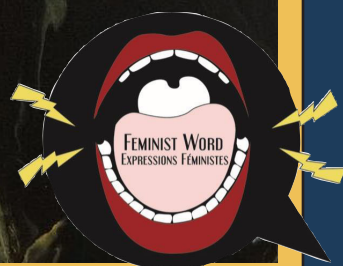


the

FEMINIST WORD



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Issue 8



COVER ART

Art Description

"Hazard Lights" was painted with an aura of joy while I was in a place of sadness. I had been working part time, taking spring courses, and staying with my dad on the nights he was going through chemotherapy treatments. I had just gotten into fluid acrylic portraiture and I painted her while I was staying with my dad by setting up a tarp over his dining table. During my teenage years, I suffered from health complications that caused feelings of intense anxiety and a lack of control of my environment. I find fluid portraiture to be a freeing and therapeutic medium that helps me to loosen the reigns of perfectionism and embrace the chaos of creativity. While my fluid acrylic portraits are all painted in colours other than skin, "Hazard Lights" was modeled off of a woman of colour. She is my most joyous and unapologetic portrait I have painted and I adore her. The painting is also a great F-Word to the angry guy who told me he didn't like her. F you, dude.

Shannon Barry is a Canadian artist, writer, and cryptid who immigrated from South Africa at the age of nine. She recently earned her honours degree in English with a double minor in creative writing and film studies at Mount Royal University. Her creative thesis focused on Surrealism and dreams in literature. Shannon was featured as the official visual artist for the 2020 IGNITE! Festival of Emerging Artists and several of her paintings have been exhibited at the Quenten Doolittle Memorial Gallery. Her poetry has been published in New Forum magazine, the project This Might Help, and the anthology Food: for the Body, Mind and Spirit.

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CRIAW respectfully acknowledges our presence on Indigenous territories and recognizes the legacy of colonization upon Indigenous peoples in Canada. The ideas expressed in *The Feminist Word* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of CRIAW.

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The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) is a charitable, not-for-profit, member-driven organization. Since 1976, we have produced research, publications, and events to advance women's substantive equality in Canada. Using intersectional feminist frameworks, CRIAW is inclusive and supports the rights of diverse women in Canada.

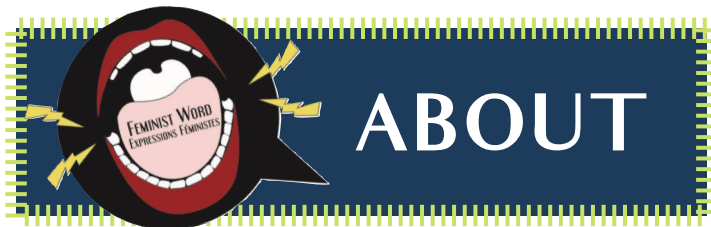
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The Feminist Word (a.k.a. The F-Word) was created by and for young feminists in Canada. We aim to elevate the collective voices of young feminists through a platform that allows us to creatively express our thoughts and priorities regarding women's equality in Canada. Our goal is to provide a meaningful space in which women aged 15 to 29 from across Canada can contribute to the women's movement.

We welcome new submissions in English and French all year long, including articles, poetry, artwork, photography, reviews (of literature, film, music), and stories. So send us your submission today and it may be featured in an upcoming edition!

The Feminist Word was originally conceived by the following women: Sarah Baker, Stacy Corneau, Rachelle DeSorcy, Caroline Flocari, Tess Kim, Susan Manning, Jessica McCuaig, Caitlin Menczel, Caroline Paquette, Jacqueline Neapole, Elizabeth Seibel, Jessica Touhey, and Miriam Illman-White.

Editor's Note

Last year's pandemic brought the world to a standstill. Now, in 2021, we're only starting to see the end of a tunnel that has proven challenging for all but the most privileged of us. Here, in Canada, the country is starting to heal as vaccines are slowly being administered around the country. We have learnt along the way to cope the best we can with limited knowledge or lack of certainty. Despite the hardships we've had to face in the last year, it is important for all of us to remember our dreams and goals that we were committed to prior to the pandemic. We were inclined to encourage our contributors to pursue those dreams now that we're returning to a semblance of normalcy. To look deep within themselves and imagine the ideal feminist future in a post-pandemic world. We chose to turn to you for inspiration and once again, you did not disappoint. The response was exactly what we expected. Feminists across the country delighted us with beautiful artwork and various other pieces.

We are pleased to present you with this newest edition, rich in diversity and full of potential for the future of our feminist movement. You will be served with profound writings that touch on womanhood as well as experiences of inequity and racism. You will journey into the intriguing life of a young feminist through her diary and get to experience her community. You will also read about young women denouncing shortcomings in our society as well as embracing the change needed in order to further feminist causes. You will be exposed to young women narrating their experiences with name mispronunciation and gender-based violence while bearing witness to their strength in the healing process. You will be asked to reflect on self-love and self-worth in a different way than you may be accustomed to and experience the unique fire that burns inside every young passionate woman. Finally, you will discover how slowing down could be considered a feminist endeavour. You are in for a treat.

We hope that this edition inspires you and provides you with a glimpse into a potential future filled with young eager, yet grounded, feminists. We hope that you will keep dreaming, even when everything seems bleak.

Enjoy!

Olivia Atsin is an African storyteller and a wild woman. She is also a dreamer, a creative writer and a dancer. She is an intense person who carries a lot of fire inside her. That makes her extremely passionate about what she cares about and her desire to be of service. The need to expand, know more, dig deep and learn new things always give her soul an injection of excitement.



This is a call for slowness

Oriana Confente

As put by Jenny Odell, “Nothing is harder than to do nothing.”¹ I feel an intense pressure to be productive, and today, productivity is married to speed. A package arrives at my doorstep within hours of ordering it on Amazon. A text sent to my mother, who is 600 kilometres away, pings from my phone to hers within moments. To take longer would not be up to the standard that we’ve collectively become accustomed to.

But slowness is not the antithesis to modernity. When my region shut down in the wake of the pandemic, I watched as my family and friends had time for activities that their regular schedules wouldn’t allow for. Baking bread and making candles at home, just because it was something to do. As a student balancing three jobs to stay afloat, my life was still a treadmill of ever-imminent deadlines. I decided to carve out slowness for myself, and reflected on how to make that happen.

1. Growing my own food.

As a child, I cherished visits to my grandparents’ home. Their backdoor was a gateway to an urban jungle. Scrap metal, paint buckets, and tattered fabrics built the infrastructure for a fantastic world of twisting vines, bushes of sweet-smelling basil, and rows of towering tomato plants.

Once I had access to an outside space, I cluttered it with pots, filling them with the fruits and herbs of my childhood. Every morning I said hello to my garden, watered my sprouts, and patiently watched as it yielded food for me to eat.

Growing my own produce was slower than buying what I needed from the store. However, providing healthy, local food to others can be a powerful organizing strategy, as identified by adrienne maree brown,² a social justice facilitator. The impact of nourishing others is also demonstrated by Ron Finley, a “guerrilla gardener” who plants on city spaces to grow free, nutritious food for his community.³

2. Making my own clothes.

Or, more often, mending them – a practice I inherited from the matriarchs of my family. One grandmother handled textiles by trade. Another sewed out of necessity, repairing garments by hand simply because that’s what she needed to do. She passed that knowledge onto my mother, who altered hems to supplement our household income.

Spending time to make or mend your clothing interrupts exploitive trends that enable mass consumerism.



Image by: Devon Banfield

¹ Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2019).

² adrienne m. brown, *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2019), 432.

³ Ron Finley, “A guerilla gardener in South Central LA,” filmed February 2013 in Palm Springs, USA. TED video, 10:30, https://www.ted.com/talks/ron_finley_a_guerrilla_gardener_in_south_central_la.

I've had the privilege of a flexible schedule, which makes it easier to set time aside for non-negotiable ways to focus on myself.

Audre Lorde encapsulates the difference between “stretching” and “over-extending” oneself: “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”⁶ Small acts of defiance could appear self-indulgent, but refusing to exert yourself past the point of exhaustion for the sake of a faster work output, especially while living through a pandemic, is simply self-preservation.

My hope is that we emerge from the pandemic with a renewed interest in resisting capitalist norms by appreciating things that are done, or made, slowly. Delaying gratification can be gratifying in itself. Taking your time can facilitate healing and happiness within yourself and your global community, and this is a feminist endeavour.

6 Audre Lorde, *A Burst of Light: And Other Essays*, Ixia Press edition (Mineola, New York: Ixia Press, 2017).

Tiny Courages

Meena Ansari

people think wokeness is
facebook photos of white faces
tokenizing black babies,
linkedin posts about your
parent-funded journey,
or a twitter rant on the latest
fake news conspiracy

but snapchat is teeth without biting,
hashtags for the haves,
and feminism is –

the fingers fastening the neighbour's veil
as she heeds friday prayer,
the tongue damning
the locker-room rapist,
the heart that breaks so
blood may scrub apathy away,
sockets scorched from
witnessing mutilated bodies,
toes that crave wise moss
instead cling to sweatshop socks,

and a throat raw
from screaming
'Change'

each action quiet as an
afternoon breath –
until you feel the throng:
the fury red of the sign
hurling 'me too' cries,
ripped laws littering concrete
defunding the corruption
greenbacks breed,
and a warrior drumming creed
until the g7 take a knee

people think leadership
speaks from a storied hill
Youth know –
bushfires are lit
by youtube clicks,
bated by swampy ticks,
and fueled by Tiny Courages.

Meena is a recent law school graduate from the University of Victoria. Previously, she obtained an undergraduate philosophy degree from the University of Toronto. Meena takes courage and inspiration from many Instagram activists and educators, including @_intersectional_activism, @beckspectrum, and @chrisunkim. Meena can't wait until the pandemic is over so she can travel internationally, dance at raves, and attend a spin class.



May Flowers

Marisa Benjamin



This piece is for my mom. She has faced many obstacles because of her gender including walking away from careers for our family. Despite this, she went back to working and thriving time and time again. Before COVID-19 she was well on her way to building a business empire, but school shutdowns forced her to drop almost everything yet again to take care of my younger sister's at-home schooling. And then, I needed significant help in my life, and she was there for me, too. I painted "May Flowers" for mothers' day to reflect how my mom faces obstacles yet still sends out strength and beauty into the world. Our post-COVID-19 feminist future needs us to come together and uplift people who have been unable to work or have faced setbacks in other ways, including women and non-binary caregivers, so that we can recover our momentum toward dismantling the patriarchy.

Marisa is a painter, writer, and digital artist. Art is her outlet to express ideas about critical issues surrounding justice and feminism. Marisa completed a MA and BA at the University of Waterloo and is currently the Research Communications Officer at the Games Institute. In the fall, Marisa will be starting law school at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. At the top of her bucket list, Marisa plans to high five all the people who inspire her (Beverly McLachlin, Lindy West, Roxane Gay, Samantha Irby, Julie Lalonde, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez...)



Is White Feminism the Final Frontier ?

Amrit Kaur Gill

The pandemic has been an eye-opening and life-altering experience for every one of us. What it has also done is bring into sharp contrast the different ways in which each of our lives have been altered. Issues of race, class, gender identity – to name but a few – have become prominently visible when the world has few other places to turn their gaze to. This is not to suggest that these issues exist in separation from each other, more than anything, they tend to have an accumulative effect. For many BIPOC, this has been a time of simultaneous mourning and resistance. It has brought into public attention, in a way that I cannot remember having happened before in my lifetime, the barest of truths: We are not all the same.

As a woman, there are some experiences that I can share with anyone who identifies as a woman. As a racialized woman, I have certain experiences that some women will never understand. I separate the idea of womanhood from racialized womanhood very deliberately. It has been my experience that more often than not, it is difficult for the two to coexist for Black women, Indigenous women, and other women of colour. For centuries, femininity has existed as being inherently white, with white women being held as the standard to which all other women should adhere. While oppressed on the basis of gender, white women have the option of aligning themselves with white supremacy in order to situate themselves in proximity to power. In this case, power is white and male. While white women cannot align themselves with white masculinity, they can rally around the idea of whiteness, and even identify with a misplaced sense of superiority on account of it. Women of colour will never have that option.

Ruby Hamad (2019) writes that for many white women, being accused of racism is the worst thing that could ever happen, perhaps even more terrible than actually experiencing racism.¹ I have heard it said by a white colleague, in a discussion on the negative impacts of racism, that it is important to make space for the absence of negative experience. That is, that there should be space for white people to admit that they have never experienced racial discrimination.

¹ Hamad, R. (2019). White tears brown scars.



Image by: Shane Rounce on Unsplash

I am of the belief that this goes without saying, whiteness is a social construction that has arisen from a need to distinguish itself from the racialized other. It has also done so in a way that allows for whiteness to exist at the top of the proverbial pyramid. I am unsure of how to convey the idea that discussions about racism are not about the white people in the room personally, but rather about the systemic nature of whiteness. It is my deepest hope that our new 'normal' begins to challenge this idea, this tendency to centre whiteness in all conversations – including ones of racism.

I believe that the first step to addressing inequity is recognizing its roots, recognizing how our histories have shaped our present. I have heard the word 'intersectionality' often, it is an idea that resonates deeply with me and one that I apply to my practice. However, one of the most important parts of engaging with an intersectional framework for me, as a non-Black, non-Indigenous woman of colour, has been to recognize not only the oppression I have experienced but to be continuously conscious of privilege. This, I would argue, is crucial in the creation of equitable systems. It is not enough to think of how we are oppressed, it is essential to recognize how we are complicit in the creation of systems that oppress others.

In my experience, sisterhood has never been real. Not as the daughter of racialized immigrants in a settler-colonial state that was always too quick to remind me that I did not belong as a brown woman. As a settler on Turtle Island, I occupy the interesting middle ground between recognizing my role in the continued processes of colonialism while simultaneously grappling from the damage those same processes have dealt my family. Many racialized women have written about this before me, and I will not claim to offer any insight that these brilliant women have not already put forth. Hamad (2019) writes that people are never really ahead of their time, they can produce the knowledge that they do precisely because they exist in their time – which is fraught with discrimination and oppression. I do not think the idea of being critically aware of our positions in society is one that is



Image by: Sacha Verheij on Unsplash

ahead of our time.

Looking forward, my idea of a feminist future is one that is self-aware, critical, and able to present the nuance of human experience. Time and time again we have heard it said that gender alone is not a sufficient lens to understand human experience. My vision for the future is one in which everybody is willing to apply that idea – for I do not believe the issue is with a lack of understanding. It is uncomfortable, it is difficult, but it is necessary to do this work. I do not pretend that I am in any way an expert or that I can ever claim that my journey to learning and unlearning will ever be finished. Anti-oppressive practice is not a goalpost, we will never be able to stand in the endzone and declare that we have made it. My vision for a feminist future is one where we know we will never make it to our destination. It is a future where, instead, we work on making the journey the best it can be.



Amrit Kaur Gill (she/her) is a South Asian, Punjabi woman. Amrit currently resides in London, on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. She is currently a graduate student in the Counselling Psychology program at Western University. Amrit hopes to apply anti-colonial and anti-oppressive practice to her eventual work in the mental health field. She is currently conducting her graduate research on the identification of cultural competency skills in intimate partner violence service providers.

if only you knew how much fire I have

Lylou Sehili

slowly consumed

reduced to ashes, and to silence

burned by their passions

ignited by the spark, and then

emptied of all heat

she suffers, heals, comforts and starts over

she collects the cries of humanity

but also its fears, its anxieties and its deepest worries

without them having to say anything

the burden of the burden falls on her

she carefully listens, but who listens to her?

do you listen to her?

do you even know that she needs to be listened to?

to be loved, consoled, comforted, supported

she feels the world, like a flower on the surface of the water

sensitive to the slightest agitation

shaken by the crash of the drops

at the same time calm but frightened by the proximity of the storm

she knows she will resist, knows what resisting implies

she knows what resisting implies, and so she will resist

resilient in spite of herself, resilient for others

listen to her

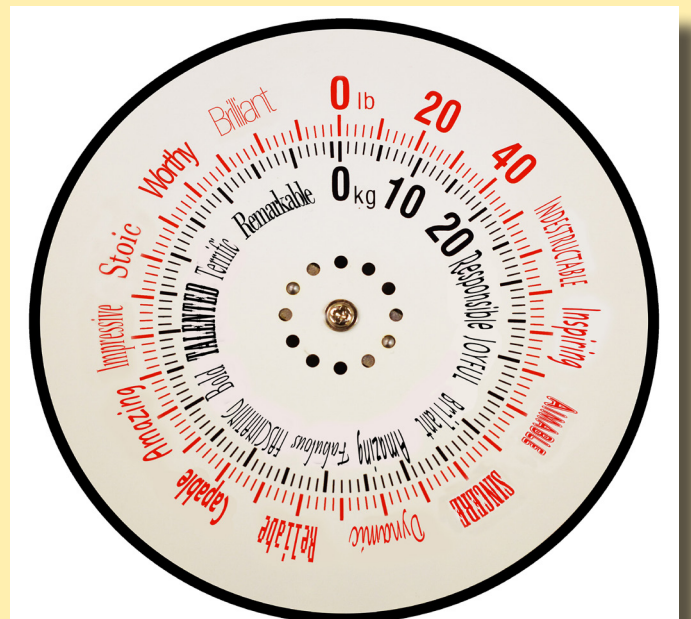
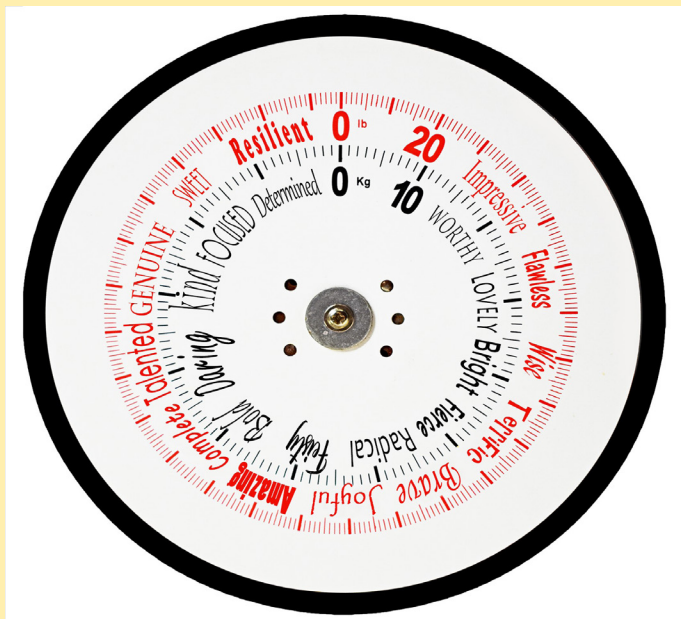
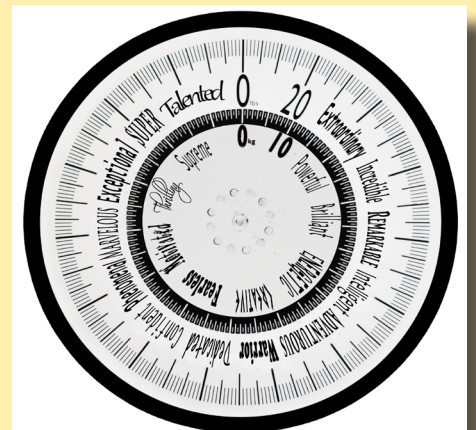
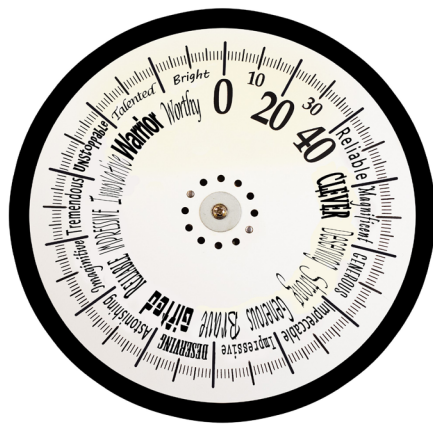
feel her

Lylou Sehili is a 20 years old student activist involved in the «Coalition étudiante pour un virage environnemental et social» (CEVES) since its day view back in August 2019, and she is completing a Double DEC in both applied sciences and social sciences this year. CEVES is a coalition of students from different academic levels that ranges across the province of Quebec. We organized numerous protests and other forms of action, including the historical global strike on September 27th 2019. Climate justice is the central point of our demands : it means the abolition of all existing oppressive systems.



More Than Numbers

Vanessa Ervin



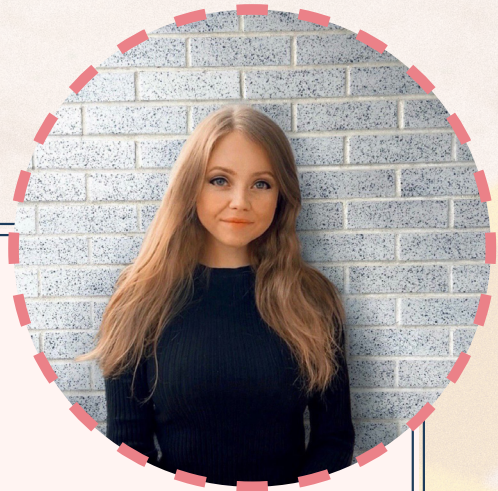
More than Numbers, is an interactive art piece commenting on the problematic fixation on weight, image, and productivity during Covid-19. These fixations existed before Covid-19, however, they have been magnified during the pandemic. Universally during Covid-19, there is an alarming increase in eating disorders, burnout, mental illnesses, and more; as capitalistic demands value productivity over all else.

More than Numbers, includes five scales that show the first few numbers within their viewing windows. They appear to be just ordinary scales, until viewers step on them and see written words instead of numbers. I have purposely chosen words that champion people's abilities and accomplishments rather than their appearance; as we often create our worth solely on being considered 'beautiful'.

Through my art, I demand that weight doesn't define our worth and that there is too much value placed on numbers. I re-imagine 'beauty' and self-worth to no longer be rooted in problematic colonial, capitalist, Eurocentric, and Westernized views. I advocate for a shift away from one standardized view of beauty, to a world that instead values happiness, inclusivity, and mental health. I welcome all people to step on my scales, affirming that they are resilient, capable, exceptional, worthy, and so much more.

Vanessa Ervin is a feminist activist artist, currently in her second-year Women's Studies Masters at the University of Ottawa; her research focuses on the importance of creative projects in academia. Ervin attended Lakehead University for her undergrad, majoring in an Honours Bachelor of Fine Arts and minoring in Women's Studies.

Ervin's work is heavily research and content-based, often focusing on topics such as gender, sexuality, and the social constructs of masculinity/femininity. As a multidisciplinary artist, Ervin is passionate about creating change through conversation, art, and education.



Diary of a Pandemic

MARCH 14, 2020:

I don't like change at the best of times—I like predictability, control over my day. I like seeing the same people everyday—knowing their faces, trusting them. It throws me off when someone gets a haircut, the way you have to look at them anew.

I live in expectation of disaster—I hear of a spark, and suddenly a forest fire ravages. And so, this chaos, this sudden turn of events and life, this disaster of historic proportions, feels almost inevitable, almost expected. I have been preparing for this all my life.

I never hoped for it, never would've asked for it.

MARCH 17, 2020:

I always joke that I'd die without school, that I wouldn't be able to take it. I resent the thought of a snow day; I hate statutory holidays; I despair all through reading week—on all these days I should be pleased, happy, relaxed.

I enjoy learning—sitting up front and listening and watching as professors stitch together information, share constellations of knowledge curated in their brains.

I enjoy seeing other students, that shared camaraderie of being in the same place for same purpose at the same time, coalescing in experience.

I enjoy seeing friends, knowing I'm creating future memories with every conversation and joke and anecdote.

I miss all that, desperately.

Or so I should. Or so I should mourn its loss, weep, be sad, despair. I am at the precipice of a nightmare—shouldn't I despair? Isn't this the time to weep?

MARCH 22, 2020:

Humour is the ten-foot pole with which I can touch all this—without it, I can't. It's as if a barrier is up between myself and the gravity of the situation.

Why can't I hear my own laughter?

MARCH 30, 2020:

I am a boulder, this great weight upon society—with a growing sense of community comes this burden of belonging, of becoming a potential threat upon the rest. Am I up to the challenge? Can I just lay here?

The rhetoric of "community support" makes me sick. I appreciate it, admire it, want it—but communities are manifestations of emotional connection, and I'm not capable. I grasp at them—groups of people, far-off figures, standing there—but they are inaccessible to me. Like clutching at smoke from behind a chainlink fence.

APRIL 2, 2020:

I cannot engage—my brain isn't there. I should be learning, I should be being, even in this fractured state—yet I can't. My brain won't let itself.

The denial, I suppose, is overwhelming—all this talk about the virus, the measures, the ever-expanding timeline, compounding uncertain certainties. There is a barrier between me and them.

Kenya Thompson

Empathy evades (I feel empty). I try to engage, but can't go there—I respond inadequately, fingers rigid as they type. Conversations turn short.

All we are is the stories we tell one another. We find ourselves at the nexus of all we've shared, and—

APRIL 13, 2020:

Sleeping late; drinking cold coffee; stabbing carbs with plastic spoons; sitting in various seats around an empty apartment, typing at a laptop intermittently; scrolling mindlessly; eating crackers ravenously when I finally begin to articulate myself, feel clarity wafting past.

You can't worry about an unimaginable future, quite. Occasionally relief comes at a refreshing shower, tidying up.

JUNE 27, 2020:

I feel sunshine again (through window panes), see children biking, dogs walking. I see life, hear laughter. Community is still there; it only stood and wait.

Burdens are contended with, lightly, as best as possible—they will be for a long while, of course. People are strong, resilient—a species to be proud of, to invest in. From the wells of loneliness—sequestered insides, closed-up apartments—springs hope, action.

If we were all endangering one another, would we (the most brazen of us) protest? Maybe so; I don't doubt it—but what a gift, a generosity it is, to try.

Blood is pumping again—pulsing, coursing from one vein to another's. For some, it never stopped—for me, it never stopped. I am a bubble on the tide of, maybe, human progress? Hope? Perseverance?

I am so, if so cautiously, grateful.



Kenya is a writer, advocate, researcher, and (remote) student at Carleton University's Institute of Political Economy. She lives suspended across space and time, eventually (hopefully) in Ottawa, ON, sometimes in Halifax, NS, but currently in Kelowna, BC, oftentimes in the past, occasionally in the future, usually in the present. She thinks prefigurative activism and radical kindness are cool, and spends her days thinking about reciprocity, intersectionality, and the politics of caregiving. Other joys include growing avocado plants from pits, practicing ASL, and trying to write a poem with a consistent rhyme scheme for once.

The Safety Smile

Lexi Salt

In order to discuss feminist futures, I believe it is important to reflect on the world that we live in currently. In particular, I am interested in the coping mechanisms that women employ day in and day out to survive. This poem unpacks these strategies and regular resiliency of women. My feminist future looks like a world where we do not need a “safety smile” anymore. Where catcalling does not exist. Where “boys will be boys” is no longer uttered. Where men are held accountable for their actions. Where people understand the difference between intent and impact. Where we don’t have to try to simply survive anymore, but we can thrive.

Trigger warning for gender-based violence

Preface: using a heteronormative framework to discuss my personal experience with gender issues

The safety smile,
The one you give to cat-callers on the streets of Toronto
Who make you cringe and burrow into yourself
Trying in vain to create a cloak of invisibility
So that they won’t notice you.

The safety smile,
The one you offer to Senegalese taxi drivers
Who ask for your number,
Again and again and again
Not taking diddit (no) for an answer.

The safety smile,
The one you provide to dance partners
Not sure if they grazed your butt or your breast
Accidentally or on purpose
Invading your safe space and dance high.



Image by: Michelle Ding on Unsplash

You see all women have this ability
We were never taught
We just inherently know,
The safety smile,
As a means of survival.

In this world of patriarchy and misogyny,
Women rely on our tools to cope and to literally stay alive.
The worst possibility of a man meeting a first date
Is that she might not look like her online picture.
The worst possibility of a woman meeting a first date
Is that he might kill her.

So we return to the safety smile,
Play nice
And laugh at his tasteless jokes
Even though our insides are burning with every sexist, degrading remark:
"Is it that time of the month again?"
"Stop being so sensitive!"
And my personal favourite "you should smile more often".
So we do.
But it is only a mask of protection against monsters like you.



Lexi Salt is a spoken word artist from Scarborough, living in Kitchener-Waterloo. As a gender-based violence prevention educator, she infuses her dedication to gender equity and other social justice issues into her poetry. The RISE (Reaching Intelligent Souls Everywhere) community helped her to develop her voice as an artist. Lexi is currently pursuing her Masters in Community Psychology, studying gender-based violence in the Latin dance community. She is passionate about community building, playing with dogs, and art as a means of social change.

A Pronunciation

Bhavika Patel

It's not a common name, but it's not an unusual name. Every so often, people are tempted to ask what it means and I don't ever have the answer. I go on explaining how my parents told me they made up the name when I was younger. When I discovered Facebook, I even searched my name and couldn't find myself.

I think I remember the first time someone mispronounced my name. When I came back to Canada after living abroad, my second-grade teacher introduced me to the class but mispronounced my name. I knew it wasn't right, but I didn't correct them, and I didn't know if I could. When I moved schools again a year later, I went along with the incorrect pronunciation; I still didn't know if I could change it.

Throughout the years, when I had new teachers or substitute teachers, they would always stop at my name. They would take a second longer than usual – a pause, and say: "I don't know if I'm pronouncing this right...", or would attempt to say it, but pause at each syllable. I had memorized the order of every attendance sheet so I could prepare myself for the pause.

When I moved cities in grade seven and the teacher introduced me to the class, they again pronounced my name differently. The pronunciation was different than before and it was close to the "real" pronunciation; it was close enough so I didn't correct them. After so many years, I still go along

with that pronunciation.

My roommate in university was a friend from the second-grade, the initial mispronunciation era. I had to tell and teach her the latest pronunciation of my name. A few months later, she asked why I didn't stick with the pronunciation that my family uses. I told her that even my family's pronunciation is incorrect; instead of three syllables, they use two – sort of a nickname. Sometimes I feel like I don't even know how to properly pronounce my own name.

As a graduate student and a working professional, my name is still mispronounced. In emails, some use my last name to address me, not prefaced with "Miss" or "Ms.", but simply my last name. On calls, after I introduce myself, people still mispronounce my name and I still cannot correct them. People often misspell my name, even though they can refer to my email address.

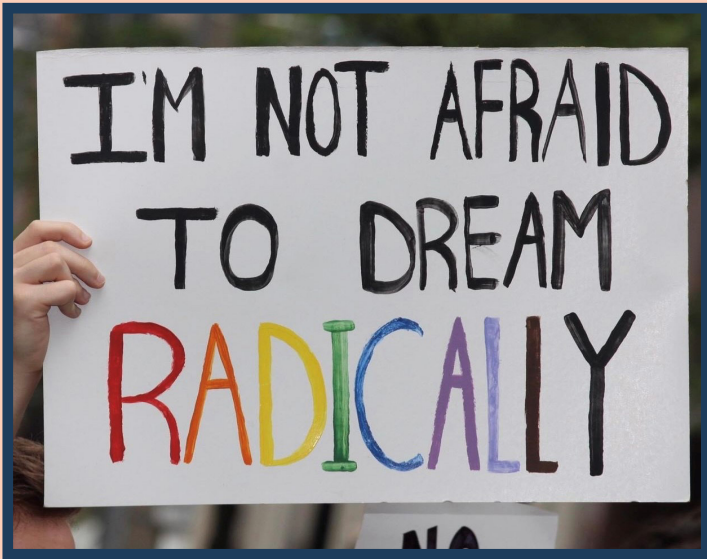
I don't know if I'll be comfortable with demanding that my name be pronounced correctly, not even the real pronunciation but the anglicized version. It's such a simple thing yet I feel as if I'm asking and demanding too much. I don't expect people to always know, but I hope that unusual and strange names will be given the attention they deserve. I believe that names will become a method to embrace the differences among us for a feminist future, and to ensure an element of equity.

Bhavika Patel (she/her) is a graduate student at the University of Ottawa; she's pursuing a Master of Arts in Feminist and Gender Studies while working for the Women's Advisory Committee at the Canada Border Services Agency. She currently resides in Toronto.



The End of the Tunnel

Devon Banfield



With vaccine rollouts happening around the world, global leaders are ensuring us that there is a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. But as we leave the COVID-19 pandemic, many questions have been raised about whether or not we should strive to return to the way of life pre-pandemic, as many believe we see it through rose coloured glasses. As people around the world and across Canada reflect on the last year, many wonder if the “new normal” will see more equality for marginalized groups, whose strife has been brought to light on a large scale throughout the last year.

Devon Banfield is a transmedia journalist and photographer from Toronto, Canada. Based in Calgary, Alberta, Banfield works as an anchor and reporter for 660 News, and as a freelance contributor to Getty Images. She has an interest in healthcare research and feminism, and is pro-caffeine and pro-high heels.



We won't be silenced

Pascale Montpetit

We won't be silenced, together we will be okay

In 2019 my life was turned upside down

My life full of ambition and happiness, was gone

The light and fire inside me vanished

In 2019 I was raped

I was assaulted and reduced to an object

A simple object for some man's pleasure

For the next year I lived everyday like nothing happened

If I did not think about that night, then it could not bother me

If I did not cry about that night, then I couldn't possibly be sad

If I did not talk about that night, then that single night did not happen

I was terribly wrong

The assault happened

And my emotions caught up to me

In 2020 the entire world was hit by Covid-19

The pandemic forced me to face my problems

Problems I hid for years and emotions that were nothing but repressed

I was surrounded by family, but I never felt more alone

I started binge eating, I found comfort in food

I couldn't sleep, I avoided my nightmares

I moved out, I tried to escape my demons

I broke down and wanted to leave this life

My heart was filled with pain, my head was confused

How could I have let this happen

How could a strong woman let a man abuse her

How could a strong woman let a man rob her of her dignity

How could a strong woman, who believes so fiercely in human rights, repress her emotions and not be vocal about this

How could a strong women stay silent for so long

Now in 2021, I am on my healing journey and I feel empowered

We should not be ashamed of our stories

We should be ashamed of a world where men still hold power over women

A world where justice and equality for all does not exist

But it does not have to stay this way

The abuse against women will never stop if we keep it hidden

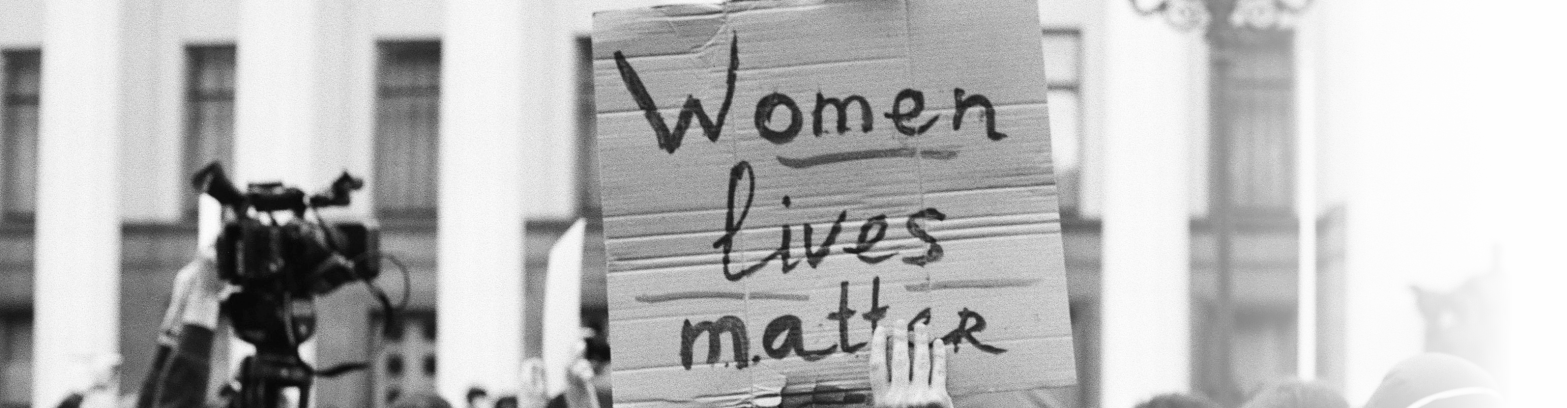


Image by: Rad Pozniakov on Unsplash

How do we create a better future for our kids if we stay silent

Let's take back our power
And find resilience through each other

All voices should be heard
All voices should be supported
All voices should have a platform
We should not have to suffer alone

We are smart
We are strong
We are powerful
We won't be silenced
Together we will be okay

The pandemic forced us to stay apart
But what if it also brought us closer

Social media was our way to connect when human interaction was forbidden

The stories of Breonna Taylor and Vanessa Guillen were shared millions of times

Pictures, Posters, Marches, Movements

All posted on every platform

The violence against women was finally being exposed

Let's use social media to our advantage

We need to create a safe space for women all around the world

A space where feminism can be explored, stories can be shared and ideas can be exchanged

My name is **Pascale Montpetit** and I am 22 years old. I am currently studying criminology and women's studies at the University of Ottawa and I would like to obtain a Graduate Degree in journalism. I also love to read and write. Maybe someday I will have the privilege to write and share other people's stories, for the world to see.





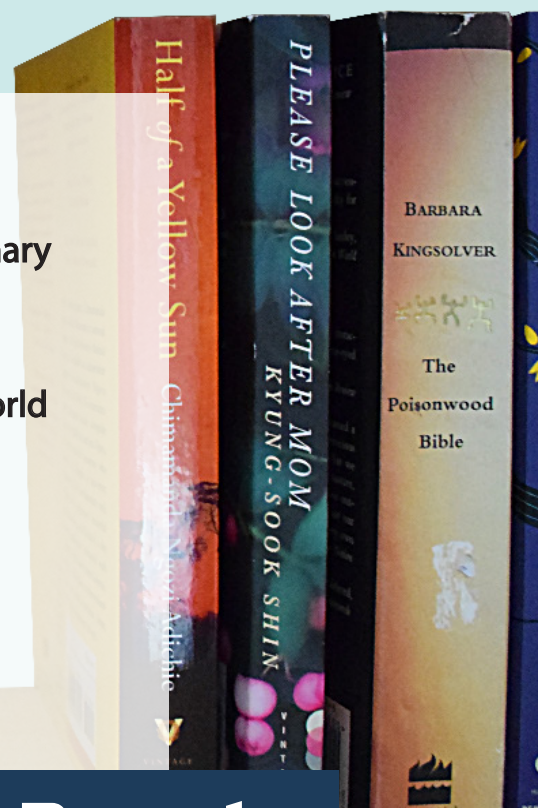
Flicks



Reads



1. **Life Stages and Native Women**
by Kim Anderson
2. **Madame President: The Extraordinary Journey of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**
by Helene Cooper
3. **Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Deisgned for Men**
by Caroline Criado Perez
4. **Girl Decoded**
by Rana el Kaliouby
5. **Modern HERstory**
by Blair Imani



●●● Fem Hits, Flicks & Reads ●●●

CRIAW celebrated its 45th birthday!

Since 1976, CRIAW has been researching and documenting the economic and social situation of women in Canada. This year we celebrate our 45th anniversary and in order to continue on in our mission, we need YOUR help!

Support CRIAW, support feminist research! CRIAW relies heavily on membership and donations to continue doing our work.

Help us stay strong for another 45 years!

For more information visit www.criaw-icref.ca or email us at info@criaw-icref.ca

New Publications

Women and COVID-19 Fact Sheet
Series

Feminist Intersectionality Primer

Check out [www.criaw-icref.ca/
publications](http://www.criaw-icref.ca/publications) for more!



NEWS



