has caused harm to the person harmed (from [transformativejustice.eu](http://transformativejustice.eu)), it means stopping current actions & committing to make change, and making reparation for the harm that's been done: apology, recognition, action. A core belief informing accountability is that the group most affected by an oppression (women & sexism, people of color & racism, differently-abled people & ableism, and so on) should be at the centre of and in the leadership, if there is leadership, of any movement to combat that oppression.

**race**, I actually mean ethnicity, racialisation, constructed identity... I mean our self-appointed culture stemming from experiences as individuals. I understand that race doesn't exist, genetically speaking.

**racism**, I mean negative experiences resulting from generalisations about people's ethnicity. I think it's possible to also generalise about dominant or colonising cultures but I'm not sorry for that (see below)

**white dude**, it's my racist and sexist term for a group of people who are socialised this way. These people may or may not be open to examining their privileges which are a result of this socialisation.

**not white**, this is my quick and lazy term for describing ethnicities other than Caucasian/Anglo-Celtic

**POC**, I mean Person/People Of Colour, who make up a united front against white supremacy, consisting of unique and different identities constructed by our histories, heritages, ethnicities, and ancestries.

**culture**, I mean the multi-faceted, infinite ways we are influenced, by family, friends, media, school, etc

**privilege**, the factors that give one power, or more social advantages, eg. **the privilege of never having to worry about or consider most of the things I write about in this zine.**



# SOME QUESTIONS FOR (anarcho/queer/punk-rock) PERPETRATORS, or LOVERS

pages i wrote for a consent zine, Jan '12

Hello!  
I've been talking consent for a while. And sometimes I say things that are idealistic, or misleading, or hopeless, or encouraging. Because sometimes I feel like things/people can change, and sometimes I lose that hope. It really depends on what has happened recently, how many people have acted responsibly or irresponsibly around me. Like at meetings, or in person, or in the street. Or maybe I do something wrong, like miscommunicate or am unclear about what "being accountable" means, or what "active consent" means. And that might make me lose hope in my ability to be clear.

Let me clarify now: I've spent over 3 years working as a mediator between perpetrators and survivors in "anarcho", "radical queer", or "punk rock" communities, partaken in discussion groups and community accountability/transformational justice groups, and am a survivor myself. I've spent the last 15 months working as a counsellor in a social centre in London. Lately, in the last year, I had been grappling with power dynamics in an intimate relationship and trying to explain the concept of active consent vs control to my partner, but two months ago it culminated in verbal aggression, rape and then their withdrawal from the situation. So what's fresh on my mind as I write this is the power of denial, and how that blocks conversations about power, privilege, control and prevents perpetrators from taking full responsibility for the hurt and betrayal of trust that they have caused. This is reflected by two other situations I am involved in at the moment: one as a support group member and one as a mediator/counsellor. Those in power and have the history of having the upper hand are sometimes very reluctant to give that up, and I'm seeing it played out before me once again. I am taking a break from being a mediator/counsellor, due to my recent trauma, but also because I am starting to get angry... very very angry.

I have not been angry for a long time.

I've been understanding, accommodating, making excuses, justifying things, post-justifying people's actions, over-communicating, putting aside most of my time to deal with denial/aggression/violence, being passive, being accepting, compliant, staying silent when I didn't want to disturb the peace, dissociated when things were triggering or unpleasant, etc... instead of getting flat-out angry.

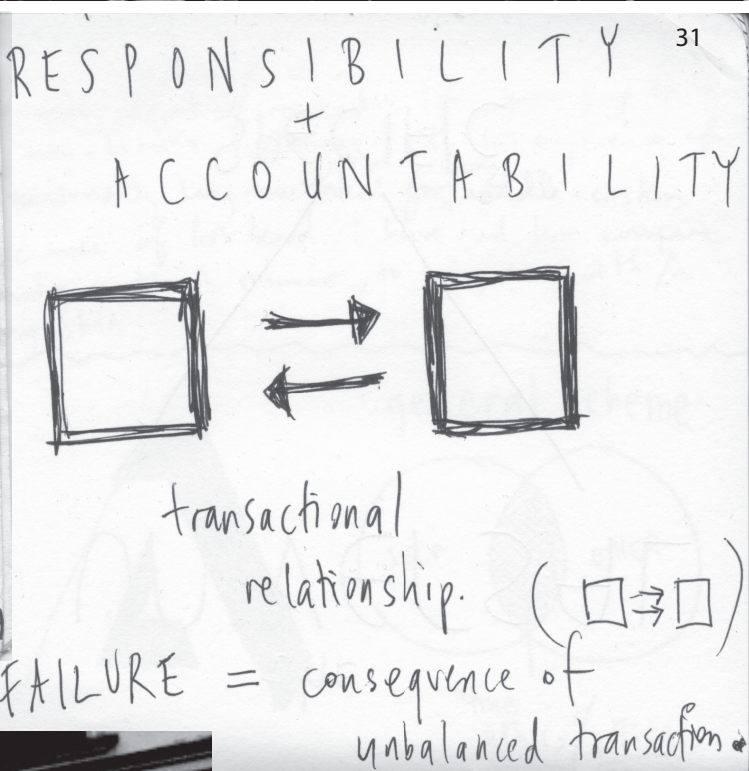
... But now I'm going ask some questions that I never had the courage to ask before.

\*Why do you find it so difficult to let another person have control? Just for a few minutes?

\*If you are in an intimate relationship, with someone you care about or love, wouldn't you want them to be empowered to navigate their own body, or make their own decisions, or at the very least, aren't you interested whether they are enjoying themselves or not?

\*How much space would you give to your lover/the survivor? To initiate things? To make choices? To be on top? To call the shots?

living you  
(rollicking bus motion)  
FINALLY, A SPINAL INJURY LITERALLY TOOK ME OUT OF "THE SCENE". THESE FACTORS ACCUMULATED, AND RESULTED IN EXTREME DEPRESSION, IN FEELINGS OF NOT BEING ACCEPTED ANYWHERE. NOW IT'S GONE FULL CIRCLE, WHERE I FELT <sup>(TWO YEARS AGO)</sup> SELF-DETERMINED ENOUGH TO MAKE MY OWN SPACES, FREE FROM THE THREAT OR PRESENCE OF DODGY EYES... AND NOW I FEEL LIKE I'M BROKEN/WOUNDED AGAIN, WITH DISILLUSIONMENT AND FEAR AT EVERY STEP. I WISH I WASN'T LIKE THIS, (!!!) I WISH I COULD BELIEVE IN THINGS, FEEL TRUST, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, FEEL SAFE, STRONG AND CONFIDENT. I'D LIKE TO KNOW HOW TO FEEL PROUD OF WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH



... that she had experienced had a range of impacts including changes in identity, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, mood disturbances, overdeveloped avoidance responses, and dissociation as a way to try and push difficult feelings from her mind. She observed difficulties in the progression of development and stated that, in one session, the traumatic incidents

... incident attempt, where she vomited an overdose of tablets, she wrote a letter explaining how she wanted to kill herself 'in order to find peace'. A Social Worker, after assessment, noted that she was experiencing high levels of distress and anxiety and that she had also reported having repeated flashbacks about the abuse she was subjected to prior to the incident.



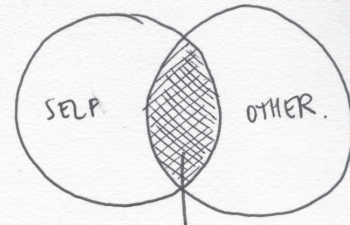
20+ MONTHS OF AT-LIFE  
LEADS TO DEPRESSION  
NORTHAMPTON  
NEWSLINE  
KATHARINE  
ROSEMARY  
MELBOURNE  
TRUE SPEAKERS  
PHYLO  
SPONGE  
CANTHRA  
NORRY  
LONDON  
MINDSET  
MILKMAN  
MUSTARD  
AND HERSELF

\* We went to  
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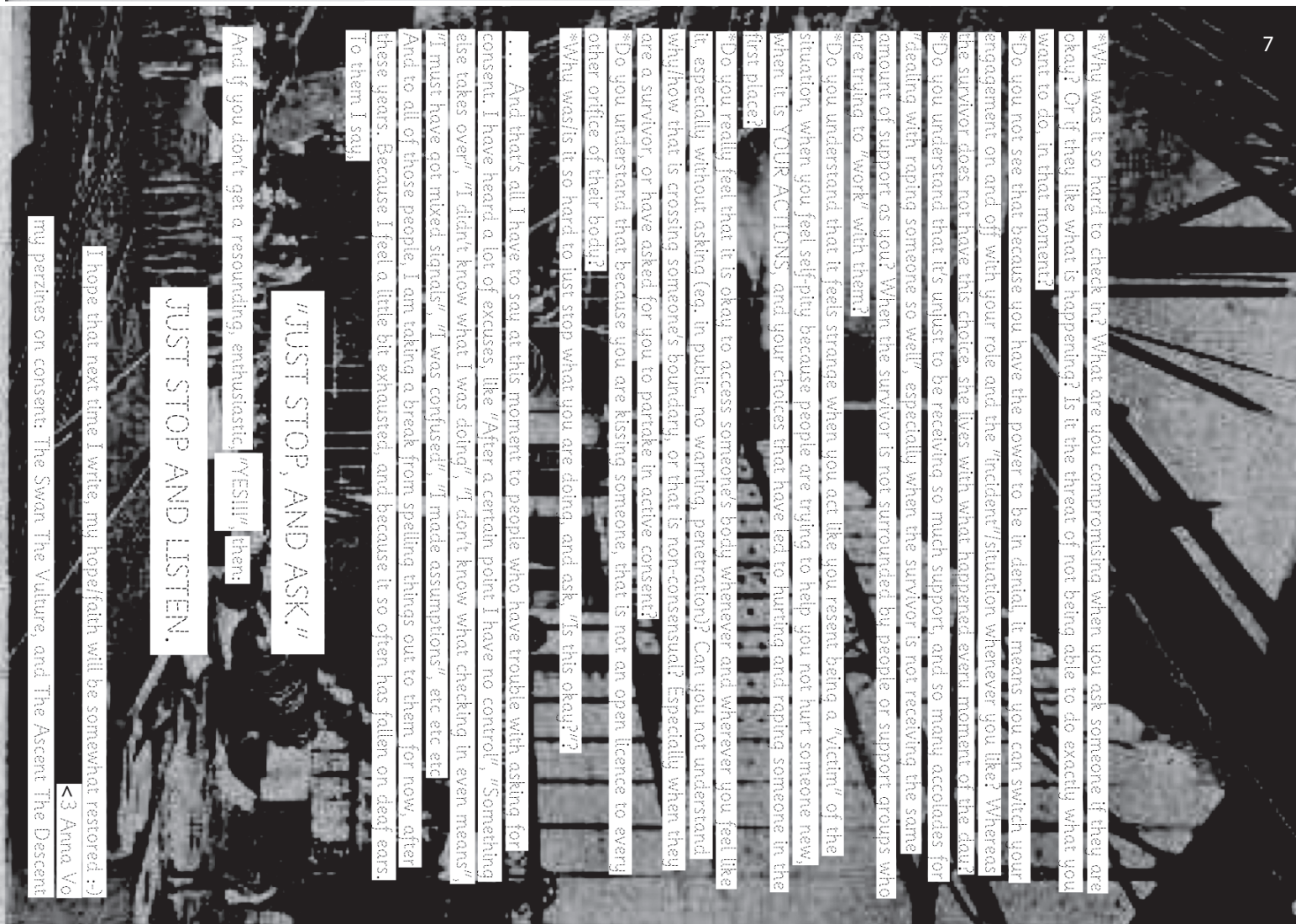
~~MY BUS JUST LEFT FOR LONDON, AND I'M FEELING~~ BROKEN SHIPS RISING TO THE SURFACE.  
 DREAD, SADNESS, ANXIETY, HURT, BEWILDERMENT, GRIEF.  
 I'M THINKING ABOUT WHY, IN SIX MONTHS, I HAVEN'T TOLD ANYONE IN BERLIN WHAT HAPPENED. NONE OF MY FRIENDS (THAT I KNOW OF) HAVE READ THESE ZINES. I HAVE TOLD SOME ABOUT ONE INCIDENT, WHICH HAPPENED THE DAY BEFORE HE BROKE UP WITH ME VIA EMAIL. IT'S A MORE DIGESTIBLE / COMMON STORY, AS TO WHY WE'RE NOT TOGETHER ANY MORE.  
 I FEEL EMBARRASSED, GUILTY AND ASHAMED TO SAY THAT MY PARTNER PERPETUATED SEXUAL ASSAULT. I FEEL LIKE IT'S MY FAULT, AND MY BURDEN. I AM WORRY OF PEOPLE THINKING: "IT'S RELATIONSHIP STUFF. IF HE'S YOUR PARTNER, THEN HE'S ALLOWED TO HAVE SEX WITH YOU, RIGHT?" I'M ASHAMED THAT IT HAPPENED, THAT I ALLOWED IT TO AFFECT ME SO BADLY. I FEEL STUPID THAT I SPENT SO LONG TRYING TO SHOW HIM WAYS TO AVOID BEING NOT CONSENSUAL. I'M EMBARRASSED ABOUT ALL THOSE EMAILS, LETTERS AND CONVERSATIONS GETTING NO RESPONSE. I FEEL LIKE AN IDIOT; THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HOW I COMMUNICATE, THAT I AM NOT CLEAR ENOUGH. THAT I WAS CRYPTIC OR NOT AS STRAIGHT AS I THOUGHT I WAS. AND MOSTLY, I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO THINK I'M BROKEN, OR DAMAGED.

general scheme



"true ethics" / ethical.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, SINCE I WAS A LITTLE KID, I FEEL LIKE I SPENT A LOT OF TIME FEELING OUT OF PLACE, LIKE I WAS ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN, AND THE FIRST YEAR I WAS WITH MY EX WAS THE FIRST TIME I FELT LIKE I WAS PART OF SOMETHING, IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING, FUNCTIONAL, LIKE 'EVERYBODY ELSE.'  
 FEELINGS OF NOT FITTING IN CAME FROM THE ADOLESCENT EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE, FROM BEING STRAIGHTEDGE AMONGST DRUNKEN TEENAGERS, FROM NOT FITTING IN WITH ANY OF THE ASIAN KIDS, BUT NOT BEING WHITE ENOUGH FOR THE WHITE KIDS EITHER. THEN A STRING OF ABUSIVE FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS CONVINCED ME I WAS WORTHLESS. ONE RESULTED IN OSTRACISING ME FROM THE WHITE PUNK/DIY COMMUNITY IN SYDNEY, AND THEN



\*"Why was it so hard to check in? What are you compromising when you ask someone if they are okay? Or if they like what is happening? Is it the threat of not being able to do exactly what you want to do, in that moment?"

\*"Do you not see that because you have the power to be in denial it means you can switch your engagement on and off with your role and the "incident"/situation whenever you like? Whereas the survivor does not have this choice, she lives with what happened every moment of the day?"

\*"Do you understand that it's unjust to be receiving so much support, and so many accolades for "dealing with raping someone so well", especially when the survivor is not receiving the same amount of support as you? When the survivor is not surrounded by people or support groups who are trying to "work" with them?"

\*"Do you understand that it feels strange when you act like you resent being a "victim" of the situation, when you feel self-pity because people are trying to help you not hurt someone new when it is YOUR ACTIONS, and your choices that have led to hurting and raping someone in the first place?"

\*"Do you really feel that it is okay to access someone's body whenever and wherever you feel like it, especially without asking (eg. in public, no warning, penetration)? Can you not understand why/how that is crossing someone's boundary, or that is non-consensual? Especially when they are a survivor, or have asked for you to partake in active consent?"

\*"Do you understand that because you are kissing someone, that is not an open licence to every other orifice of their body?"

\*"Why waste it so hard to just stop what you are doing, and ask, "Is this okay?"?"

\*"And that's all I have to say at this moment to people who have trouble with asking for consent. I have heard a lot of excuses, like "After a certain point I have no control", "Something else takes over", "I didn't know what I was doing", "I don't know what checking in even means", "I must have got mixed signals", "I was confused", "I made assumptions" etc etc etc

\*"And to all of those people, I am taking a break from spelling things out to them for now, after these years. Because I feel a little bit exhausted, and because it so often has fallen on deaf ears. To them I say:

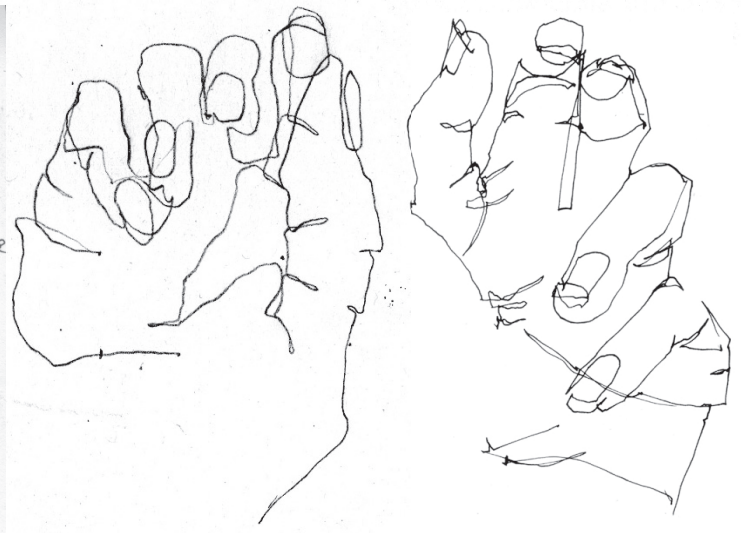
"JUST STOP, AND ASK."  
 "YES!!!", then

And if you don't get a resounding, enthusiastic, "YES!!!", then  
 "JUST STOP AND LISTEN."

I hope that next time I write, my hope/fath will be somewhat restored :)  
 my perzines on consent: The Swan The Vulture, and The Ascent The Descent  
 <3 Anna Vo



It's astounding how reluctant, or the flat-out refusal to listen to my perspective when talking about race or gender, to a partner who had never had any non-white friends, <sup>growing up</sup> before me. As a person of colour trying to share her experiences to a partner, who thought he knew everything about race <sup>racism</sup> because 1) he had travelled, and 2) because he grew up working class; I always made excuses, and felt so grateful/thankful that he was dating me at all, I did not notice how he silenced the discussions about racism and sexism. I did not realise at the time how he did not give space to listen to my points of view; and also made assumptions about what I would be about to say. I now have a checklist when getting to know new friends or loves. I don't want to make friends with people unless: <sup>they:</sup>



## FRENZ: ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- make space for me in conversation, thought or behaviour (ie. are not immediately defensive, aggressive or violent)
- are considered, careful or thoughtful
- respect my boundaries and are clear about their own boundaries
- actively check in, or are sensitive to emotional environments
- are aware of their privileges and can be critical of mine also
- are open to criticism and can likewise call me out on my shit
- are not rigid, and are open to change or new ideas
- are politicised, anti-oppression, feminist, and queer-friendly in a way that is practiced, not simply worn as a label/patch/badge/shirt

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(gmail chat a couple of days after he raped me, and a day or two before he sent me an email saying, "it's over".  
...i hadn't had the courage to call him out at this stage)

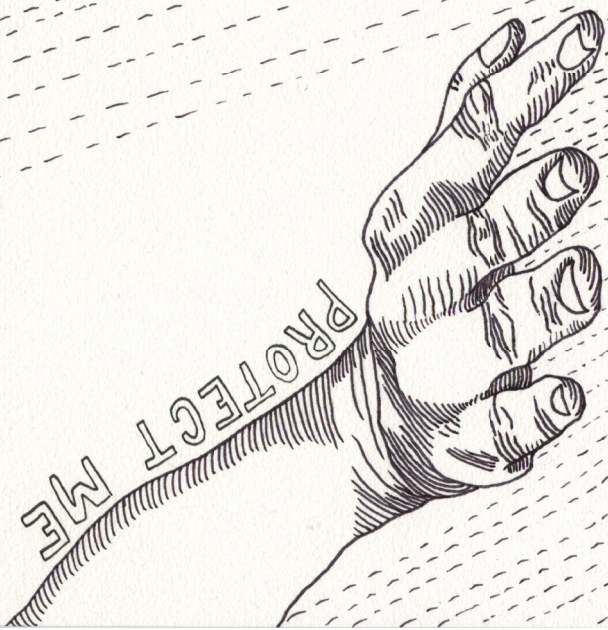
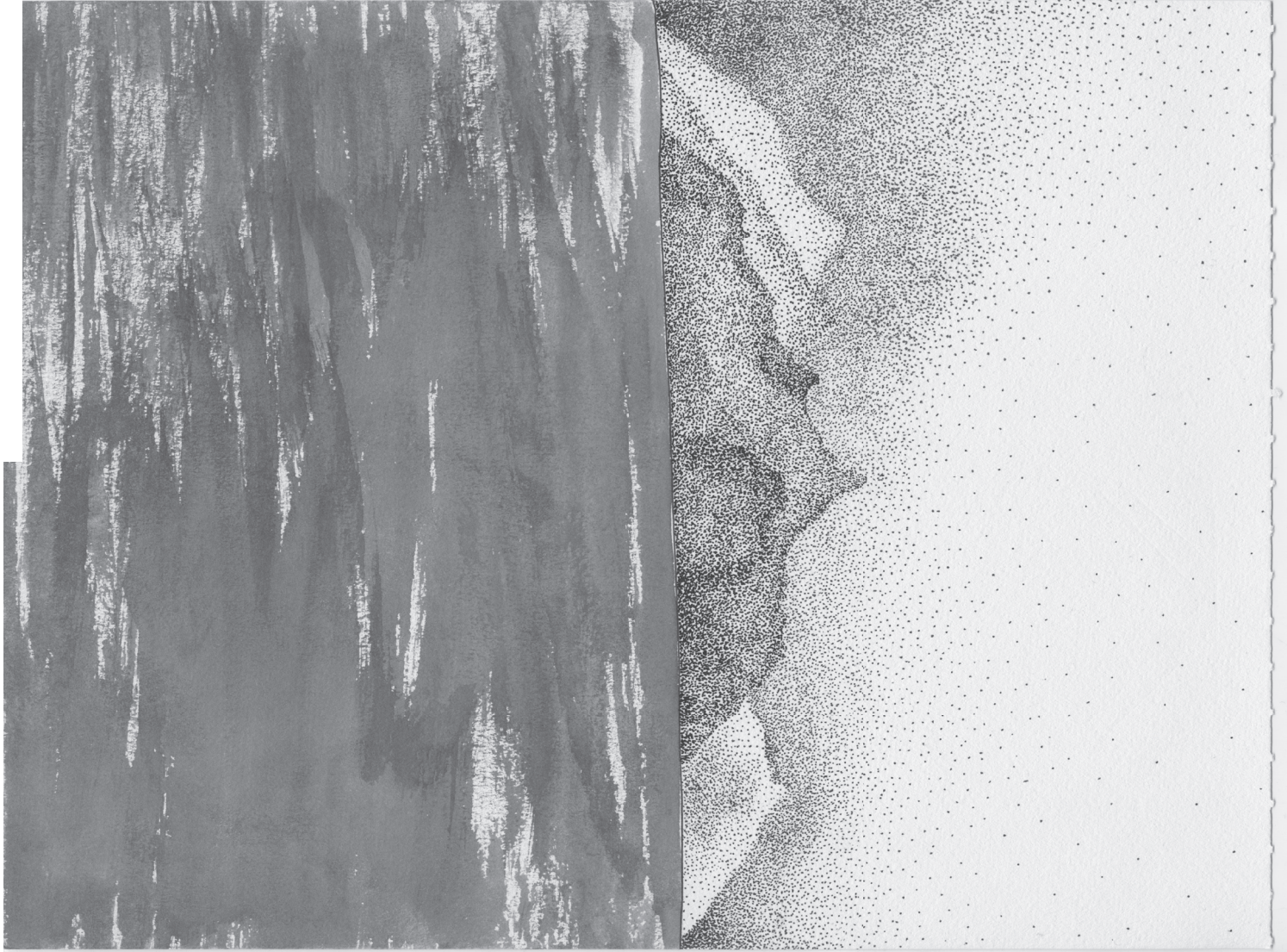
23:15  
me: hello!!!!  
23:16  
█: hey  
me: busy?  
:-)  
ok if you are!  
█: not that busy  
23:17  
me cool!  
█?  
where he?  
how was your day then?  
█: █ is in the basement  
23:18  
me: how are you feeling generally? up or down or nothing?  
█: he's tidying it so we can jam  
me: oh wow!! cleaning busy busy  
are you taking a break?  
he's awesome!  
█: he was tidying it while i was at emo/screamo praco  
me: is █ having fun?  
█: i think so  
me: wow cool!  
█: right now she's reading razorcake  
me: oh cool  
how was your jam? was it just █?  
23:19  
█: no full band  
me: ohh was it a lot of pressure?  
or could you handle it?  
23:20  
how are you feeling?  
23:21  
do you need more time to read my other questions?  
did you see that i wrote a huge email to you? read it whenever  
you're ready!  
:-)  
23:24

█: i could handle it  
i've not read it yet  
i can see it's there  
█ arrived  
me: ok  
23:25  
how are you feeling generally? up or down or nothing?  
ill let you go after you tell me how you're feeling?  
23:26  
█: not really had time to think  
me: no, i meant in general?  
23:27  
are you having fun in general? still depressed? or just  
flatlining?  
i can smell coffee everywhere i go in berlin  
its really nice!!!!!!!!!!!!  
█: :)  
me: are you having fun in general? still depressed? or  
just flatlining?  
23:28  
█: yeah  
fun i guess  
me: ok cool!  
ill let you go now  
i think you missed quite a few lines of what i was asking  
you in this chat  
just so you know  
ok bye  
and have a nice night!  
23:29  
█: ok i'll check it, sorry █ ahs come over to hang out,  
so i'm talking to him  
speak to you soon.  
me: no worries  
no pressure  
bye  
sorry if i bothered you!  
23:30  
█: nope

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(i feel really embarrassed about how posi/coddling i was to him i was in this conversation, whilst feeling real shitty)

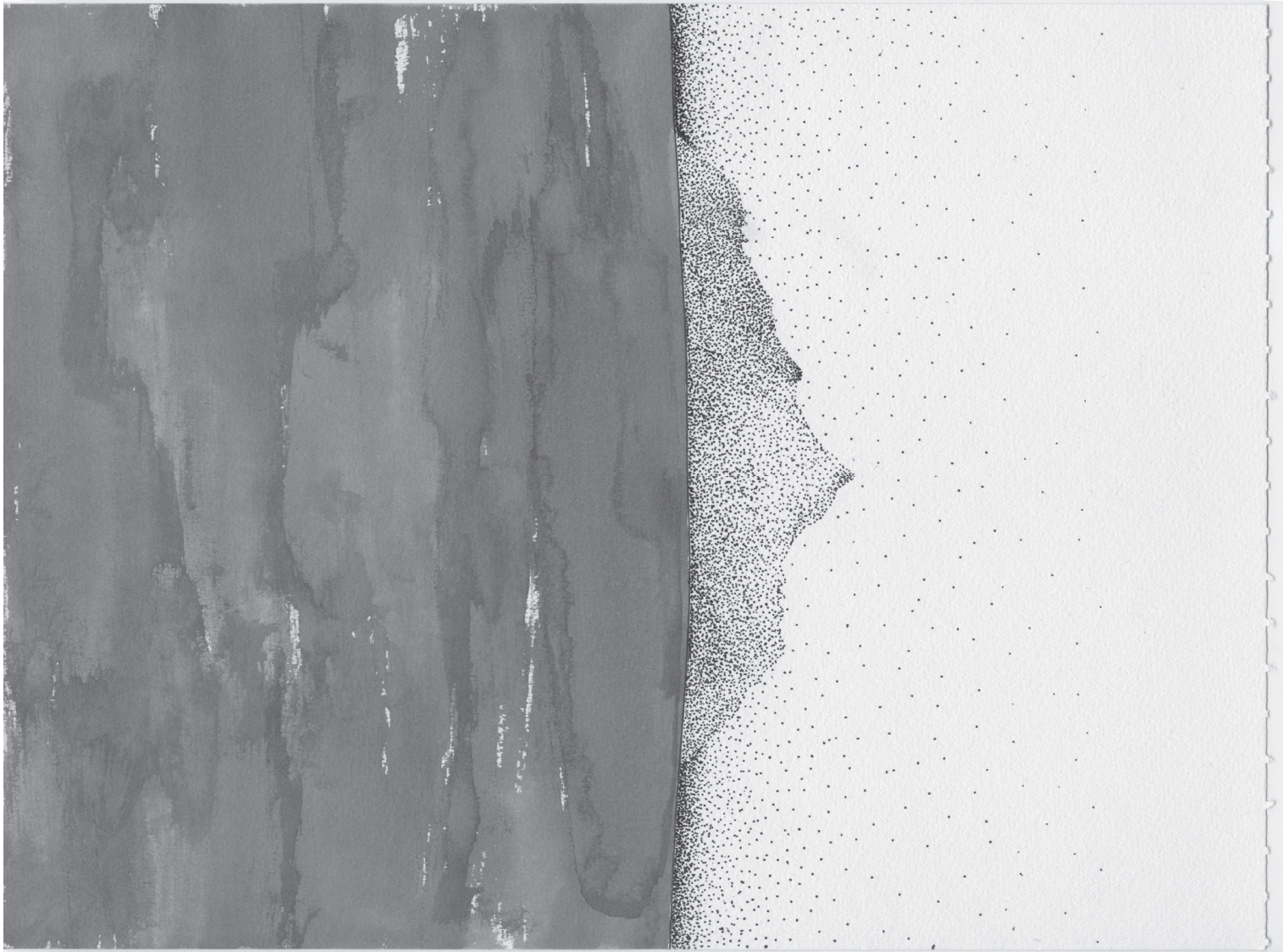




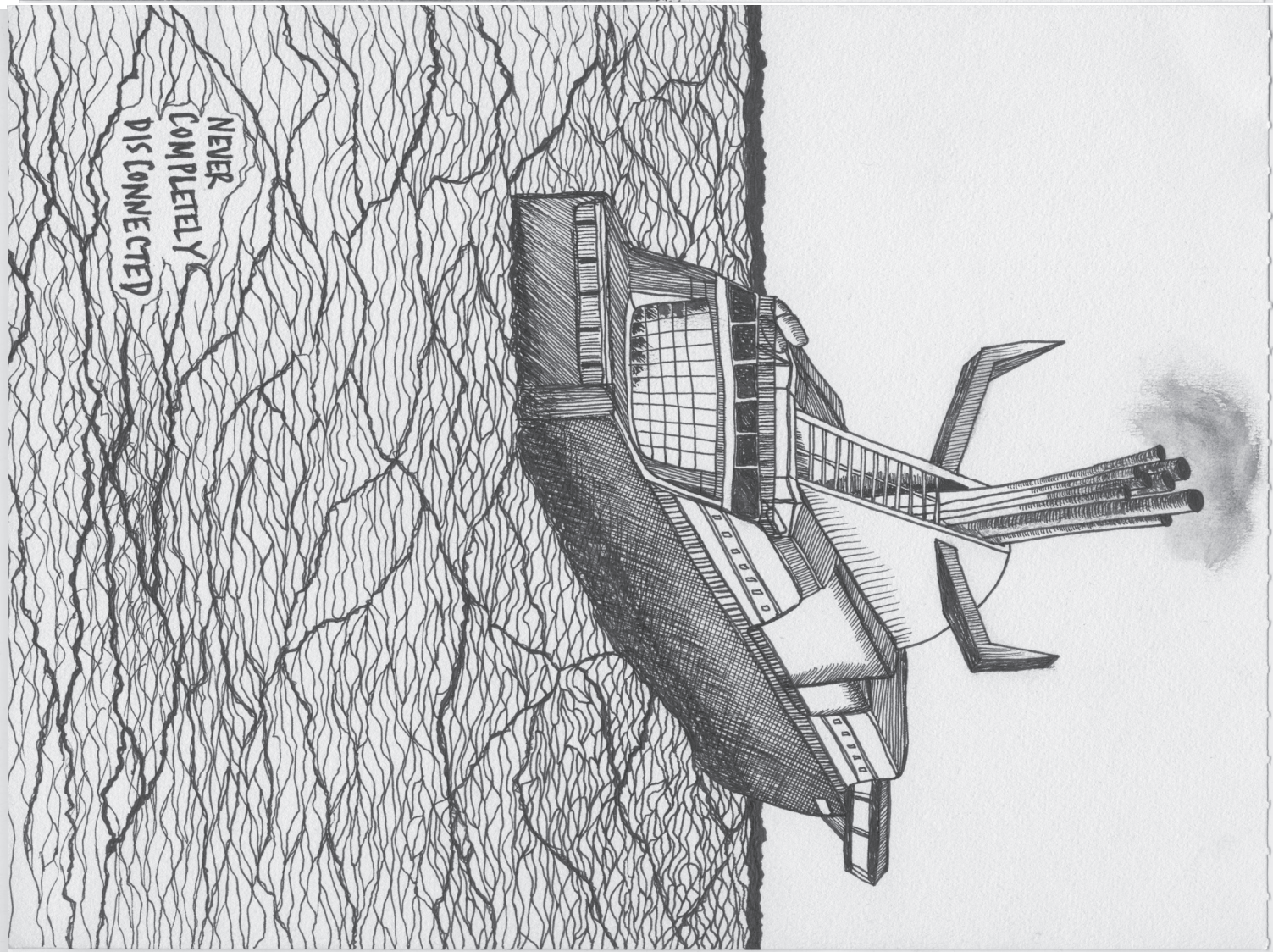




THINGS ARE ALWAYS GOING TO END THE SAME WAY...

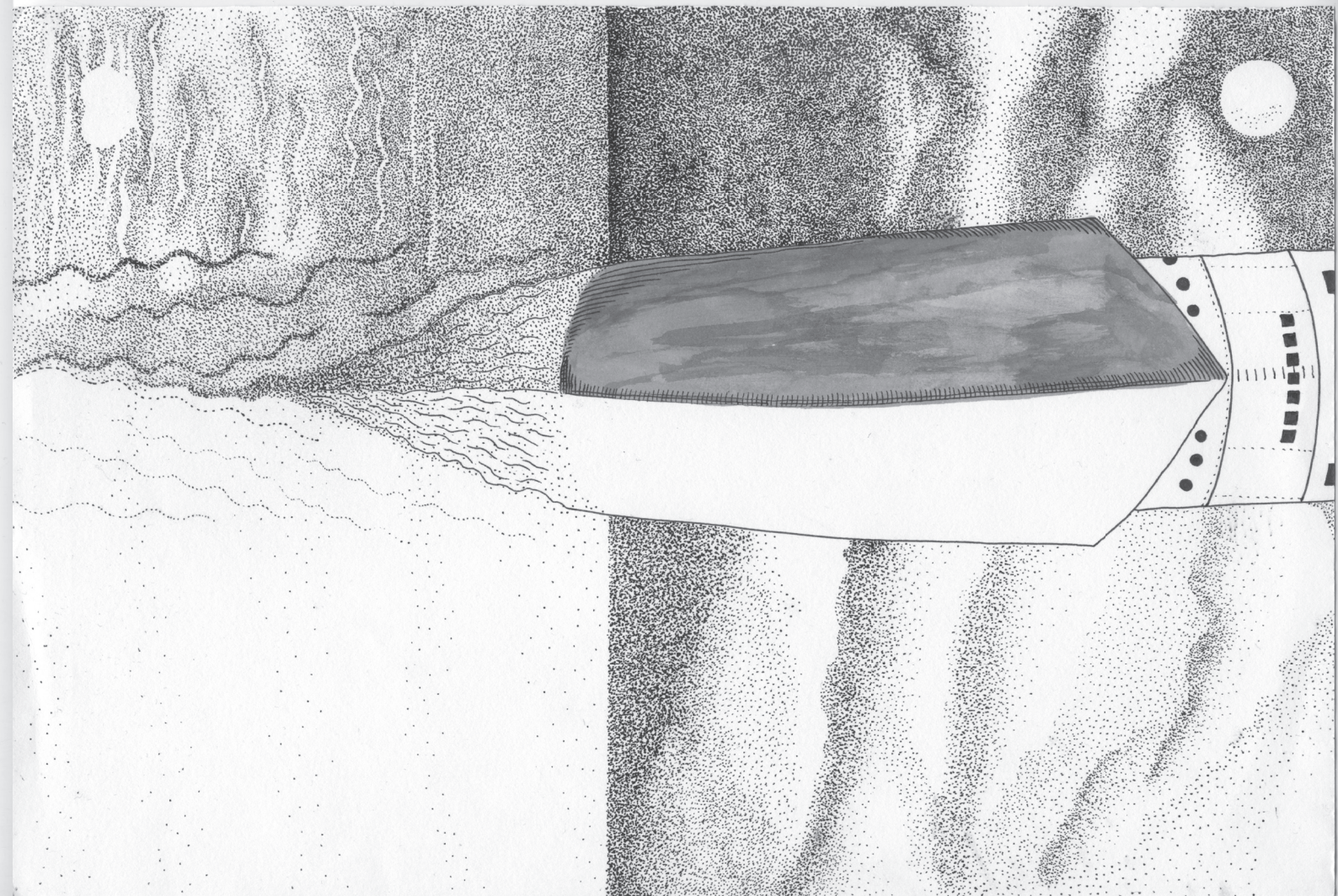






NEVER  
COMPLETELY  
DISCONNECTED







"hey, the last thing I want to say is that whilst \* may have been able to have a break from talking or thinking about this stuff,

I have not had that choice. This has affected me in a huge way, every day, and he has never asked me how I feel as a result of his treatment. I have not had the choice to stop thinking/talking about it,

especially when I get friends and strangers coming up to me in Berlin or emailing me, and saying "Hey, are you \*\*\* \*\*\*\*'s ex?? He told me about you!"

I don't think of him as my ex. Because is a current and real part of my life.

And even though I appreciate the intention of you telling me about one day when you guys met up, and he and you were in tears... there has rarely been a day when I've not been in tears. And if "\*\*\*\*" had ever shown me remorse (or tears) or any kind of sadness, then maybe that would be one thing, but he has been hostile or cold or angry or defensive or aggressive, for the last several months towards me. So I don't really care if he's showing remorse to other people for his own benefit.

He has only shown me that he has no interest in sorting things out with me, or being accountable. He has told me he doesn't love me any more and that we cannot be friends. He sent me an email with a robotic list of "sorry"s, with absolutely no recognition of how those things affected me, and absolutely no offer of how he would follow any of these automatic "sorry"s up. This was his last email, from over three months ago.

So, I really don't want to hear that he's showing other people that he's been upset by this, because he has not shown that to me. He has not shown me support, friendship, care, or any fucking respect whatsoever. He has only shown me that he is upset that I called him out, not upset because he enacted any of his shitty behaviour. As I have said, he has refused to acknowledge a lot of his shitty behaviour. Others have tried to talk to him about it too, but they haven't been successful either. I fucking give up."

RESPONSE TO ANOTHER APOLOGIST

## what's skin got to do with it?

-an open rant-

This is my third relationship with a white hetero male. This white hetero male claims to be queer, feminist, and "only likes queer women". It is hard to explain to some white hetero men that queer women aren't necessarily theirs to colonise or claim.

Similarly, women of colour aren't there for their consumption either. I have grown up hearing, "I love Asian girls" and nowadays, "I love Asian women" said by white men that approach me in public, and say this as AN INTRODUCTION, as if I am meant to be grateful and fall at their feet. And the sad thing is, it actually used to work in their favour... In my teens, most people invisibilised me, so when someone noticed me at all, I was relieved and thankful. Unfortunately, this is how my first two abusive "relationships" started. One lasting over a year, and the next almost five years. Throughout both of these relationships, I heard countless racist, creepy things, about why they only liked "non-white girls", citing a whole bunch of really racist and sexist generalisations... There really are too many to list. One example? One of these Dudes demanded that I speak "Asian" to him when he was about to come, because he thought it was hot... there were so many issues wrapped up in that, I don't even know where to start (...).

After those experiences, I became more wary, maybe even strict and unforgiving, and when I finally started my first respectful relationship, it was only after I interrogated this person about race. (Because they had just come out of a relationship with a Vietnamese female. In fact, someone that people used to mistake me for on a regular basis!) Even now, I tread a fine line. There is a contradiction, because when I find out someone I'm crushing on HAS been with someone of my ethnicity, then I think "Oh, I've got a chance with them..." [because most people I come into contact with wouldn't even consider dating someone who isn't white], but at the same time I don't want to get involved with anyone who fetishises my racialisation. Soooo, then comes the cross-examination.....

I ask white people I might be intimate with about their relationships, whether they have any friends of colour, what neighbourhoods they grew up in, whether many of their past partners were Asian or not Caucasian. I am especially suspicious when they have no/few friends of colour, but perhaps several non-white ex-lovers. Then I ask them to deconstruct their past relationships, and their attraction, if there is a pattern there. Like my patterns of attraction, it is usually related to power dynamics. Sometimes people like being the aggressor or predator, so they prey on Asian women, because there is a stereotype of them being shy or submissive. They seek to actively perpetuate this power dynamic. Sometimes they like to be the protector, teacher, provider, or carer, and a small timid Asian girlfriend makes them feel like the strong, smart, rich or gregarious half of the equation. This analysis applies to dynamics in age differences also. For me, as I don't present as obviously shy, and because I am not small or timid, people usually approach me because I'm "different", "exotic", "interesting", or "Oriental". Yes, ...Oriental. As for MY patterns, I was/am attracted to people who I perceive to have more power than I do. But this backfires when they abuse their power, when they don't critically analyse it, or even acknowledge it. I'm attracted to power because I grew up in an intensely patriarchal family (in a white society), so it's ingrained that I want someone that will protect me, or maybe rescue me. I remember now that for the first year or 18 months of my last relationship, the strongest indication that I was in love with this person was that I felt safe when I was with them. I had never felt safe with anyone else before, and thus now I am interrogating my own patterns of trust/attachment. I am deconstructing this need to feel protected, and have made peace with the fact that I am an adult woman who doesn't need anyone else to make her feel safe anymore. That I have all the tools I need to keep myself safe. Whilst I appreciate (white male) people examining their own privilege, I don't melt into a heap of gratefulness like I used to when they say this. Also, I don't feel like it is my job to assist or guide them, like I used to do.

Anyway, back to power and it's proximity to a cultural centre/norm... some of the visible ways I perceived people to be powerful are:

- \*being opinionated/arrogant about their knowledge or taste
- \*having status or visibility (artist, writer, musician, popular, etc)
- being more open, positive or likeable than me, and having lots of friends, so they could be my functional, socially-acceptable surrogate... (...really...!)
- \*having many current or past lovers, or being widely desired
- \*coming from a middle-class or upper-working-class background
- \*being educated, well-read or knowledgeable
- \*being sure/positive about their life decisions
- \*being wealthy, or having lots of STUFF (records, guitars, amps, etc)
- \*being physically strong, taller or bigger than me
- \*being male-identified, male-socialised, trans\* male, butch, or performing macho
- \*being of an appearance that wider society would perceive as attractive.

I remember when I first started dating my last partner, and thinking, "Finally! People will accept/like me because my partner seems "cool", and "Maybe people will think I'm legitimate or normal because I'm associated with someone so nice and charming", and I don't doubt that that happened. I believe his presence as my "punk" partner legitimised my presence in a lot of punk/hardcore scenarios... even in my own home at an anarchist social centre. I felt more legitimised when we were in public together, especially in materialistic London, where I believe people validated my social capital for being with this attractive, fashionable, white, male punk dude. I wish it wasn't true, but I think if I had been at shows or parties alone in London, people wouldn't have given me the time of day. Even a few weeks ago, people asked me about the shows that he and I put on... which were actually the shows that I organised myself. But he was my white male passport to punk... Similarly, I tried for 18 months to start a hardcore band in London, but maybe due to my race, gender, or appearance (ie. lack of fashion sense), people made assumptions about my ability to play music or doubted my ability to contribute to a hardcore band. I don't know, I'm only guessing... I'm processing this because my experience has indicated that very few [white] people would consider me as a potential friend. 14

Whilst they would consider another white person as someone they would socialise with. I feel like people in white-dominated societies assign less value to people who are not white, unless they fetishise them. That is problematic for me, because it means that the strata missing is being on an even plane from the start. I rarely participate in organic friendship-making, as I get approached by [white] people who seek people of colour for their own selfish reasons, and am ignored by or invisible to everybody else. As a result, after living in Australia for 20 years, I can count 4 close friends. One of which is Asian, another who grew up in an Asian community, one from high school, and one who I lived with for a year. None of these people are in the punk "community" that I spent most of my life investing in. I felt largely excluded by, or sometimes nastily spoken about, by the [white] punks in Australia. It was incredibly disappointing. Whilst growing up, my father would tell me not to trust white people, and not to be friends with white people because "they will never understand us". I thought he was being racist, a total bigot, and like any teenager I resented him angrily for "not getting me". Now, I understand what he means... He means that he only associates with Vietnamese people because there is an unspoken understanding. They have come to be where they are through the same process, sneaking onto a boat at night, living on refugee camps, learning English in a foreign country, having sustained racist attacks, been ostracised in their new communities, and often been the only person/family of their ethnicity in that neighbourhood. They're his friends that understand how he grew up: customs, traditions, ways of thinking and communication, stuff that is too much work to explain to people who didn't experience these, or don't care. That's what I'm finding out now. I have spent the last 5+ years trying to explain to partners and friends how I've grown up, what I've experienced, why I think and communicate the way I do. I'm exhausted by the effort, so the only white people I pursue friendships with are those who actively seek to understand me. This is difficult because the last few countries I've lived in are Australia, England, and Germany. Colonisers everywhere. So I'm rethinking my environment again. I wanna finally find my utopia where white people aren't inherently racist, and where there are piles of rad POCs that I can hang out with.

## YOU CANT TAKE THE PUNK OUT OF THE DUDE

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>>Like so many punk dudes, he resented me when I asked for a safe space at shows, which meant him missing out... Months before the Noothgrush tour, I contacted him (I initiate Safer Spaces communication) and said I planned to go to the Berlin, Leipzig and Copenhagen shows. He could have the other three if he wanted? He replied saying he wanted to go to the Copenhagen show, so I cancelled my plans to go there. The intention of this communication was to make sure that we weren't in the same city/venue/space at the same time. Fast forward to the time of the Noothgrush tour, and he emails me and tells me he's going to the Sleep show in Berlin the following week that he sees online that I will be at. I reply saying, In that case, I won't go. I spend the next week or so freaking out that he will be in my hometown. I was sad, triggered, depressed, anxious, scared. I spend that week wondering why I just didn't tell him, No you can't go, I've really been looking forward to that show. I end up putting another show on that night, so I could feel like I had something to do, so I didn't stay at home, being depressed or putting myself in danger. I spend that week fantasising about meeting up with him and him finally acting accountable, and maybe he will be open to listening to the things I have to say. My mind runs away with itself. I think, maybe he will be understanding finally, maybe he will ask me how I am doing, or maybe he will take responsibility. Maybe we can fall in love again ... [I'm getting pretty upset writing this, I know this sounds so stupid] So I call him to ask him when he will be in Berlin. He is already here. And he's here for the majority of the week. I ask him, Don't you think it's inappropriate after I arranged so that we would be in different cities for the Noothgrush tour, that you would so brashly come to a show you know I plan to go to, in the (small) city where I live? His response was, 'I don't know what you are saying to me right now.' Blunt and hostile. I said, It's really upsetting and triggering that you are here. That you didn't think to discuss it with me, or give me the opportunity to say No. I am crying and retraumatized. His response, 'I don't know what you are talking about'. Cold and aggressive. And then, 'You moved to Berlin for your own benefit, not mine.' Then his phone cut out and he didn't call back. I was a fucking mess. My dreams of him being kind or caring or giving me any kind of space or respect were smashed. This is the first time we had spoken for 3 months, since my giving him his birthday present. I texted him and asked him which neighbourhoods he would be in, so I would avoid those neighbourhoods. He is a 5 minute bike ride away from me, so I just stay home for the time he is here. Except for the show I put on - I am anxious while riding there and back. But once I am inside, hiding behind the sound desk, I feel safe. Afterwards, one of the people in the headlining band asks about my relationship with him, not knowing that we had broken up or why. So I briefly explained the situation to her, reliving it again. It is difficult to avoid thinking or talking about him, as it comes up often.

>>I'm continually gutted to find out that he is more concerned about watching bands than be accountable for his abusive behaviour. In his last email to me he mentions a festival we were both at in late May where he was "hardly able to enjoy any of the sets", but still denies any responsibility for causing this situation.

>>I've been told about situations where he has recently been ironing out scene relations with some of my London friends, where he is more concerned about making things right with band-dudes around him that trying to make reparations to his partner of almost two years.

>>Additionally, he finally started talking about maybe starting an accountability process, because individuals in London had a problem with one of his bands playing their benefit show, because they did not feel safe there. The night before the show, the promoter asked to Skype call with me ASAP, which I made clear was triggering, and stressful (because I had no idea what it was about!) and that I had no desire to engage in, which amounted to him telling me that "this show is going to be huge, and it's a really good platform for his band", trying to appeal to me and explain the reasons why he could not take the band off the bill. I hadn't been aware of this entire situation, of people's requests. It had nothing to do with me, it was a group of people separate to me that feel unsafe around him, and it was meant to be a benefit show for their group. I kept asking, 'So why are you calling me?' The group ended up withdrawing, because the promoter had refused to take his band off the bill, and so the show became a sole benefit for another group. What was "ironic" (in the Alanis Morissette sense of the word) was that I had cancelled a workshop I was planning that night at the No Borders Camp in Stockholm in order to have this Skype conversation. It was a workshop on Power, Privilege, Gender, Sexism and Racism, in response to a situation that was splitting the camp, and resulted in almost 100 people leaving the camp. I had planned to do the workshop with the perpetrators of sexism and racism at the camp, but I cancelled it in order to have this redundant, triggering, fucking frustrating conversation, about a show that was a benefit for No Borders! In this conversation the promoter also probed for personal information. I couldn't draw my boundaries in the conversation, felt pressed for information, and gave it to him, but regretted it afterwards. He also said as some kind of plea, '\*\*\*'s been taking a break from thinking about this situation for a few months ... which obviously upset me a lot. Why would I want to hear that he's been having a break from it?

**He is only interested in accountability now that it affects his punk status... not because of how it affects me, or other partners in the future.**





THIS IS MY DAY

THE CENTRED LOGIC OF A 'FEMINIST' ("anti-racist" anarchist) MALE

DISCLAIMER: These things may not be problematic on their own, especially if people are open to discussing or thinking about the origin and the consequences of these statements/motivations...

>"I love that you are \* \_\_\_\_\_, but why do you have to be so § \_\_\_\_\_ ?

- \* caring, § sensitive
- \* analytical, § careful
- \* politically active, § busy
- \* a strong woman, § opinionated
- \* politicised, § serious
- \* a feminist, § angry
- \* not white, § caught up in that stuff

>"I love it that I can tell you everything I'm thinking" (whilst not listening to things i say/think)

>"you don't look punk! you were wearing a floral shirt this morning" (this stuff really wore down my confidence)

>"I'm making jokes because that is what i would want to hear if i was grieving/depressed/assaulted"

>"Yes that is what i do when we have sex, but what has that got to do with anything else?"

>"You triggered me by telling your best friend what happened, 'cos now i can't be comfortable at hardcore shows he might be at"

>"I like black women because they have big lips and big asses"

(and when i tried to say that was problematic/racist/a generalisation/etc)

"but i didn't mean it like that. you don't understand what i'm saying" (which invalidated what i said, and silenced any further input)

>when i am trying to talk about MY experience of being racialised, i am silenced by:

"i know what it's like because i tan really dark in summer"

"people often think i'm middle eastern because i have a beard"

(and later) "i got a nod of recognition by a sikh guy today, i told you i look dark"

when asked about if he had any non-white friends before/except for me, "no but i had a crush on a nigerian girl i worked with" (when people can't understand why it's insulting to be hypersexualised due to my race, but that i probably wouldn't qualify to be their friend)



>"i love living in Hackney" (referring to his staring at and sexualising ethnically African and Caribbean women/girls on the street) (Missy Elliott was his dream date, and his favourite item of clothing was a thick gold chain...)

>"i wasn't staring, i was looking at her tattoos"

>"i can't help staring, because I'm from \*\*\*\*\*"

>"what does me staring at girls have to do with male privilege or power dynamics?"

>(when i cut n paste a john berger quote in a skype conversation, "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at") before i could say anything about my thoughts on it, he typed "that's not true"

>"i am a feminist, i have lots of female friends."

>when i tried to talk about sexism, "i get it, a lot of people wanted to kiss me in high school"

>when i tried to talk about being repeatedly beaten up because i was asian, "well, yeah, i was the poor kid in school that got picked on" (his experience always eclipsed my experience!)

>"I understand that you are a survivor, but i don't understand what i can do about that or what it has to do with me"

>"I didn't hear you say no"

>"I didn't notice you trying to push me off/resisting" (not to mention all the times I disassociated and just laid still)

>"I know you said that that hurts, but i can't help myself" (i have a spinal condition, which he made worse often)

>"I understand you were asking me not to put my hands on people who have said they don't like to be touched, but what has that got to do with boundaries or my male privilege?"

>"you can say what you want, but i know i'm right"

>"i might have teased or ignored you or gotten angry, but it doesn't mean i wasn't listening"

>"what does me loving a lot of women have to do with privilege? i can partition my feelings, it doesn't affect you."

> (after a 6 wk support group about coping mechanisms from survivors of rape where he was the only male, that we had to open the group up so he could come as a "supportive partner", i asked him what he'd learnt from the group): "it made me think about going to sex parties, so i can have sex with other people to experience different sex styles"

>"i'll be accountable for the rape after you tell me how you are going to be accountable for punching me when you had night terrors in your sleep" (which i never heard about until this particular email exchange)

>and... calling it "the rape", as if he had nothing to do with it

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FREEZE FRAMES FROM MY EUROVISION

21

§ Did not feel legitimised in most spaces. which I understand is a common experience for lots of insecure folk like myself! I felt like I had to work extra-hard to illustrate that I was someone worth speaking to/knowing.

§ In one "anarcho" collective that I volunteered with weekly, the one time I made a suggestion, it was widely ignored and discussed rudely unbeknownst to me. My asking to stock books on racism and white privilege were spoken of as criticism to that collective (more info on this if you ask me!). I took myself off that list and stopped volunteering or going to that space. It sucked that i had been giving my time to a space that was so condemning of a fairly reasonable suggestion. Obviously, it made me feel really unwelcome there.

§ People yell "Asia!" or "China!" down the street a few blocks after me, whether I was riding or walking.

§ "Fiji"/"fijis" is a common derogatory term for 'Asian'. That ain't even close to the right continent, guys!

§ I've had older men stop, stare, laugh and point: "Look! A chinese girl on a bike!" or sometimes, "Look at 'the' Chinese!"

§ My housemate's doctor said during an ultrasound: "Your baby might have Downs Syndrome..... or he could be Asian." (the disorder is..... being Korean!)

§ Being told that I shouldn't go to critical whiteness or white privilege workshops... because it wasn't for [not white] people like me...

My common experience is that people in organising/Ⓐ collectives value my time and the hard work I put into things, my politicisation or unique (POC) perspectives about projects... but when I bring up race-related issues, I haven't felt supported and there is no solidarity there. This results in feeling invalidated, or that my presence is purely tokenistic.

Now, I focus on hanging at QPOC gatherings, doing ladies/queer/POC-only projects, running POC empowerment workshops, and minimising my interactions with white folk (unless they're FREAKIN' AWESOME!). I've reduced my attendance at punk shows, which is sad.



ACTUAL, REAL AD (found while streaming Bob's Burgers) wtf.

(read the "warning"... ...seriously, wow.)



\*i recognised a pattern, and this is very hard for me to say, of being in bands with people who wanted to capitalise on my gender, or race, or politicisation (lyrics, anger, etc), or skill, or lyric-writing ability, or appearance, etc ... whilst at the same time deriding, minimising, alienating, silencing and invisibilising me for those same reasons. it feels very very imbalanced, like i don't have a voice or decision-making power in those band/s, and somewhat exploitative. i am being careful in that i don't want to sound like a victim right now, as these are merely observations, that still did not stop me from continuing in those bands at that time. i do recognise my agency in choosing to be in those bands for that amount of time. i also am remembering now how powerless and silenced i felt in these bands, how continual sexist and racist behaviour was something i felt like i had to put up with in order to play music, which is something i really value and enjoy.

More recently, in one of my current bands that is made up of all dudes (except me), one member feels that he has to work in a reference to my Asianness in every conversation that we have. It comes from a place of good intention, but it's pretty uncomfortable. He will say things like, "Who would have imagined that we would have someone from Asia in this band!" "Or, look at us, from different corners of the world, coming together. Me from \_\_\_ and you from Asia." Besides the fact that he tends to forget which part of Asia I actually come from (it's actually pretty fuckin' big!), he continually marginalises me by putting me in my place, sending me back to my place of origin, everytime he brings this up. He does it in good nature, but it's very hard to get past this in order to relate to each other as actual people, and it gives me the impression that he sees me as an "Asian", rather than his friend or bandmate, like the others in the band. It's quite dehumanising ... I don't need to be Asian-ised daily by other people, I do it enough internally as it is :-)

As a result of my negative experiences of playing music and touring with men, I'm trying to start bands with mainly women or queer people, but that doesn't expel every obstacle...

In another current band, one bandmate said they wanted to list us as a "POC band" in a bio for a festival we were playing. I said that I did not want to do that, and that would only be okay if everyone in the band was a POC. I am the only POC in that band. Maybe what I should have said in that moment was that I felt tokenised, and that would be really exploitative of my race for them to use it in that way. I have also noticed them talking to other people about my experiences growing up in a third world country as a way of almost qualifying their own proximity to a peripheral condition. I have sensed that they use these in an almost boastful way. It is weird to hear white people use me like a badge. Or to use my life experiences to amplify their own credibility as a "punk". I am still figuring out what to do in these situations. When I look back, I wonder what it is that makes me unable to find the right words in those crucial moments, to say, "Please don't do that. That makes me feel really alienated" "That's actually kinda shitty of you to say that." "Uhm, that's quite problematic", etc etc etc ...

I wonder why I didn't leave the first band when I wanted to, why I let myself get talked into staying every time. I wonder why I didn't recognise those situations while I was in them, or why I tolerated them. And I wonder why I keep giving to people who are inherently selfish, who don't make space to consider my point of view ... while I work very hard to educate or meet these people on their terms.

I won't include everything, but some other things that made me feel weird were his getting angry when i was sad about something, ridiculing me about private/intimate things in front of our friends, berating me in public about my mannerisms, would get vocally annoyed by how i chewed my food or scrunched up my nose, disappointed that i didn't dress punk enough, would flip to being violent and wanting to hit someone when a stranger was annoying him instead of talking about it or trying to change his reaction, derided me for not understanding certain vocabulary/British colloquialisms, recently asked one of my best friends who he doesn't know very well about our relationship status when he hasn't spoken to me directly for months, and then painted himself as the victim to that friend. when i asked him not to email me, he emailed me almost immediately; and finally, when giving a mutual friend some items to return to me, he packed mixtapes that people/girls had made for him, and also, his bedsheet (the last time i was lying on it was when he raped me... that was obviously pretty triggering...!)

The few conversations we had about our dynamic ceased 5 months ago, because the logic he uses is unaccountable:

him: i didnt kick you out of my house  
 i used a turn of phrase that you thought was me kicking you out  
 me: you yelled at me, saying "GO HOME THEN"  
 im meant to take that some other way?  
 him: yes you are  
 me: i can't believe i continually get sucked into this bullshit  
 04:12  
 him: this is your bullshit

This was after/about the conversation where i called him out for the first time (in the last issue):

"new job is good, cause it's with people and i'm distracted and dont dwell too much  
 what's also weird is that right after the phone call from you when you were in berlin.  
 i'd just been offered a job at \_\_\_\_\_ before you called  
 and then we had that conversation.  
 happy about new job, feeling horrible about phone call."

The last time I saw him in person was in March where I met with him after finishing work in London to give him a birthday present. I had been looking for this item since last August, when some of our things burnt down in a housefire. He was hostile, aggressive, did not listen to my point of view, and did not even thank me for the present. I wasn't even surprised at this point, just really sad and mournful. And obviously feeling pretty stupid that I had gone to so much effort for him, again.



## NOTES FROM BEHIND THE MIC

These are stories from two bands, in Australia, where I was the only woman in a band with three other dudes. I was the frontperson, which has many issues in and of itself. The first band went for four years, and the second band went for three years.

### EXPERIENCES ON TOUR

\*in indonesia, malaysia, singapore and the philippines, people meeting us would only introduce themselves and shake hands with the dudes. i would extend my hand, but not get a response. this may have been because i was asian, in asian countries, and it was hard to identify me as a member of the touring band, thus "worth" meeting ...

\*these are quotes from a 40-something year old white Australian male, who unfortunately released our record prior to our Asian tour, and kind of invited himself along to the tour. he did not recognise his status and privilege as a tourist, as a relatively wealthy person, as someone with much punk social capital, as a guest that people wanted to please, etc ...

-(white) male says: "How much for a kiss?"

to younger (Singaporean) female waiter at a food court.

-(white) male says: "Can I borrow your girlfriend for a few minutes?"

to a local (Malaysian) male half his age and half his size.

-(white) male says: "It's surprising that some of these girls

with the things on their heads are quite cute." to another white male about (Malaysian) women with hijabs (on the first day of tour!!!)

-he regularly commented about the bodies and leered at the behinds of passing teenage girls

-he also talked incessantly about which sex workers he wanted to spend time with ...

\*at our first show of the six-week tour of South East Asia, someone in the circle pit grabbed my chest, hard. it made me feel really haunted and nauseous for a long time after. This is from an article I wrote for Femme Fest Singapore, in 2008:

*This was mentioned online later:*

Ariff said

2 July 2008, 5:23 pm

Somebody said some rempit guy groped the Crux girl at the Taiping leg of their show. Pretty fucking spectacular.

*It was not spectacular. It was fucking horrible and invasive. My body is not public property and if anyone touches it, it is because I say it is okay. My gender is not a billboard for sex or for enacting sexual desires. Unfortunately this discouraged me from stage-diving or crowd-surfing for the rest of our shows when ideally I would be equal to all the other musicians on stage - people who receive attention for their skills and enactment - not their body parts or gender.*

*Similarly, there were males on tour who exploited their friendships and contact with me by touching and rubbing me inappropriately. At a show in Singapore I told one of these individuals to "Stop it!" several times, and was not taken seriously. He kept pushing it. It is up to everybody to be aware of cues from another person, especially if they are yelling at you to STOP. I ended up removing myself physically from the situation.*

*These incidents made me feel hyper-conscious of all my interactions for the rest of tour. Many times I acted paranoid and avoided conversations with many friendly males, in case it would result in a similar situation: one person persisting with intimate contact despite another's objection. It is sad that I missed out on potentially great friendships and conversations because I let one or two people make me feel threatened and unsafe. My impetus for writing this is to implore people to recognise subtle power dynamics and their privilege in social contact. There is no excuse for threatening behaviour or harassment. Especially people connected to a community that is supposedly informed of such scenarios. Keep in mind that if someone is physically smaller than you, or may feel less comfortable or self-assured, or is quieter or less vocal, or have a less widespread network of friends, or there are communication barriers, then they are unlikely to feel at ease or autonomous enough to speak up. It is up to everyone to take responsibility, be accountable for the results of their own actions, and look out for one another.*

### EXPERIENCES WITHIN BANDS

\*one member of my first band refused to agree to releasing our final recordings until my guitar track was erased. i did a guitar on one song for around 30 seconds, and this is the only guitar part I played in the band, out of 12+ songs. i had been playing guitar for about 5 years at that point, and other members liked the part that i had recorded (they said to me separately, later). we spent \$1300 on that recording, and it never got released because of his refusal. he never explained what his problem was, he did not say that there was anything wrong with the guitar part, he was just adamant that we not release it until my part was erased. it was hella awkward, so we never talked about it again. obviously no one else in the band stood up for me either.

\*in that same band, i repeatedly expressed a desire to leave the band as i was being continually treated like a token or a frontpuppet. each time i expressed i wanted to quit (to the guitarist, who was also my lover at the time), usually in tears after having run out of the practice room after some kind of incident, i was coerced into staying. he used his power over me, and my romantic attachment to him to silence my concerns about being treated badly within the band. his reasoning was, "you can't quit, because i really really want to be in a band" (not in a band with ME, not to play music together, or for me to be comfortable or to be okay). what was affecting my mental health was put aside for his desire to play in a band.

\*when i asked if i could write songs for the second band, i was told "no, we want the songs to be consistent", even though no one in the band ever had heard any of the songs i had in mind, or any of the riffs i had come up with. also, the riffs were written by two different members, the guitarist, and the drummer. so, what does consistency have to do with it? obviously, after that, i didn't feel encouraged to contribute much to that band.

\*due to the presence of someone in our audience that was triggering. While I was singing, I would see his face watching me, and freeze or go blank. Despite me explaining that I did not want to be in the same space as that person, I still got shit from bandmates for "turning up late" to shows, and leaving straight after we played.