bitch

a feminist response to pop culture

GHOSTS

ISSUE #80 / FALL 2018

bitchmedia

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VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN, QUEER, AND TRANS PEOPLE IS NOT INEVITABLE.

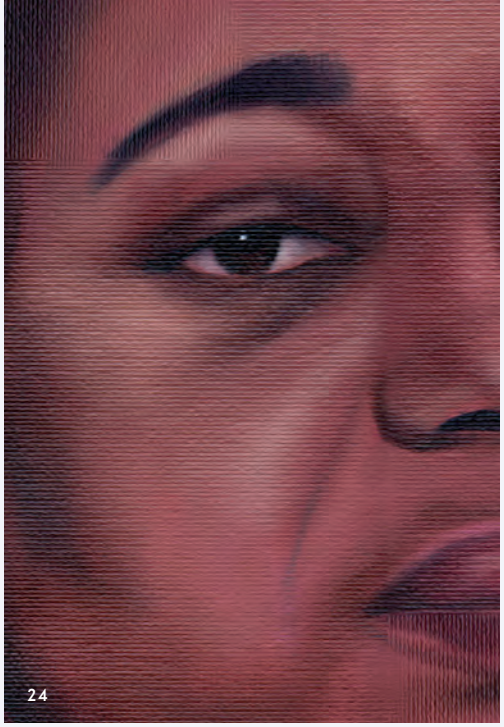
ABAKI BECK, page 67
photo by *RACHELLE BUSSIÈRES*

THE GHOSTS ISSUE

first of all

dispatches

features



from the hq

culture

books

screen

music

bitch media is a nonprofit, independent, feminist media organization dedicated to providing and encouraging an engaged, thoughtful feminist response to mainstream media and popular culture.

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online at bitchmedia.org

on the air with our podcasts, *Popaganda* and *Backtalk*

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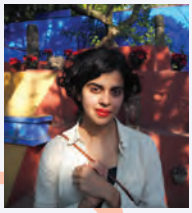
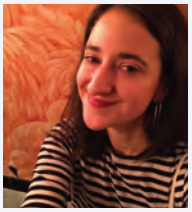
CHANELLE ADAMS ("Digitizing the Dead is Capitalism's Next Ghoulish Move," page 82) is a Marseille-based writer and researcher. Committed to platforms that prioritize experience as a way of knowing, Chanelle colaunched feminist web platform *Bluestockings Magazine* before later becoming managing editor at Black Girl Dangerous. Find her on Twitter @nellienooks or at chanelleadams.info.



ADITI KINI ("Ghost in My Mouth," page 18) is a writer and artist based in New York City, where she writes cultural criticism, creative nonfiction, and screenplays, and tries to be better every day.

D.W. ANSELMO ("Pretty Girls Make Graves," page 34) is an assistant professor of film and media history at Georgia State University. Her work on girl fans and U.S. silent cinema has appeared in *Feminist Media Histories*, *Cinema Journal*, *Camera Obscura*, *Screen*, *Spectator*, and several academic anthologies. *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Interview with a Vampire* changed her life.

ABAKI BECK ("Missing, Murdered, but Never Forgotten," page 64) is a freelance writer passionate about Indigenous community resilience and racial justice. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in public health. She is a member of the Blackfeet Nation of Montana and is Red River Métis.



KERENSA CADENAS ("Female Trouble," page 20) is a writer and editor based in New York. She's written for *Complex*, *Jezebel*, *The Week*, *The Guardian*, *Bustle*, and several other publications. She has exactly five skills, one of which is speed reading. She also has a vast knowledge of celebrity relationships.

MARITA GOLDEN ("Dying Indifference," page 42) is the author of the novel *The Wide Circumference of Love*, cofounder and president emeritus of the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation, a veteran teacher of writing, and an acclamed, award-winning author of 16 works of fiction and nonfiction. She has served as a member of the faculties of the MFA Creative Writing Programs at both George Mason Virginia Commonwealth Universities, as well as in the MFA in Writing Program at John Hopkins University.

CHAÉDRIA LABOUVIER ("American Pain," page 24) is a writer and scholar of the artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. She is a former contributing writer for Elle.com, and a cofounder of Mothers Against Police Brutality.

ILANA MASAD ("Literature's Troubled Legacy of Grieving Madwomen," page 70) is a queer Israeli-American fiction writer, book critic, and essayist. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *L.A. Times*, *Broadly*, *Electric Literature*, the *Guardian*, *Joyland Magazine*, *StoryQuarterly*, and more. She is the founder and host of *TheOtherStories.org*, a podcast that features fiction writers at all stages of their careers.

IMRAN SIDDIQUEE ("Nijla Mu'min Brings a Radical Portrait of Black Muslim Women to the Big Screen," page 80) is a writer, filmmaker, and activist. His words on gender, race, and the media have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Buzzfeed*, and *Bitch*, among other publications. He's a collaborator at the South Asian American Digital Archive and was also on the founding staff of The Representation Project. Find him on Twitter @imransiddiquee.

about the art

A theme like "ghosts" calls for haunting visuals that stir the soul, including Tatyana Fazlalizadeh's ethereally undone portrait of Erica Garner (page 25), Anjali Pinto's unearthly photo essay on loss (page 46), and Matika Wilbur's gorgeous photo of Native children from communities that have been affected by missing women and girls (page 64), all bookended with Rachelle Bussières's light-based photos to ground us and give us space. On the cover is a mysterious figure draped in pieces from artist Rhiannon Griego's Ghost Dancer Collection, photographed by Kacie Tomita, giving us the best witchy vibes while reminding us of the ghosts that America is built on. We have chills just thinking about it.

— **Veronica Corzo-Duchart, Jessica De Jesus, and Margot Harrington,** Art Directors

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Department of Corrections
The art for *"Flash Forward Makes Improbable Futures a Reality"* (#79) was credited to Julienne Alexander and should have been Matt Lubchansky. In "BitchTapes" (#79), Bob Marley's "Three Little Birds" was incorrectly titled as "Everything's Gonna Be Alright." In "7 on Travel" (#79), we wrote that the Singapore Changi Airport has a "12-mile-long slide." Its slide is 12 meters high. These errors were ours.

—

This issue is set in Lelo, Optima LT Pro, Tiempos, and Morion.

DEANNE CHEUK (page 24) is a New York–based art director and artist. She has been commissioned by companies such as Nike, Target, MTV, Olay, Sephora, Nickelodeon, Gap, Urban Outfitters, and *The Guardian*. Her artwork is inspired by nature, utopia, space, and distorting realistic representation into fantasy.

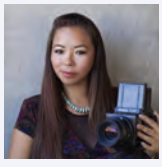
KACIE TOMITA & RHIANNON GRIEGO (cover) Kacie Tomita (left) is a photographer based in Los Angeles and New York City. Her work has been published in *The Cut*, *Interview* magazine, *Nylon* magazine, and *Teen Vogue*. The cover features the Ghost Dancer Collection "Silk Roads" by Rhiannon Griego (right). She is a textile artist and jewelry designer with Mexican, Spanish, and Tohono O'odham heritage. Her work combines Saori Zen Weaving. She lives in Ojai, California.

RACHELLE BUSSIÈRES (page 82) focuses on our experience with light and how it interacts with the world. Using photography, light, paper, and chemistry, she creates photograms by using the lumen print process. She is currently a Charter Resident at Minnesota Street Project in San Francisco.

CHARLOTTE EDEY (page 56) is an artist and illustrator working across print, tapestries, and ceramics. Softly surreal, the themes of identity and balance are explored within fluid and impossible spaces. Drawing on modernist architecture, Afrofuturism, and vastly arid landscapes, the scenes are punctuated with touches of lush, organic idyll, and miniature figures.

TATYANA FAZLALIZADEH (page 76) is an artist, illustrator, and Oklahoma City–native currently living in Brooklyn, New York. She created *Stop Telling Women to Smile,* an international street art series. She has been profiled by the *New York Times*, NPR, and is a NYC Commission on Human Rights Public Artist in Residence. Her work has been featured on BET, Oxygen, and Spike Lee's feature film *Da Sweet Blood of Jesus*. She is the art consultant on the Netflix series *She's Gotta Have It*.

MANUJA WALDIA (page 20) is an award-winning designer and artist whose work takes us on a journey of ritual, festivals, and gatherings covering feminism and friendship. She has been in *Forbes*, *The Atlantic*, *Print* magazine, Fast Company, and more. She is from India, and is now based in Oregon.



MATIKA WILBUR (page 64) Matika Wilbur is a visual storyteller and photographer from the Swinomish and Tulalip peoples of coastal Washington state, and is based in the Pacific Northwest. She earned her BFA from the Brooks Institute of Photography. Her most recent endeavor, Project 562, has brought her to more than 300 tribal nations dispersed throughout 40 U.S. states, where she has taken thousands of portraits and collected hundreds of contemporary narratives from the breadth of Indian country all in the pursuit of one goal: to change the way we see Native America.

GHOSTS

from the editor

When we think about ghosts, it's often in the context of literal and physical hauntings—the things that go bump in the night. While these apparitions are real (don't debate me on this), this issue of *Bitch* expands the definition of ghosts to encompass all the ways we're haunted by things we can't control. It might be the Alzheimer's disease that ravages a loved one's mind and renders them ever more spectral (page 42); it could be the colonialism that, bit by bit, attempts to erase the language of an entire culture (page 18). Ghosts are much more multifaceted than what we see depicted in Gothic novels, summer blockbusters, or prestige television—they're *all around us*.

If you're anything like me, you watch horror movies through your fingers, dreading the jump scares even as you anticipate them. In some respects, that's also how so many of us are viewing the chaos in the world today. As the current presidential administration allows America's legacy of colonialism and white supremacy to guide its policies, we're watching in fear. Every day there seems to be a new upset, but this issue aims to remind us that there's already a blueprint for overcoming oppression: the ever-elusive and lingering ghost.

When activist Erica Garner died at the age of 27 on December 30, 2017, it was a shock to our collective system. We're not supposed to die at 27, a little more than three years after our father is choked to death by a police officer on a Staten Island sidewalk. Erica was a warrior for justice, not only for her father, but for all those who've been harmed by police brutality. She was also haunted by her father's death, by his last moments being captured on camera, and by the lack of resources available to her. It is an honor to pay homage to Erica in this issue as Chaédria LaBouvier—a woman who understands the impact of losing a loved one to police brutality—does in "American Pain" (page 24).

The work Erica poured into her all-too-brief life teaches us that loss is potent political and personal fuel. Photographer Anjali Pinto understands that better than anyone: After unexpectedly losing her husband, Pinto decided to publicly document her grief—the good, the bad, and the days she felt as though she couldn't move forward but somehow did. In a moving photo essay (page 46), we get to see a sliver of Pinto's life after losing her partner.

None of us escapes this world without a few personal ghosts, but they're not only here to scare us. If we heed the lessons taught by Garner, Brazilian activist Marielle Franco (page 16), and our ancestors, we can stave off the omnipresent ghost of oppression and fight for a better world. That's the reason the Ghosts issue excavates spirits but doesn't aim to exorcise them. Only you can do that.

Evette Dionne, Editor-in-Chief

LOVE IT

A GUIDE TO WHAT & HOW WE'RE FEELING

1 Becoming
(November 13)

Michelle Obama's autobiography will cover her life from childhood to the White House. We can't wait to get to know the best FLOTUS even better.

2 On the Basis of Sex
(November 9)

This biopic stars Felicity Jones as Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Director Mimi Leder is no stranger to smashing glass ceilings herself, either—she was the first woman to graduate from the American Film Institute Conservatory, in 1973.

3 All You Can Ever Know: A Memoir
(October 2)

Nicole Chung, editor-in-chief of *Catapult* magazine, was put up for adoption by her Korean parents and grew up with a white family in a small town in Oregon. After a lifetime of feeling out of place, Chung begins the search for her real birth story just as she becomes a mother herself.

4 She Wants It: Desire, Power, and Toppling the Patriarchy
(October 16)

Transparent creator Jill Soloway takes readers on a patriarchy-toppling emotional and professional journey as Soloway details their path to stardom.

5 Halloween
(October 19)

Jamie Lee Curtis is back as Laurie Strode, confronting Michael Myers once and for all.

6 Suspiria
(November 2)

Dario Argento's 1977 cult classic about a ballerina trapped in a dance academy run by a coven of witches is being remade by *Call Me By Your Name* director Luca Guadagnino. The film stars Dakota Johnson as Susie Bannion and Tilda Swinton as Madame Blanc.

7 Night Moves
(September 18)

In her first memoir, Jessica Hopper draws on her journals to capture years of friendships and Chicago adventures lit by glowing streetlamps. *Night Moves* is an homage to a city that has always been central to American culture.

SHOVE IT

8 Bill Cosby

(September 24)

Eighty-one-year-old Bill Cosby will be sentenced after being convicted of three counts of aggravated indecent assault. His sentence will take place five months after his conviction and 14 years after the assault. He'll likely serve five to 10 years in prison.

9 Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald

(November 16)

This Harry Potter prequel features accused domestic abuser Johnny Depp as Gellert Grindelwald, a dark wizard who causes mass violence and terror. Screenwriter and series creator J.K. Rowling defended the choice to cast and keep Depp in the role, writing "conscience isn't governable by committee."

10 Killing the SS: The Hunt for the Worst War Criminals

(September 18)

Bill O'Reilly is publishing his 26th book in September. O'Reilly's Killing series is a bestseller with an estimated 15.5 million copies in print worldwide. Though O'Reilly has been dropped by his literary agency, William Morris Entertainment, they say it's their "fiduciary responsibility to service the existing deals we have under contract" even though they "will not be working with him moving forward."

11 The NFL's 2018 season

(September 6)

The Falcons will play the Eagles in the first game of the NFL's 99th season in September. This spring, the NFL approved a policy that protesting the national anthem will result in team fines that can be forced onto the protesting players themselves.

WISDOM FROM: MOANING MYRTLE

BY SORAYA MEMBRENO

Dear Myrtle,

It feels like the world is just getting worse. You've been around for a while; is it actually?

— Curious

Dear Curious,

Well, I don't know about "a while." That's just—that seems like a cruel thing to write. I'm really not sure why you would write that.

And I don't *knooooow*. When I was a girl, all of the other students would pick on me all the time—not just Slytherins! Everyone was so very mean. And now that I'm...that I'm in this state—*oh dear*—current students throw things into my stall (I may not feel a book going through me anymore, but it still hurts!) and the teasing never ends.

Everyone is consistently horrible, just horrible. But, I suppose...while the bad isn't any less bad, the good isn't any less good, either. There are still secret chambers to discover, yellow-eyed questions to be answered, new faces to fight old battles, and old faces returning to help them—even when things seem surely hopeless. And the bubbles in the bath are just as pretty as I remember. I'd hardly call that worse.

illustration by Margot Harrington

Dear Myrtle,

I'm normally a pretty shy person. Now I'm switching schools and starting to feel anxious about meeting people. How do I go about making new friends?

— Anxious New Kid

Dear Anxious,

I thought Olive Hornby was going to be my friend, but all she ever did was tease me about my glasses and make my life miserable. Just miserable. It wasn't only Olive, you know. Everyone always had something to say about my glasses, my hair, or how easily I cry, even though it was their fault I was crying in the first place!

Oh dear, it was just horrible, all horrible. But there are always friends to be found in the most unexpected places. Of course, the "finding" is a little easier when you've got bathroom stalls or drain pipes to hide in and can listen in on what everyone is doing (which isn't a bad habit since you know how cruel kids can be). I suppose that's easier said than done for most people. Even if you don't manage to secretly spy on your would-be friends, even when you aren't looking at all, there they'll be. And it isn't usually who you'd expect, either.

I've seen a lot of kids come through Hogwarts: some nasty and mean, others less so. I can tell you that finding a friend is about more than just finding someone who is similar to you. Real friendships are made by those who either get in trouble together or show one another kindness in a moment that would otherwise be embarrassing, both of which tend to happen in my bathroom. You'll find that when you stumble upon that person, it pays to dry your face, leave the stall, and introduce yourself. (Except maybe not when they're in the bath. For some inexplicable reason, people always seem so jumpy when you say "hi" while they're in the bath.)

BY MIA BURCHAM & SABRINA NELSON

7 ON GHOSTS

In many cultures, ghosts are thought to be tied to physical spaces, especially homes. **THE "STONE TAPE" THEORY OF SPIRITS** posits that emotional energy is imprinted on the physical areas where traumatic or emotionally overwhelming events have taken place, "recorded" in foundations, walls, and other surroundings. The theory suggests that this energy is projected, recorded, and "played back" like a recording in such spaces, often taking the form of apparitions and other paranormal events.

In 2015, the *Collins English Dictionary* added **THE WORD "GHOSTING"** —the practice of "ending a relationship by ignoring all communication from the other person" —to its online editions.

WANT TO DIVE INTO THE SCIENCE AND HISTORY OF GHOSTS? There are currently 11 universities with programs for the study of the paranormal. They range from Stanford (the first academic institution in the United States to study extrasensory perception and psychokinesis) and Princeton to the University of California–Los Angeles (whose Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior studies clairvoyance, telepathy, haunted houses, and ghost photography); and the University of Virginia, which is home to one of the only university-sanctioned paranormal-research programs in the United States.

Probably the most famous ghost (particularly if you were a tween girl who ever attended a slumber party), **BLOODY MARY IS TRADITIONALLY SUMMONED BY CATOPTROMANCY—THAT IS, BY LOOKING IN A MIRROR AND SAYING HER NAME THREE TIMES.** The divination practice goes back as far as ancient Greece and Rome, and was sometimes used for religious purposes. In the United States, the practice has historically been used by women to conjure the faces of their future husbands. An element of horror and dread still lingers over the practice, however: Sure, you might see your future, but as with the legend of Bloody Mary, you might also conjure an angry spirit.

The earliest ghost stories are found in Homer's *Odyssey* and the Hebrew Bible, and the first written work that features a haunted house is the Roman comedic playwright Plautus's *Mostellaria*. Another early haunted-house story comes from Pliny the Younger, who imagined **A GHOST TRAPPED IN CHAINS HAUNTING A HOUSE IN ATHENS.** The Roman writer Seneca offered up even more frightful tales; as did the collection of Middle Eastern folktales *One Thousand and One Nights* (often called *Arabian Nights*), and Murasaki Shikibu's 11th-century Japanese epic *The Tale of Genji*.

While then-President Abraham Lincoln led the Union in the Civil War, his First Lady, **MARY TODD LINCOLN, COPED WITH THE DEATH OF THEIR YOUNG SON WILLIE** from typhoid fever by exploring the world of Spiritualism. The grieving mother attended séances with local mediums, and even held her own in the White House, hoping to connect with her son. The séances were apparently successful: The FLOTUS reported that the ghost of her son appeared almost every night in her bedroom.

Infrasounds—low-frequency noise that humans can't hear, but still sense—might be an explanation for some purported ghost sightings. Some animals, **INCLUDING SNAKES, ELEPHANTS, GIRAFFES, AND WHALES,** sense or produce infrasounds to communicate with one another, but in humans infrasound perception often manifests as feelings of fear (like shivers up your spine), irritation, or dread. Other ambient factors, such as carbon monoxide poisoning, can also create the illusion of ghosts. And hallucinating the form of a deceased loved one is a known symptom of the grieving process.

Caitlin Doughty:

Caitlin Doughty wants to change the way people think about death. She's the founder of the death-acceptance collective The Order of the Good Death; her books *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes: And Other Lessons from the Crematory* and *From Here to Eternity: Traveling the World to Find the Good Death* explore death rituals and practices around the world. We asked Doughty about ghosts, her own favorite book, and more.
—Dahlia Balcazar

illustration by Jessica De Jesus

Something people would be surprised to know about me is that my biggest fear is not death, it's whales—or submarines. Any large, amorphous creature floating below me in the vast expanse of the ocean.

I do not believe in ghosts.

My favorite book to recommend is Elif Batuman's *The Idiot*. You won't want it to end.

The music that keeps me going is female voices over synths. Light Asylum, MUNA, Chvrches, and of course the originals, such as Cocteau Twins and Siouxsie Sioux.

To me, death positivity means that it's okay to have open, honest conversations about death and mortality. It's okay to acknowledge the systemic inequality of death, and that not everyone has access to a good death. It's okay to want to learn about death history, death rituals, and stages of decomposition. None of this makes you weird or morbid.

A ghost I'd be okay with haunting me is Prince. I don't think I have to explain this one; he obviously would be the best ghost.

The least understood aspect of the funeral industry is how much power the family has. That corpse is yours! You don't have to turn it over to a funeral home right away. Death is not an emergency. It's totally safe and legal to keep the body at home until you feel comfortable moving forward.

My favorite questions about mortuary science are about what is possible. Can I keep my dad's skull? Can I keep my boyfriend's tattoo? Can we give Mom a Viking funeral?

Bitch LIST

FEMINIST FAVORITES FROM THE BITCH CREW

THE STANLEY HOTEL GHOST TOUR

On October 30, 1974, Stephen King and his wife, Tabitha, spent a single night at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colorado, and quickly realized that it was full of spirits. King had such a vivid nightmare that night that he woke from his sleep, sat down in a chair facing the hotel-room window, and lit a cigarette. By the time he finished smoking, he had created the plot for his third book, *The Shining*. For those who love a good scare, the Stanley Hotel is still open and accepting guests. You can embark on a $28 tour or even stay overnight—if you dare. —EVETTE DIONNE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

MEMENTO MORI: THE DEAD AMONG US

Catacombs of Paris by Alexander Parsalidis via Flickr

Photographer Paul Koudounaris traveled to more than 250 sites in 30 countries to witness the macabre, elaborate, and fantastic death rituals and memorials featured in this book.

These photos take us all over the world—from the Paris catacombs of 19th-century Europe, where craftsmen worked in human bone to elaborately decorate the monasteries and ossuaries in which it was considered sacred to be buried; to modern-day Bolivia, where families still keep and care for human skulls as good-luck charms. These mementos mori remind us that death is coming for us all, but that humans haven't always been in denial about its reality.

—DAHLIA BALCAZAR, SENIOR ENGAGEMENT EDITOR

SPOOKED

The podcast *Snap Judgment*'s Spooked series presents ghost stories told by real people, produced with such epic detail and care that even the most mundane of spiritual encounters reaches astral levels. Standout episodes feature orphan child ghosts, a terrifying tale about an unkind jinn who possessed a Boy-Scout troop, and, my favorite, a tale of a couple who stops at a roadside bar in rural Wisconsin late one night only to discover mysterious behavior from the patrons and inexplicable changes happening within the mural on the bar's walls. Spooked is produced once a year around Halloween, but there's a back catalog of episodes available for binging.

—MARGOT HARRINGTON, ART DIRECTOR

EL ESPINAZO DEL DIABLO

I'm not scared of serial-killer movies, and I'm not scared of evil clowns. The only thing that truly terrifies me is ghosts. But because I'm obsessed with horror films, I watch every ghost movie I can, so I know that *El Espinazo Del Diablo (The Devil's Backbone)* is the perfect ghost movie. Directed in 2001 by Oscar winner Guillermo Del Toro, *El Espinazo Del Diablo* follows 10-year-old Carlos, who was sent to live in an orphanage during the Spanish Civil War. Though the other boys warn Carlos that the orphanage is haunted by a ghost they know only as "the one who sighs," Carlos begins to suspect the haunting is connected to another boy's disappearance on the night that a bomb dropped on the orphanage. —DAHLIA B.

FRANCES GLESSNER LEE

You may not think you know her work, but if you're a fan of *Law & Order, CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, or any TV procedural that features forensic investigation, you do. The "Mother of Forensics" was well into her 50s when she began pursuing her interest in forensic pathology by creating dollhouse-scale dioramas of crime scenes, exquisitely detailed down to wee overturned perfume bottles and locking doors. *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* were based on real crimes and designed to help actual crime-scene investigators learn their craft. A family inheritance allowed Glessner Lee to support the field of forensics (she helped to establish Harvard's Department of Legal Medicine) and her dioramas are still used in training investigators. *Of Dolls and Murder*, a 2012 documentary fittingly narrated by John Waters, celebrates her legacy. —ANDI Z.

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MARIELLE, PRESENTE!: A MOVEMENT REMEMBERS

by Nicole Froio

ON MARCH 14, 2018, Afro-Brazilian councilwoman Marielle Franco was assassinated in Rio de Janeiro as she left an event during which she had discussed the challenges and joys of being a Black woman politician. Thirty-eight-year-old Franco, a member of the Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL), was elected into office with 46,000 votes in 2016. Her work in office focused on developing policies that would improve the lives of women, advocating for LGBTQ rights, and demanding justice in cases of police brutality against Afro-Brazilian people. She consistently opposed the militarization of law enforcement and was on the council that performed oversight of a presidentially decreed military intervention in Rio de Janeiro. While driving away from the political event, Franco and her driver Anderson Pedro Gomes were executed in cold blood. Franco received four fatal shots to the head.

Franco's murder was first reported by police as an attempted robbery, though nothing was taken from her car; many Brazilians suspected immediately that she was assassinated because of her positionality as a bisexual Black woman in post-coup Brazil; her constant demands for accountability in a corrupt police force; and a political focus on opening doors to Black working-class women. The political pressure from the hashtag #NãoFoiAssalto ("It Wasn't a Mugging") forced media and authorities to admit that she was executed. Months later, no one has been charged, and the investigation into Franco and Pedro Gomes's murder is still ongoing.

The mourning cry of the Brazilian left at the loss of one of its fiercest and most radical voices was heard across the world. On social media, activists began using #MarielleFrancoPresente, which can be translated to "Marielle Franco is Here," to raise awareness about the murder. The word "presente," the standard Brazilian student response to a classroom roll call, has previously been used by Brazilian activists to remember victims of violence and to combat the Latin American practice of political assassinations. Using "presente" for political purposes can be traced back to the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, who started using the word in the '70s to memorialize the missing children taken by a military junta during the country's dictatorship. Adding "presente" to Franco's name is a proclamation: Though she was brutally murdered for her politics, we refuse to let the racialized misogynist violence that took her body also take her memory and legacy.

The practice of remembering Franco through roll call was done at vigils as well as online, shining a light on who she was and what she stood for while simultaneously combating the fake news produced by right-wing trolls who spread a photoshopped photo of Franco with a gang leader, implying that she died because of her involvement with organized crime. Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Elza Soares, and even Viola Davis posted homages to Franco online. A viral video made by YouTuber and actress Ana de Cesaro remixed a poem about Franco into a haunting tribute played alongside the sounds of a storm over Rio de Janeiro: "Another assassinated woman, not just a woman, a Black woman...Marielle moved structures ...stop killing us, this is urgent. Marielle, presente." The echoing voices of the poem mirrored the fast-paced mourning-to-outrage-to-resistance many Brazilians experienced. In response to the assassination and the subsequent defamation of Franco's character, Black academic Allyne Andrade wrote for the website *CartaCapital*: "We need to preserve the legacy of Marielle.... Part of combating racism is also not allowing them to rip away our memories of ourselves."

Keeping Franco's memory alive was also integral to the protests that ensued the week after her murder. Vigils were held in London, Lisbon, Paris, Buenos Aires, Santi-

"Marielle never inspired silence. Marielle makes noise. Marielle always made noise. A new Marielle will be born on every street corner."

ago, Montevideo, Barcelona, and many other cities. In Brazil, activists from the Socialism and Liberty Party, the Brazilian feminist movement, and the Black civil rights movement flooded the streets to demand justice. Banners and signs expressed mourning and continued resistance: "They won't shut us up"; "I, a Black woman, resist!"; "Who killed Marielle?"; "Marielle's voice won't be silenced"; and "They tried to bury us."

Across the world, left-leaning politicians mobilized to honor Franco: Representatives from the European Parliament demanded justice, and the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly issued a condemnation of the assassination. Politicians took photos with signs that read, "Marielle is here, today and always." Posters raising awareness about both the assassination and Franco's legacy have been popping up across the world. The importance of keeping Franco's intersectional approach to state violence echoing through Brazil via both embodied and virtual resistance was and still is palpable.

Making Franco's queerness visible is also key to keeping her legacy alive; Franco often spoke about violence against lesbian women in Brazil and worked with Rio de Janeiro's Lesbian Front to propose Lesbian Visibility Day, though the city council struck down that idea.

In an open letter, Monica Tereza Benicio, Franco's partner of 12 years, wrote in *Vanity Fair*, "Could two women, born in the favelas, live together? There were many reasons to stay away and only one pushed us forward: love. We could not live separated from each other."

We can certainly question whether Franco was appreciated enough while she was alive, but her execution—blatantly linked to her Black feminist positions in a time when activists are openly being pushed out of the public eye by Brazil's right-wing government—has strengthened a political movement to demand change in the country. Leftist parties in Rio have agreed to drop out of the upcoming state gubernatorial election to make way for Franco's party, PSOL, signifying a unity within the left. Grassroots antiracism and feminist movements consisting of Black women, queer people, and working-class people are encouraging women to run for office, and are continuing Franco's practice of demanding accountability for violence by asking every day: Who killed Marielle and Pedro?

illustration by Catarina Bessell

Franco's political career began, as it ended, with a tragedy: She first decided to run for office after a friend was killed in a shoot-out in her Complexo da Maré community. Franco's assassination and the Black genocide perpetrated by the state have reinvigorated many who had lost hope in the fight. As Rio de Janeiro state representative Marcelo Freixo—a party colleague and lifelong friend of Franco's—said, "Whoever killed Marielle thinking it would silence anyone made the biggest mistake of their lives. Marielle never inspired silence. Marielle makes noise. Marielle always made noise. A new Marielle will be born on every street corner." Indeed, Franco's assassination has strengthened resolve to fight against fascism in Brazil—so saying her name, spreading her message across the world, and continuing to demand justice for her murder will haunt the people in power until they answer for their crimes. Marielle Vive! b

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GHOST IN MY MOUTH: A MODERN DIASPORA'S ENDANGERED LANGUAGE

by Aditi Natasha Kini

KONKANI WAS MY FIRST LANGUAGE. I grew into it at my mother's breast, and lost it away from her. My mother cooed to me, fashioned a song: "Zai zai zai, Adit maka zai. Love love love." It disappeared slowly, eroded by life in colonized lands, deprecated by English.

When I was 7 years old, living in St. Louis, my friend's father asked me my mother tongue. I never knew the name of the language we spoke at home other than our own word for it, "Amchigele," which I later learned was an affectionate term ("our language") perhaps used by the Konkanis who fled Goa to escape the Portuguese inquisition. My friend's father had never heard of Amchigele.

Goa is a little nugget of land in India between the large states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. The Portuguese conquered its taluks in the first half of the 16th century, and ruled what they called their "Old Conquests" for longer than the British ruled India. For more than four centuries, until 1961, the Portuguese violently proselytized; those who did not convert, like my ancestors, were forced to leave. Those who did convert were heavily policed.

The Goan Inquisition, perpetuated by the Roman Catholic church, was established in 1560 and put around 16,000 people on trial—but we will never know for certain the exact numbers, the demographics of those tried, or their punishments because all documentation was burned when the Inquisition ended in 1820. Muslims were once an integral part of Goa—through Arab trade; through the intermittent rule of Delhi Sultanate, the Bahmani Sultans, Adil Shah—until the Portuguese invasion. They constituted less than 1 percent of the population when the Portuguese left. A 1569 royal letter in the Portuguese archives indicates that all Hindu temples in Indian colonies were burned and razed to the ground. Imprisonment, executions, and public flogging were common; books in Konkani, Sanskrit, or Marathi were burned. Konkani was banned; and property confiscated. Voltaire said of the Inquisition: "The Portuguese monks made us believe that the people worshiped the devil, and it is they who have served him."

When I returned to India for secondary school, I became fluent in northern languages like Hindi and Gujarati. Hindi is the highly Sanskritized register of the Hindustani language; Gujarati, a language descended from Old Gujarati, might be as young as 700 years old. My fluency in Gujarati grew colloquially, while Konkani became a private language between my mother and me, though I was hardly verbal in it. I mostly listened, and when I heard other relatives speak Konkani during rare visits, their accents sounded strange, alien. A debate teacher at school mocked me for not reading any Konkani books—blaming me, personally, for letting my mother tongue die.

Portugal's 1820 Liberal Revolution—and subsequent new constitution—allowed the heretofore-banned Konkani to thrive in Goa once again, and aggressive proselytizing policies were relaxed in some places. (The Portuguese Christian government continued to tax the Hindus and Muslims.)

The Portuguese left traces of ghostlike linguistic remnants throughout modern Goan Konkani. While the Portuguese were said to have destroyed all Konkani works in 1548, the Jesuits established the first printing press in all of Asia in Goa in 1556. Jesuits in the mid-16th century wrote down Konkani versions of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* in Roman script, and the Portuguese took them back—three manuscripts were preserved in a Braga, Portugal, library until Mariano Saldanha discovered them in 1950. These were later turned into the *Adi Parva*, the first of the 18-book epic in Roman script. A Konkani Bible was published in 1808, and the first Konkani school was started by the Portuguese in 1932.

In the 20th century, India underwent a rearrangement along linguistic lines, and a debate about whether Konkani was an independent language or a dialect of Marathi formed the basis of a geopolitical power play to subsume Goa into Maharashtra after Goa's annexation to India in 1961. The latter half of the 1980s saw a fight for Konkani to become the official language of the state, which it won. The Sahitya Academy in New Delhi declared Konkani a fully fledged language, thus paving the way for the 1992 decision to constitutionally establish Konkani as an Eighth Schedule language, making it one of India's official languages.

Konkani is, as some linguists surmise, a Prakrit—an Indo-Aryan

The very act of speaking it is revolutionary, rejuvenating, even.

language dating back to at least 1187, to its first inscription in Bombay, though experts debate whether an earlier inscription on Shravanabelagola in 981 CE is Konkani or Marathi. But it is a *southern* Indo-Aryan language, and retains elements of Proto-Dravidian language structures, as well as similarities to eastern and Western Indo-Aryan languages. It is a complex language that travels with its displaced speakers; just as Goa's coastal location opened it up to attack and trade, linguistic exodus is endemic.

In 1882, Angelus Francis Xavier Maffei, an Italian Jesuit and scholar of Konkani, described it as "far more perfect than many European languages" yet "altogether uncultivated," which is possibly how all colonizers feel about cultures they visit devastation upon. Maffei faulted the Hindus who spoke Konkani for not incorporating as "many Portuguese words as the Christians." Even then Konkani was blighted, as Maffei called it, an "ignoble state," which he attributed to its lack of a common written language and its "corruption" by foreign words borrowed from Portuguese and English. Maffei's confidence in the superiority of adopting European words into Konkani—additions that he believed made "Natives" despise it as a "good-for-nothing" language—was at odds with the Hindu route of adopting vocabulary from Indo-Aryan languages.

In Goa, the train passes by and sometimes through the Western Ghats, a long, continuous mountain range that travels down six states—from Gujarat, where I went to secondary school, to the very southern tip of India, where I have never been. I first visited Goa when I was 12, and expected to find a feeling of homecoming in this beautiful beach state where locals flocked for short vacations and foreigners for infamous hedonism. I found myself in my ancestral village outside of Mangalore a few years ago, and had to rehearse my first sentence before I spoke to my distant relatives.

Manuja Waldia, "Shared Bread," an ongoing series of images celebrating the spirit of paying it forward and sharing, May 2017

Konkani is a split tongue; you can even tell the religion of the speaker by the intonation (Hindus speak with a "rising contour" while Christians speak with a "falling contour"). It has five written scripts: Roman, Kannada, Malayalam, Perso-Arabic, and Devanagari. If it borrows words from European languages, it is "corrupted"; if it borrows words from Sanskrit, it is Brahmanized; if it uses Kannada or Malayalam, it is Dravidized. It is a language undergoing constant stress and reinvention. It is a heat map informed by movement.

Though the last Konkani newspaper folded three years ago, there are still plays written and performed in the Goan "tiatr" theater tradition. A Konkani book won the Sahitya Akademi Award last year, and there's a Konkani translation of "Despacito" on YouTube. Konkani has nearly 13 million speakers and a growing diaspora continuing the tradition of migrant language. The very act of speaking it is revolutionary, rejuvenating, even—at least it would be for me, out in the diaspora.

But I have lost it; it has fallen out of my mouth. My mother tongue —a ghost. ⓑ

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FEMALE TROUBLE: WHY DAPHNE DU MAURIER'S REBECCA STILL POSSESSES OUR IMAGINATIONS

by Kerensa Cadenas

"LAST NIGHT I DREAMT I WENT TO MANDERLEY AGAIN," begins Daphne du Maurier's iconic *Rebecca*, a novel published in 1938 that has managed to stick around in pop culture's ever-wavering consciousness for 80 years. Just as haunting as the novel is Manderley, a lavish manor on the Cornish coast that serves as the centerpiece of the Gothic drama. In the novel, our unnamed narrator falls madly in love with the dashing and mysterious Maxim de Winter—a single but emotionally unavailable babe—after the death of his wife Rebecca. The two marry and the new Mrs. de Winter is swept from her peon existence into the halls of Manderley, where Rebecca's presence constantly lingers. But what the new Mrs. de Winter doesn't know is *who* Rebecca really was.

Besides the *Jane Eyre* of it all, *Rebecca* satiates everything a reader might want in a novel. Intrigue! Romance! Murder! Vague homoerotism! The novel sold close to 3 million copies between 1938 and 1965, has never gone out of print, and still sells around 50,000 copies a year. And in 2017, book retailer WHSmith named it the U.K.'s favorite book of the last 225 years. So just why do *Rebecca* and Manderley have such staying power?

When the *New York Times* praised du Maurier and her work in 2017, writer Parul Sehgal mused about her lasting influence and nailed it: "Few writers (Elena Ferrante comes to mind) have been so aware of how women excite one another's imaginations." That relationship between female observation and female obsession—one becoming the other—is the essence of *Rebecca*, what haunts the second Mrs. de Winter and Manderley itself.

What makes *Rebecca* perennially interesting is that, while it is about the romance between Max de Winter and his second wife, it's much more about her growing fascination with the late Rebecca. Whatever changes she wishes to make to Manderley, Rebecca's maid and henchwoman, Mrs. Danvers, is quick to let the second Mrs. de Winter know her shortcomings compared with her statuesque, perfect predecessor. Our narrator is haunted by Rebecca in spirit, but also by her things, which are scattered throughout Manderley, from menus prepared especially for her and book inscriptions written in her "curious slanting hand" to her entire bedroom, which Mrs. Danvers has kept fully intact—down to the underwear drawer and monogrammed accessories. And what makes du Maurier's prose feel fresh and unique to this day is just how real it is in capturing the way women observe. Like the cliché aphorism that "women dress for other women," in du Maurier's descriptions of china and fabrics, Rebecca's pale skin and dark hair, the sloping "R" for Rebecca all over Manderley, it is these seemingly inconsequential details that haunt the second Mrs. de Winter.

Though there isn't exactly a ghost in *Rebecca*, Manderley, filled with Rebecca's deserted, beautiful things, is certainly a haunted house. The house is the closest physical

manifestation of Rebecca, a home that she carefully decorated, maintained, and filled with her belongings, so du Maurier's fawning prose about the hallways and gardens of Manderley are really about our narrator's attempt to understand and know the late first wife. Du Maurier's ability to accurately capture the thin line between observation and preoccupation is likely why *Rebecca* has stood the test of time—and those dynamics have permeated culture beyond the scope of the novel, which has spawned so many different adaptations of its own.

The novel has been adapted to both Bollywood and Pakistani films. Its storylines have been lifted for telenovelas and American soap operas such as *Dark Shadows*, and the story has been adapted for television by BBC and PBS. Obviously, Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 *Rebecca* is the crown jewel of the adaptations: Starring the luminous Joan Fontaine and Laurence Olivier, it won Best Picture at that year's Oscars. It's thrilling to see the novel's tensions visually played up in Hitchcock's vision, from tiny moments between Fontaine and Max's sister Beatrice to the relationship between Fontaine and Mrs. Danvers, cruelly portrayed by Judith Anderson. Those small yet powerful moments of threat and confrontation, examination and fascination, are what make *Rebecca* so adaptable.

And beyond direct adaptations, *Rebecca*'s presence (much like her sloping "R" all over Manderley) still haunts pop culture, from Anastasia reading *Rebecca* in *Fifty Shades Darker* to multiple Stephen King references (including using Mrs. Danvers as the name of a servant in his 1982 film *Creepshow*). But Rebecca's exemplification of the thin line between female observation and female obsession—might be its ultimate legacy.

Films such as *Single White Female* and *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* are direct descendants of *Rebecca*—but both take the relationship between the second Mrs. de Winter and Rebecca a step further by having the obsessed actually attempting to become the source of their obsession. Mrs. Danvers thinks our narrator is usurping Rebecca merely by marrying her husband and moving into her house, and she forces the second Mrs. de Winter even closer to this path when she tricks her into wearing Rebecca's dress to a costume party. When the women in these later films begin to transform themselves, however, things take a decidedly deadly turn.

More recently, a similar dynamic can be seen in Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels, a carefully detailed series about the decades-long friendship between two Italian women; and in the BBC America series *Killing Eve*, starring Sandra Oh and Jodie Comer as an MI6 officer and a charming yet notorious assassin playing a cat-and-mouse game with each other. The infatuation between the two enemies—while not entirely *not* sexual—is characterized through their objects; Villanelle (Comer) goes through Eve's (Oh) luggage and steals a scarf to wear while she murders Eve's best friend for instance. When Villanelle sends Eve expensive clothes and perfume selected exactly to fit and taste, Eve strokes the satin dress and longingly smells the fragrance before finally putting both on, and later breaks into Villanelle's apartment in an attempt to learn more about her nemesis. The dueling fixation echoes that of the second Mrs. de Winter and Rebecca as the former wanders Rebecca's wing at Manderley, gingerly touching her things.

Killing Eve *film still courtesy of BBC America*

Rebecca's exemplification of the thin line between female observation and female obsession—might be its ultimate legacy.

Ultimately, the most haunting aspect of du Maurier's lasting lines isn't the Gothic romance, Rebecca's death, or the secrets hidden in the Cornish countryside. Du Maurier's attention to detail—the scent on a lost handkerchief, the handwriting of a stranger—shows us that it is the traces left by those who are gone that haunt us the most. And trying to fit ourselves into those remnants makes us think we truly know and can therefore become them. It's why the second Mrs. de Winter believes that she knows Rebecca through the china that she left behind—and why Mrs. Danvers believes that whoever uses the first Mrs. de Winter's belongings wants to replace Rebecca. Du Maurier gave us the empty halls of Manderley and all its beautiful relics as a reminder of how easy it is to become lost in someone else's identity. And though the end of *Rebecca* sees Manderley burned to the ground, the house and its secrets forever linger in that space between admiration and infatuation. ●

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Manderley Mansion courtesy of Daniel Selznik, Selznik International Pictures

FEATURES

"untitled" by RACHELLE BUSSIÈRES

AMERICAN PAIN

REMEMBERING ERICA GARNER'S SHORT LIFE AND EVERLASTING ACTIVISM

BY CHAÉDRIA LABOUVIER

PORTRAIT BY TATYANA FAZLALIZADEH

a feminist response to pop culture
Bitch Media is a non-profit, independent media organization.

I ONLY MET HER TWICE, BUT I KNEW HER. I interviewed her in December 2015 and January 2016 for a March 2016 profile for *Elle*, and we kept in touch, though we never met again. I knew her uniquely American pain, and though we were from very different places, I understood where she was coming from. I knew her dreams because I shared some of them. But most important, I knew her heart.

Erica Garner died on December 30, 2017, at age 27. I was devastated by her death. I was heartbroken for her children: for her young daughter, who saw the video clip of her grandfather, Eric Garner, dying at the hands of the NYPD; for her young son, who will have no memory of her, just as my twin nephews have no memory of their father who was killed by the Dallas police when they were two weeks shy of 15 months old. From the moment I learned that Erica was gravely ill, all I could think about were the costs—financial, emotional, personal—of rebuilding your life after it has been shattered by police brutality. Life after losing a loved one to senseless violence feels like sitting in a charred house, sifting through ruin, searching for remnants of what is still good, what survived the fire. And that's all you've got to build from.

When you lose a family member to police violence, you need money—lots of it. You need time, and people to hold space for you. You need a team to handle the PTSD that is acutely heavy the first few years. After Erica died, I tried to sort out what her absence would mean for her family, and how they would supply themselves with the immeasurable resources they'd need in order to live an even remotely "normal" life.

WE LOST OUR PRIVACY

March 10, 2013, will always be the worst day of my life. I was 27 when my number was called. The Sunday before an interview for my dream job, my only sibling, Clinton Allen, was killed by Clark Staller of the Dallas Police Department. Staller shot Clinton, who was unarmed, seven times. And as in so many other police reports about Black people killed by those paid with our tax dollars to protect and serve, Staller claimed that he "feared for his life." Like Daniel Pantaleo, the man responsible for Eric Garner's death, Staller had a disciplinary record that should've kept him off the street. A few years before graduating to killing Clinton, Staller tried to run over a fleeing man with his squad car and then falsified his report. Pantaleo amassed at least four credible citations for abusing his authority before he killed Eric Garner.

Erica knew a lot of my story before I told her myself, which, in fact, was one of the reasons she agreed to speak to me. When I first met her in December 2015, she was only 25 years old, but she was in command of her role as Eric Garner's daughter, and she knew what she wanted to accomplish. In person, Erica was much taller than I expected, and more soft-spoken than hinted at by the rich voice that drew a nation to chant "I can't breathe." Her eyes were very big and brown, and there was an endearing innocence and curiosity in her grin. At times she looked uncomfortably like her father, and I'm sure that simply seeing her face brought others back to the awful video that captured the last traumatic minutes of her dad's life. There were moments when people would recognize her on the street and approach her, which struck her as sometimes weird and other times cool. Even at age 25, Erica told me she "[felt] like that 19-year-old who's still a daddy's girl."

There's a line of demarcation, a before and an after. Through these tragic events, we'd lost our privacy in the same delusional, fantastical way as people who hit the lotto. We were not celebrities, but rather two women who had, in our 20s, completely lost the public rights to our most personal and painful experiences. Most people will never know what it feels like to have that sort of information a Google search away, the entire world believing that the ubiquity of your tragedy gives them the right to an opinion—to tell you personally or the entire internet what they think of men they've never met, and sometimes, to wish death upon you too. Being a public person isn't about paparazzi following you; it's about whether or not you have any control over the dissemination of the most devastating things that have ever happened to you. Your privacy, among so many other things, is the cost you must pay to openly fight injustice and oppression.

It took a while for Erica and me to arrange our first phone call; there were a lot of messages and back channel vetting, which I understood. Families who have been victims of police brutality can be extremely reluctant to speak on the record. Too often, they find their pain reduced to a brief sound clip or their words completely twisted. My family and I went through that, too. Fortunately, Erica had a supportive team that cared about her, and they did not want her to be used by anyone, especially journalists.

SHE LOST HER FUTURE

Erica spoke with fluency about her future, which she wholeheartedly expected to arrive at. In December 2015, she was mulling a run for Congress against Daniel Donovan, the former Staten Island district attorney who refused to indict her father's killer. Some people privately ridiculed her decision, but Erica was serious about running for office, and she didn't care what others thought. Erica knew that she faced a steep climb, but she wanted to force the conversation about her father's death and state abuse at a time when already, she thought, people were forgetting.

I remember looking at Erica as she spoke into the microphone, at times huddled over it because the people sitting at the table next to ours in a Mexican restaurant were annoyingly loud, and thinking, This was Clinton. He was 25 when we lost him, and in the months before, he and I talked endlessly about the many varieties of man he might become. Could he, would he, become an actor? What kind of trade school should he go to? Maybe he could come stay with me for a while in Los Angeles? He ultimately decided to become a rancher, and if he had lived long enough, he would have joined his grandfather as a fifth-generation Texas rancher.

Erica did not have dreams of becoming a rancher, but still she did list all the things that she might someday do with the breathlessness and confidence of a 25-year-old who believes that they have infinite time. But Black children become adults at 12, so Black 25-year-olds must pack in life as though they are in their twilight years.

Erica ultimately decided not to run after going over the logistics with her team. She had the whole world both with her *and* against her—and she knew it. And though the public may not have seen it, I could tell that the strain was affecting her. She was bone-tired, partly because she didn't have everything that she needed. Movement building is financially, politically, and emotionally expensive. As Erica later did, and as so many Black women had done before us, I put aside my own PTSD, grief, and trauma and immediately organized and mobilized. I began gathering witnesses for my brother's case the day after his murder, wrote his obituary, and helped organize his funeral. The first protest that I co-organized was about 10 days after we buried Clinton. I put aside my individual pain, like Erica did, because I realized that my family wasn't the only family to go through the pain of police brutality and its aftermath.

> Life after losing a loved one to senseless violence feels like sitting in a charred house.

In September 2013, nearly a year before Michael Brown Jr. died in Ferguson, I cofounded Mothers Against Police Brutality (MAPB) with my mother; for the next two years, I worked behind the scenes to fund, organize, and write articles about police brutality in an effort to bring the realities of the police state to the world's consciousness. Being woke, at that time, wasn't corporate cool. I spent almost $30,000 over the course of those two years. Erica and I spoke with a refreshing frankness about the costs of being one of the first on the front lines of Black Lives Matter: missing job opportunities, traveling to protests outside of our cities, paying for poster boards and markers, training other activists—without any hope of recompense. At times, Erica couldn't afford basic feminine products, or had to depend on her grandmother's pension and food assistance from the government.

"Still to this day, I'm on food stamps," she said in our first interview in that noisy Mexican restaurant. "I live with my grandmother. She gets a pension every month, but even that, it's not enough, but it's enough to get simple stuff like hygiene products, cleaning products. When my child has an upcoming trip that's $8, just like the simplest things…"

I was shocked, but unsurprised. Some of the grassroots activists that we worked with in Dallas were housing or food insecure. They were often working for a better America even while experiencing its worst on multiple levels. It bothered Erica that people would continually ask her about the family's settlement money. Some of the more callous questions such as, "Why don't you just get a job?" not only annoyed her but oversimplified the unpredictable nature of activism and dismissed the value of service work.

IN HER OWN WORDS

A big part of your last year has been activism and campaigning. Do you feel that you would've been able to do this work while still having a "normal" job?

No.

Why?

'Cause there are different schedules. [Sometimes] I could not be doing anything for two weeks and then, all of [a] sudden, y'know, a whole bunch of things come in. I remember one time I had to travel to four different cities in four days.

What was that for?

On panels and advocating on the behalf of, y'know, my dad, and getting the issues out there. It's very time consuming and the hectic schedule, working as a cashier you already have a schedule, so to say, "I'm working these amount of days, can I have off?" is always a conflict…even getting called on your days off.

Now, there's national momentum to encourage women to run for office, and I can't help but wonder what Erica might have achieved had her prescience been supported. Clinton would have been 32 this year; in the America that we were owed, he should have been just finishing his mentorship under his grandfather and buying his own land to support cattle and horses. Erica's birthday was May 29; in the same America that once enslaved her ancestors, she should be contemplating her run for Congress and bringing up her children. Instead, both Clinton and Erica, like so many others, are, unfairly, in the ground. This country does not deserve them.

CAPITALIZING ON MISFORTUNE

Erica loved the profile I wrote about her for *Elle*, but it didn't come even close to capturing the multitudes inside of her, or what she was up against. I suppose I keep coming back to that point because in writing this, I'm reflecting bittersweetly on both her ability to pack a great deal of life into 27 years, and the fact

Erica gave everything she had in her —and ultimately, her life itself— to speak truth to power.

that she had to. There is nothing sweet about her young, round face never growing more beautiful with laugh lines. And she had beautiful skin that she said she only used Dove soap on. Erica wanted to write a column for a publication because it would allow her to speak directly to the public and not in bite-size bits (like the then–140-character Twitter limit) or in 10-second clips on the nightly news. An op-ed column might also have provided some consistent income for her and her children. It was something that Erica spoke hopefully about each time we talked. She really wanted to speak to people directly.

She never got the opportunity to support herself by writing, but many, many outlets made money off her. She saw very little of it. (She told me that the *Guardian* was the only publication that paid her.) I tried to teach her how to write a pitch, so that she could get paid for her stories, but no one was interested in paying her to share her views. It broke my heart a little when I asked her what she wanted to do with her life, and she said, "Well, I want to do what you're doing." She had long-term goals of going to law school, starting her nonprofit, and telling stories. I wanted my editors at the time to see the wisdom in telling a larger story about Erica and other women like us, but they didn't.

It's not just that Erica could have used that money as a young woman and mother. She shouldn't have been on public assistance in New York City, the world's media capital, where someone could have hired her to write the column that she dreamed of. I know the extreme stress of fighting, sometimes alone, for justice. I believe that lack of access to the resources she needed hastened her premature death.

Erica Garner won't be the last Black woman to be used by an industry that profits from her story while she is left to go without. This dynamic so darkly folds into the pervasive belief that a Black woman's labor should be either free or severely underpaid. The news cycle can be sick, in its cold and indifferent turnover, and Erica had one of the "hottest" stories for a few years. A lot of publications profited, hugely, from the worst thing that ever happened to her. But the last years of Erica's life were also part of a larger moment in history, and we are all the poorer because major publications weren't invested in telling the full story of one of the most important activists of the early 21st century.

The last time I spoke to Erica was in June 2016, shortly before I left for London for six months. Erica wished me well and asked me to take pictures; London was one of the places she hoped to visit one day. I asked her to send me her mailing address so that I could send her a postcard, but to my lasting regret, we did none of these things. I felt such guilt, leaving her in the United States to fight, knowing how much she was doing alone. At one point in my second interview with her in January 2016, Erica asked me if I wanted to coalition-build with her, and I said yes, but that it would be some time down the road. I knew that I was a long way from being better—it was part of the reason I went to London—and now that MAPB had secured its grants and police brutality was on every media outlet's radar, I needed

Getty Images

to step away to take care of myself. I heard a bit of longing in Erica's voice, and it felt like I was being airlifted out of a burning building while watching her wave from the window. And it is an unmitigating guilt, knowing that Erica died of exhaustion, and a broken heart, while I had a chance to begin to recover.

MAKING IT TO 50

Erica and I had spoken about telling the next generation of activists what it was like to have been survivors of police brutality and state violence, about putting aside our grief and trauma to help build and sustain a movement. We had spoken about what that coalition building might look like as we got older. It was important to Erica that people know what it was like to *lose* in the way that we did—what it took to create from those ashes. I'm not yet nearing my 50s, but I already miss who Erica would have been in hers. I miss her because there will be no one there where she should be. It is a long, lonely walk without her. But my loss is nothing compared to that of her family, her children, who already miss her at levels that are beyond comprehension.

All we have now are her words, and the tremendous gifts that she left us: She taught Americans how to stand up and protest. Without the anti–police brutality organizing of the Black Lives Matter movement, there would be no Women's Marches, no #MeToo in its current iteration. Erica gave everything she had in her—and ultimately, her life itself—to speak truth to power. Now it is our time to honor her. So many men who were not there building and birthing the anti–police brutality movement continue to take up space. I hope, as a tribute to Erica, that we stop giving men opportunities to speak on behalf of a movement that, until Ferguson, most Black men were uninterested in joining. It was, and is, Black *women* who have been marching and organizing and fighting since day one.

Erica's organizing was consistent, her activism fearless. Her booming voice formed a prologue to the strong anti-Trump dissent. She was not always right, and she made mistakes, as many young and gifted people do, but I hope her children know that they had an amazing mother. I hope that this country never forgets her. Erica, I will do my best to keep my promise to you that future generations will know that we were *there*. Please tell Clinton that I miss him. Tell him that I will love him until China and Africa meet, and the river jumps over the mountain, and the salmon sing in the street. He'll know what you mean. Please, please, Erica, be with your babies where you are. I will see both you and my own brother again one day, but it will be a while before I do, as I have promises to keep, and many miles to go before I sleep. I won't let them forget. And no quarter shall be given. b

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LOVE REMOVAL MACHINE:

The Future of Outsourcing Sex

by Naseem Jamnia
illustrations by Charlotte Edey

IN LATE APRIL 2018, A 25-YEAR-OLD man killed 10 people and injured 15 by plowing a van into a Toronto crowd. He claimed to be part of the "Incel Rebellion," an ideological movement created by incels, or involuntary celibates, men who can't convince women to have sex with them. Perhaps inevitably, the conversation around incels since has also shifted to include sex work.

One unhelpful take on the subject was the May 2018 opinion piece in the *New York Times* about the "redistribution of sex," in which writer Ross Douthat ultimately suggested that sex work and sex robots are the inevitable answer to incel loneliness. In response, *New Republic* staff writer Jeet Heer tweeted, "Here's the deal: Getting to fuck robots won't make incels happy because their unhappiness isn't rooted in lack of sex. It's rooted in misogynistic anger at not being able to control women."

Inherent in this conversation about incels, sex work, and sex robots is the issue of power. Given that incels believe that they are owed sex in some form or another—why else would there even be a "rebellion"?—it's clear that these men desire to flex their power over others, particularly women. In their perhaps unintentionally ironic support of this ideology, the very people who oppose the decriminalization of real-life sex work claim it's because sex work is inherently tied to misogyny and the objectification of women. But sex robots, designed primarily for the pleasure and benefit of men, are discussed gleefully, a promise that "real" women—who incels already view as "cum dumpsters" and "femoid pieces of trash"—will no longer be necessary, and every man can have all the pleasure he wants without the hassle of another person.

Here's the question that springs to my mind when I think of all of this: What does it mean to remove the human element from sex?

Though the term "automation" didn't come into use until 1936, according to a 2014 paper by author and engineer Katsundo Hitomi, it was the Industrial Revolution that truly put machines and mass production on the map: In order to increase manufacturing productivity and efficiency, Hitomi writes, the "human" factor needed to be replaced—or at least supplemented—by robotic technology. Between 1993 and 2007, the use of robots increased fourfold, resulting in a ratio of approximately one industrial robot to every thousand workers. According to the International Federation of Robotics, in 2016 there were 189 robots for every 10,000 U.S. workers in the manufacturing industry; between 2017 and 2020, they estimated that robot sales will increase by an average of 15 percent each year. Put another way, according to a March 2017 MIT study, for each robot per 1000 workers, the U.S. national unemployment rate increases by 0.18 to 0.34 percent and wages across various sectors drop by 0.25 to 0.5 percent.

Automation may not be new, but as technology prices drop and advancement continues, the face of it changes. It's

"The idea of robots replacing sex workers is a [labor issue] that is confronting society as a whole, with the word 'sex' in it to make it spicy."

not just about robots we can program; it's about robots who will program themselves. Artificial Intelligence, or AI, blends these mechanical workers with state-of-the-art software, and though the human-robot interface is at the crux of many a futuristic sci-fi movie, this hybridization is already here—and is here to stay. This fact of modern life means that many industries that currently depend on human labor have to consider the ethical implications of roboticizing their workforce.

Take the sex industry. If you consider the growth of the sex-toy market over the past few decades, automation is already having a measurable impact. A February 2018 *Wired* article noted that sexual technology is a $15 billion-per-year industry that has blossomed far beyond flashy vibrators and plastic vagina-like sleeves and segued into technologies such as teledildonics—a remote form of masturbation where you and your partner are linked via Wi-Fi to sex toys that can be activated by your partner. The patent for this technology was filed back in 1998 and granted in 2002. Because that patent expired in August, it's likely that the market will soon be flooded with new sex gadgets at increasingly affordable prices.

Well before the digital cloud ascended to the sky and starting gathering our sexual data, humans were thinking of ways to remove other people from the physical experience of pleasure; the oldest known dildo, for example, dates back 28,000 years. (Note that plenty of people have used and continue to use sex toys in partnered sex; such use can still include other flesh-and-blood humans.) The first sex dolls are believed to have originated with Dutch sailors in the 17th century as masturbatory puppets that kept the seamen company on long journeys. In the United States, sex dolls became available around 1968 through porn magazines (aided by then-recent legalization of shipping sexual devices through the mail). As Julie Beck pointed out in a history of man-on-doll sex published in 2014 in *The Atlantic*, these initial apparatuses didn't make any attempts to resemble actual humans. It wasn't until 1997 that sex dolls became what we know today: Matt McMullen, the founder of RealDoll, went all in to advance the realism and usability of sex dolls. At a starting price of around $5,000 for the first RealDoll models, it took only five customers to launch the company; by 2015, McMullen had sold more than 5,000 of his creations at prices ranging from $5,000 to more than $50,000 dollars as the technical sophistication, functionality, and realism of the dolls increased.

These days, Abyss Creations (RealDoll's parent company) isn't the only high-end sex-doll player in the game, but it is one of the few with a robotics component. Abyss's Realbotix division recently launched Harmony AI, a sort of sexy Siri. As an Android app, Harmony AI can be used on its own, but is meant to be paired via Bluetooth to Realbotix's Antimagnetic Facial System, which allows customers to swap doll faces via magnets without any loss of functionality in their pretty, if not completely realistic, noggins—which themselves have the ability to move their lips, eyes, and necks. Though there's no official release date for the Animagnetic Head, Realbotix is accepting preorders, and the numbers coming in make it clear that this head upgrade is already a coveted component in the evolution of sex dolls.

In 2015, futurologist Ian Pearson published his "Future of Sex Report," which suggested that innovating shiny new ways for people to get off is a top tech priority. Pearson predicts that virtual reality (VR) sex will be a household norm by 2030; by 2035, most people will own sex toys that interact with VR programs; and—this one set the media aflame—that robot/human sex will become more popular than human/human sex by 2050.

In fact, sex-doll brothels already exist in Germany, Spain, Austria, Japan, South Korea, and France; there have been rumors of a café in London set to offer robotic blowjobs alongside its beverages, but little word on how that project is progressing. Judging from the backlash against these establishments by both politicians and citizens, often expressed by tabloid media from those countries, we're definitely not yet in a place where human/robot sex is NBD: LumiDolls, the company behind the Barcelona brothel, had to move its storefront, and workers now disclose its location only to paying customers; a motion last March before the Paris city council advocated for the closing of local "game center" Xdolls. (The motion ultimately failed.)

Putting aside for a moment the ethical, moral, social, and legal implications of businesses that peddle automated sex—and there are many—we must also explore the tangible impact of sexbots on real-life sex workers. While more than a few scholars loftily hypothesize about a future where human sex workers are forced to compete with their robot counterparts, sex workers themselves have varying opinions.

Liara Roux, a sex worker and decriminalization advocate, points out that the question isn't simply about the merits of sex with humans vs. sex with robots, but about

capitalism itself. "The idea of robots replacing sex workers is a [labor issue] that is confronting society as a whole, with the word 'sex' in it to make it spicy. We need to create a safety net for every laborer in every industry," Roux wrote in an email interview. "Just as people now who cannot afford to or choose not to prioritize spending on sex workers tend to consume less expensive options like porn, the end game for automated stimulation is mass consumption." For many people, Roux argues, sex work "is usually about a connection with a real person on an emotional level;" often sex workers see robots as just another specialized tool of the trade, noting that such automatons might also be used by human sex workers "to augment the experience."

Roux's sentiments are echoed by Lola Balcon, a community organizer with the pro–sex-work advocacy organization Survivors Against SESTA. "A lot of sex work is emotional labor, helping a client process their day or [get] through a major life event," she writes. "There's nothing special about the sex industry in terms of what level AI needs to reach to substitute for human labor. Just [as] in other emotional labor–heavy industries, when AI development reaches a point where another human is fully satisfied with its empathy, listening, and imaginative skills, AI can begin to substitute [for] some of the work sex workers do."

Then there's Torri, a self-described stripper who finds sex robots "sad and pathetic" but doesn't think they'll seriously harm the sex industry as a whole. "[Sex robots] make me angry," she admits, because they offer "the realization of a man's dream to have a Stepford Wife, a programmable woman that [lets] them feel loved without demanding a single iota of consideration. [The] idea of creating a whole person to fulfill your sexual appetites and emotional needs…it's a bit of an abomination."

Torri understands that there will certainly be men who are all for sexbots, and wonders if there will be a ripple effect with certain types of people—perhaps men like those who identify as incels, though she doesn't mention them specifically. "Increasingly realistic sex robots run the risk of hardening such men's attitudes toward human women. They already see women as subhuman, and now we'll have actual subhumans programmed to mimic us as much as possible. The line between us would be all but erased in the minds of men who already see women and children as objects." (That said, the fact that her clients require so much emotional coddling means she's not too worried about being made redundant: "I'll feel threatened when a sex robot can have an [empathetic] conversation about a marriage that's crumbling after 25 years.")

One of the fixes often proposed for incel men is that they might turn to professionals for sex—a "solution" that further dehumanizes sex workers by suggesting that they act as a sort of sexual punching bag for men whose problems are not about sex but about entitlement to women's bodies. So when I ask Roux the question on my mind—will sex work eventually become dominated by AI-supported sex robots, leaving behind the "ghosts" of human sex workers?—Roux points out that the question itself is problematic: "Actual sex workers are [already] suffering and dying under unjust legislation and the dehumanizing aspects of tech companies." Balcon knows sex workers who have become homeless because of SESTA/FOSTA, the recent legislation intended to curb trafficking that in reality threatens the daily lives and livelihoods of sex workers. "This is a cool theoretical discussion to have," says Balcon, "but the presence of sex robots will not fundamentally change the hatred and stigmatization of sex workers."

Sexual labor is stigmatized in a way that no other field of work is. In other fields and industries, there's at least some anxiety and discomfort at the idea of robots taking away jobs from humans; only in a profession as divisive as sex work is there even a consideration that a future industry populated mainly, if not entirely, by robot workers may not be a bad change. We live in a society where we wring our hands over food-service workers and government employees replaced by automatons but shrug when the same begins to happen to a group whose labor is already so marginalized. Certainly robots will affect the nature of sex work, but the stigma against the sex industry and those who work in it won't change until people put the same amount of effort into supporting existing sex workers as they do into creating new avenues for mechanizing them. ●

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PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES:

HOW FEMALE SUICIDE BECAME A CULTURAL OBSESSION

by D.W. Anselmo
illustrations by Moonassi

It's My Fall, 2018

A GIRL DROWNING AMONG WILDFLOWERS. A YOUNG MOTHER GASSED IN HER KITCHEN. FIVE SISTERS WITHERING AWAY IN THEIR SUBURBAN HOME. A HIGH SCHOOLER RECORDING MESSAGES TO HER ABUSERS. AN ASPIRING PHOTOGRAPHER ON THE LEDGE OF A ROOFTOP.

These familiar images define the narrative of female suicide in U.S. culture: Shakespeare's Ophelia in *Hamlet* (1609), Sylvia Plath (1932–1963), the Lisbon sisters of Jeffrey Eugenides's *The Virgin Suicides* (1994), Hannah Baker in Jay Asher's *13 Reasons Why* (2007), and Francesca Woodman (1958–1981). Generally young, white, and middleclass, our postmortem fascination with these women reveals a pervasive romanticization of interrupted femininity.

Whether in regard to fictional characters or actual people, the emphasis placed on the female suicide muse entrenches a hyperbolic narrative of failure that equates death by suicide with an inability to convert "innate" female attributes (caretaking, physical beauty, reproduction) into the hallmarks of well-adjusted citizenship (productive partnerships, sucessful parenting, professional careers). What sociologist Arlie Hochschild defined in her pivotal 1983 book, *The Managed Heart*, as "emotional labor"—the smiling, mediating, planning, and comforting expected of women in both personal and professional life—presents an impossible standard, and the suicide girls of Western culture embody it: We punish women who refuse to perform such labor but elevate their transgressions when (and often because) these same women take their own lives.

White cisgender men die by suicide 3.5 times more often than women, and according to the 2015 United States Transgender Survey, at least 40 percent of transgender adults attempt suicide. Yet media representations of suicide have long romanticized the deaths of young white women. In 1846, Edgar Allan Poe offered perhaps the most lasting encapsulation of female self-destruction as a spectator sport when

he wrote that "the death…of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world."

That so many female suicides involve jumping or falling is notable: Francesca Woodman's leap from a New York loft; Buffy Summers swan-diving off a tower; Cecilia Lisbon jumping from her bedroom window and impaling herself on an iron fence below. For women, temporality and linearity are culturally linked, a trajectory of life-defining marks either hit or missed—the fertility window, marriage, peak physical beauty. The already implicit connection between failing and falling, which fastens female identity to self-destruction, suggests that suicide often stems from a woman's inability to fulfill her expected societal roles. Perhaps a brisk, clean dropping off seems preferable to a slow-motion free fall into failure.

In the 1940s, depictions of white female jumpers became a cultural fascination for U.S. audiences. Within a five-year period, two men snapped now-iconic photos women leaping to their deaths off New York public buildings. Ignatius Russell Sorgi, a *Buffalo Courier Express* correspondent, captured three images of 35-year-old Mary Miller falling outside the city's Genesee Hotel in May 1942. In May 1947, photography student Robert Wiles shot a photo of 23-year-old Evelyn McHale lying dead on a car after she jumped from the Empire State Building. Though technically crime-scene photographs, the images were promoted as art: Both Sorgi's and Wiles's photos appeared in *Life* Magazine, and Andy Warhol incorporated the latter into his 1962 art film *Suicide: Fallen Body*. More than 60 years after McHale's death, *Time* journalist Ben Cosgrove invoked Poe's romanticized vision, crowning McHale "the most beautiful suicide."

By packaging these photographs as evocative commentaries on the ephemerality of life and beauty, the subjects of the photographs are stripped of personal history and autonomy, not so much memorialized as taxidermied. To this day, write-ups of Miller's suicide foreground the emotional labor she performed even at the moment of death, invariably noting that she politely smiled and waved to a gathering crowd before plummeting eight stories to the pavement below. *Life* took a similar approach when covering McHale's suicide: "Through the mist, she gazed at the street, 86 floors below. Then she jumped. In her desperate determination she leaped clear of the setbacks [...creating] this picture of death's violence and its composure." These young white women's perceived ability to perform femininity and grace even under the most savage duress is repeatedly praised. The message is loud and clear: Killing yourself may not be so terrible a fate if a man might later elevate your corpse into art.

THE MESSAGE IS LOUD AND CLEAR: KILLING YOURSELF MAY NOT BE SO TERRIBLE A FATE IF A MAN MIGHT LATER ELEVATE YOUR CORPSE INTO ART.

The Virgin Suicides sends a similar message, both in the book itself and in Sofia Coppola's 1999 film adaptation. Viewed exclusively through the eyes of lovesick boys, the adolescent Lisbon sisters emerge as modern incarnations of Poe's ghostly leading ladies, pale and lithe in 1970s school uniforms and home-sewn prom dresses. They hover, beautiful and elusive, only long enough to bewitch their male suitors and glide away to die: one razorblade, one rope, one handful of pills at a time. In their secondary opaqueness, the sisters lose both their voices and their interventive power in their own fates; like McHale and Miller, they are ghost girls without a bite, both their lives and their deaths conjured by men.

Discussions of suicide by young women these days demands the recognition of cyberbullying as a key component of the intense social pressure such girls experience. A significant number of the suicides by cyberbullying that garner nationwide attention are those of suburban white girls. Some are assiduous bloggers and aspiring creatives who have likely sought out social media to find a sense of self-worth they

WE LEARN EARLY ON THAT SUICIDE IS PERMANENT, BUT ALSO THAT DEATH IS PERMANENTLY BEAUTIFUL.

don't receive elsewhere. But such self-worth is built on the fallacy that the feminine identity of women and girls is most venerated when they perform emotional labor. Modern women and girls have internalized a complex cultural narrative that suggests the best way to achieve personal and social validation is by providing an ever-flowing stream of uncompensated care work—as confidantes, friends, girlfriends, entertainers, crushes, and role models (whether to an intimate few or—thanks to platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram—an audience of thousands).

Our culture sets impossible standards for girls and then keeps escalating them throughout our lives. We learn early on that suicide is permanent, but also that death is permanently beautiful, the only effective means women have yet found to successfully guard their beauty from aging. We are taught that for a woman to live a good and proper life, she should not shun emotional labor but hone it into one of her most valuable assets. We learn that self-exposure is glamorous until it becomes "too much"—and that it is always others who decide what is too much. Indeed, not even the onslaught of online harassment that they have endured fully exculpates these girls when they commit suicide: For instance, girls who have killed themselves as a result of revenge porn are often held entirely responsible for their own deaths in news reports; it's the "she was asking for it" of the Snapchat generation.

A morbid kind of digital celebrity looms on the horizon: the posthumous kind. Twelve-year-old Katelyn Nicole Davis and 18-year-old Océane were both vloggers who livestreamed their suicides on social media in 2016. Their deaths recalled that of newscaster Christine Chubbock, who in 1974 was the first televised suicide (and who is the subject of two films that premiered at the Sundance Festival in 2016). The shock of their deaths afforded Davis and Océane the voice and the agency they felt denied in life. Like ghosts, such girls are seen only when they are dead, because they are dead.

We need to recognize our complicity in a culture that finds glamour in desperation, provided the package is pretty enough. The devaluing and erasure of the labor, emotional and otherwise, that women pour into creative industries, activist projects, fan communities, gig economies, and more also cultivates the eviscerat-

You to sustain myself, *2017*

ing fear that we are not *enough*. Living a female identity can feel like a constant high-wire act when each day is filled with the pervasive and demoralizing sense that we will fail—in friendships, in relationships, in careers, and in womanhood itself.

I'm not calling for us to limit depictions of female suicide in the media or ban accounts of it from classrooms. But as feminist activists, educators, and consumers, it's crucial to push back on the societal overvaluing of their youth, their wombs, and the belief that these girls' self-worth is dependent on how well they cater to others. We must be alert: When young girls fail to develop an enduring sense of value and selfhood, they easily find themselves adrift in a culture that too often presents suicide as an acceptable, even compelling, way to cope—especially if your tragic, unfulfilled potential inspires a book, a song, a poem.

Putting female suicide into its larger cultural context doesn't take away from it being a deeply personal act. What it does, though, is complicate the notions of choice and decision-making that are often associated with reports on voluntary death. When we track the cultural narratives currently pinned to girl suicide, we also begin to investigate the roles that both systemic oppression and social disempowerment play when a young woman decides to intentionally end her life. Now is the time to decide how long we are willing to carry their ghosts, unaddressed and unadorned.

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Dying Indifference: Confronting the Shame of Alzheimer's in Black Communities

BY MARITA GOLDEN

Medical records from as early as 2002 indicate that Rosa Parks had progressive dementia. Getty Images.

I was interviewing African American families to find one to profile in a piece on Alzheimer's in the African American community for the *Washington Post*'s Sunday magazine. I thought I had found them: A family of eight—two parents, six children—that had been reduced to seven when the father died.

Both parents had developed Alzheimer's disease in their late 70s, the mother showing the first signs after the death of her husband.

The siblings contradicted the pattern I had so often seen in families, where one adult child serves as the family's anchor, carrying the load of care for a parent. Here, all six siblings worked together like a well-oiled machine to care for their mother. They visited her at the home of the middle daughter, her primary caretaker, to give their sister respite; stepped in regularly to assist with their mother's physical care; and shared the financial requirements of her care.

Yet when a family meeting was called to decide if they would be willing to be profiled for my article, the siblings were torn about the prospect of "public exposure." The most successful of them—a Washington D.C.–based businesswoman, spoke frankly, saying that she worried her business would be negatively impacted if others knew that her father had died of Alzheimer's and that her mother was now living with the disease. "In the Black community, one of the biggest obstacles to treatment of Alzheimer's is the silence and stigma it engenders in those affected by it and their families," says Dr. Goldie Byrd, director of the Center for Outreach in Alzheimer's, Aging, and Community Health at North Carolina A&T State University. The family decided not to participate in the story. For this caring and committed family of well-educated professionals, shame and stigma overruled an opportunity to help others in their community understand the toll Alzheimer's takes on families like theirs.

I am a storyteller. So I will tell you a story of how writing about an incurable disease taught me about life and living and love and death. This journey chose me, and at the time I didn't understand why. I had spent years researching Alzheimer's as a way to understand and write about it in fiction, and then suddenly found myself writing about it in journalism.

It took a long time to figure out why I wrote about this disease when it had not touched me personally; I was neither its victim nor the caretaker for someone who was. It has always been important for me to put myself on the front lines of any story I tell, whether it means conjuring make-believe in a novel or reshaping reality in memoir.

Investigating Alzheimer's in the African American community kindled the activist in me and impelled long-overdue thoughts and decisions about how I wanted to live—and how I wanted to die. During the five years I spent researching and writing—first a novel, then that *Washington Post* article—I was buoyed by the courage of the families of Alzheimer's patients, marveling at how they modeled loyalty and devotion, finding new and transformative forms of love as they cared for their loved ones.

A COLLECTIVE DEMENTIA

An estimated 5.7 million Americans live with Alzheimer's disease, the most common type of dementia. The progressive illness disrupts daily activities and cognitive skills such as memory, judgment, and language; eventually, it affects the parts of the brain that control bodily

Etta James, diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2009. Getty Images.

functions such as walking, swallowing, and using the bathroom.

African Americans are twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to develop Alzheimer's, representing more than 20 percent of Americans with the disease yet accounting for only 3 to 5 percent of those enrolled in clinical trials. In African Americans, the gene associated with Alzheimer's, ABCA7, is a higher-risk indicator than for whites. This genetic link, when added to the rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity in the Black community, mix with the psychological and emotional stress of racism to create what Darrell J. Gaskin, director of the Center for Health Disparities Solutions in the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University, calls "an existential threat."

Why? Because African Americans are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to have multiple cases of Alzheimer's and other dementia in the same family, and are often diagnosed at a more advanced stage. African Americans who leave the workforce to care for an affected family member lose, on average, more than $300,000 in earnings, pension, and Social Security benefits over their lifetimes and are more than three times as likely to live in poverty as white Americans. The cultural codes of the Black community privilege caring for our elderly at home rather than placing them in institutions, especially given that the cost of high-quality, long-term care in a private memory-care facility can cost between $5,000 and $7,000 a month.

Though the public face of Alzheimer's is often an elderly white male, the fastest-growing group affected is Black women. Blacks and Latinx people are also developing the disease at increasing rates; no one is certain why, even as researchers search for a cure. In America, researchers receive paltry levels of support and work against continuing silence about and stigmatization of those with the disease.

The high incidence of Alzheimer's among African Americans is shocking, but even more disheartening is that so few of the doctors and caretakers who work with patients seem to be aware of the disparity or working to solve it. The heartbreak of the disease is that the silence, shame, and indifference it inspires springs from our culture's attitudes about aging, dying, and the value of those who are growing old. "They're going to die anyway" is one such attitude in the medical profession that helps explain why only 45 percent of those with Alzheimer's and other dementias are formally diagnosed.

The heartbreak of the disease is that the silence, shame, and indifference it inspires springs from our culture's attitudes about aging, dying, and the value of those who are growing old.

CLOSE TO HOME: A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

Jonathan had always been close to his mother, Janice. He was the youngest, and his older siblings, Alex and Nina, had watched with a mixture of awe and some envy the bond Janice and Jonathan shared. Jonathan was the first to recognize that something was wrong with their mother: Janice kept getting lost driving to familiar places. She resisted answering his questions about the changes he was witnessing. She called him by his brother's name.

Alzheimer's was the diagnosis they had feared and eventually received. Envisioning the challenges that awaited him and Janice, Jonathan quit his job as a graphic designer to care for his mother full time. He moved her from Philadelphia to Los Angeles to live with him. This, for Jonathan, was more than caretaking; it was being present for his mother for as long as *she* was able to be present. To share with his mother the mundane and the majestic of every day, every hour, before she slipped away.

I met Janice and Jonathan at an UsAgainstAlzheimer's summit, where they were on a panel together. Janice, then in the early stages of the disease, was a dignified, graceful woman in her 60s who spoke frankly about how it felt to slowly lose memory, cognition, and a sense of self. The connection between mother and son was palpable, and in a moment of vulnerability, Jonathan spoke of his dismay that his siblings sent checks and called occasionally but were too busy or too intimidated by their mother's transformation to join him in what he called "the greatest adventure of my life."

"I want to find a way to tell them," he said of his siblings, "'Yes, this thing that Mom is going

through is awful and it's scary, but what she and I are experiencing as I honor her and witness her change is so deep.' I want to tell them [to] come and get some of this. It will change your life. I have never loved my mother more." For Jonathan, every day with Janice was measured in present moments, and he had chosen to live in the redemptive space of the committed caregiver who witnesses and is strengthened by the grace of the task at hand. Every day, Jonathan found a way to access the honor bestowed upon the caregiver, and to live and move beyond the obstacles.

WHAT WE NEED NOW

We need a national education campaign that educates people about Alzheimer's disease—and that directly targets the Black community. We need to confront and challenge the lack of basic knowledge about—and the silence and stigma around—this disease. People affected might be diagnosed earlier, allowing families to more effectively marshal the emotional and financial resources required to hang in there for the long haul.

More than a decade ago, when a national prostate cancer awareness campaign was launched in Black churches, Black media, and Black sororities and fraternities, there was a dramatic increase in the number of Black men seeking prostate exams, and an attendant decrease in the number of Black men dying from the disease. Occasionally, popular culture can also successfully step into the breach to speak on subjects often burdened with shame, as it has with ABC's *How to Get Away with Murder*, which has for three seasons explored the lives of a Black family dealing with Alzheimer's.

In season three, Annalise Keating (Viola Davis) is on trial for murder, and her parents attend the trial, during which Annalise's mother, Ophelia (Cicely Tyson), shows the first signs of dementia. Ophelia is convinced that Annalise is on trial for a crime she herself committed: That long-ago act of revenge now haunts Ophelia, and she fears her daughter will pay the price. This episode also explores one common response to the onset of Alzheimer's: Ophelia's husband and primary caretaker, Mac (Roger Robinson), is overwhelmed by the new demands of the disease and clings to the hope that his wife just has, per the family doctor, "a bit of dementia." Annalise, already facing possible imprisonment, must at the same time ensure that her mother has access to care that her father may not be able to provide. The charges against Annalise are ultimately dropped. But there will be no such reprieve for Ophelia.

Annalise serves as the "family anchor"—the spouse or adult child who rallies the family to action or connection. In some real-life cases, the family anchor is unsupported. Black families across classes are buffeted by so many destabilizing forces—discrimination, lower salaries, disparities in access to good healthcare—that rallying the family can be a thankless and lonely undertaking. As in many Black families, Annalise alone takes on the role of researcher, organizer, and educator.

Season four opens with Annalise arriving in her hometown of Memphis to visit her parents. Opening the front door, she hears the tinkling of a bell that her father has set up to alert him should Ophelia try to leave the house unaccompanied. The bell also foreshadows the disease's progression and the challenges that await Annalise: Ophelia has been wandering, and Annalise has come home to put Ophelia in a full-time memory-care unit.

B. Smith, model and restauranteur who is currently fighting Alzeheimer's. Getty Images.

The most breathtaking scene comes when Ophelia wakes up one night shouting that the house is on fire. In her dementia, Ophelia's reliving a past memory, and Annalise tries to break her out of it, holding her mother by the shoulders and telling her that her fear "is just the dementia." This moment between two magnificent actors is heartbreaking. Later, Annalise bathes her mother as they sing a song from Annalise's childhood; she has become her mother's mother. Yet Ophelia bravely insists, looking into her daughter's face as though trying to imprint it in her fast-fading memory, "I haven't lost my whole mind, not yet."

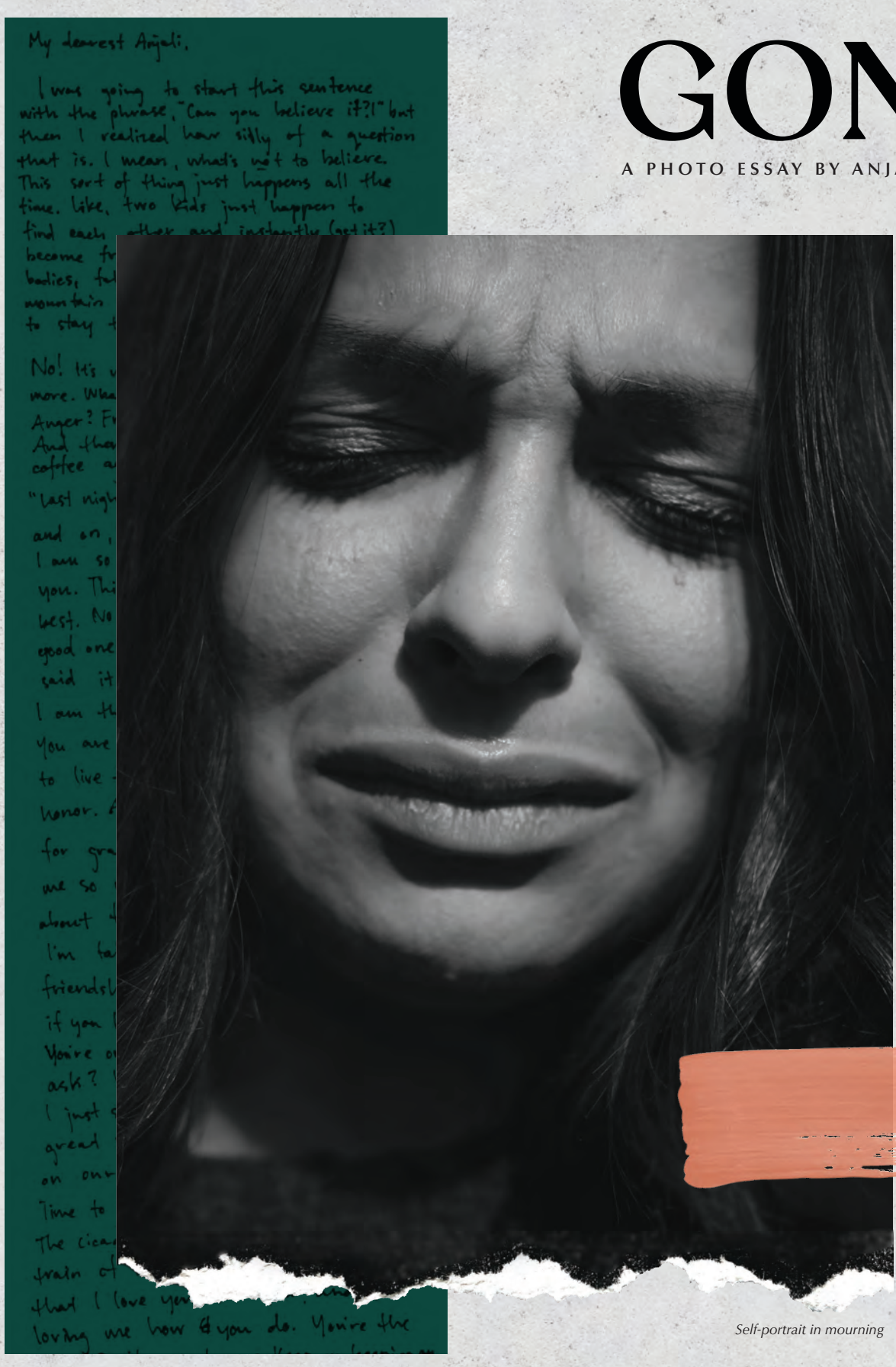
Rarely has a Black family in crisis been depicted with such brutal and compassionate honesty. Gil Scott-Heron famously said "The revolution will not be televised"—but sometimes it is.

Until a cure is found for Alzheimer's, African Americans must break the silence in our communities. All we can do is live our lives and honor our bodies. I am honoring mine and have enlisted in the fight against one of my generation's hidden health crises.

Marita Golden *is the author of the novel* The Wide Circumference of Love, *the cofounder and president emeritus of the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation, a veteran teacher of writing, and an acclaimed, award-winning author of 16 works of fiction and nonfiction.*

GONE

A PHOTO ESSAY BY ANJALI PINTO



Self-portrait in mourning

Jacob's morning routine

FOLLOWING THE SUDDEN DEATH OF my 30-year-old husband, Jacob Johnson, the shock was engulfing. Pain is too soft a word. He had no known health problems, nor had he been sick. The autopsy revealed a tear in his aorta, a rare abnormality in young men. The coroner could not explain the underlying cause for the fatal gash along his main artery, but we do know that blood surged through Jacob's chest and surrounded his heart, making it impossible for it to continue beating.

I was at home with him when it happened, napping in the next room. Did he call out for me? Had I not heard him? I found him in an upright position, looking as though he had fainted. When my hand touched his cheek to wake him, a terrifying thought enveloped me—my husband was dead. Medics were not able to revive him. I was defenseless in his most vulnerable state.

How could someone so seemingly healthy cease to exist? Genetic tests clarified nothing. In a world where so many questions can be answered instantly, his death remains unsolvable. Nearly two years later, the mystery continues to baffle me. *He was just here. How could he be gone?* I feel a pang of jealousy when I see scar along a man's chest—why could he not be saved?

He supported my passion in photography, collaborated in making images, and matched my desire to document our life. Our vast photo archive—some 15,000 images—serves as a meaningful reminder of the incredible partner he was. The photos allow me to stay close to our memories as the time I've spent without him grows longer. Everyday moments I captured—like a walk through a park or a morning in bed—take on new meaning in light of his death. They echo the haunting feelings of the sudden and irreversible void he left behind.

This series, *Gone*, seeks to explore the pain, trauma, and beauty I have experienced as a young widow. In these images, his presence and his absence are equally felt. They are proof that he was here—and that he is gone.

Never have I ever..
loved a woman like
you.
Never have I ever..
laughed the way I
do.
Never have I ever..
seen the skies so
blue.
Never have I ever..
loved a woman like
you.

Portrait of Anjali by Jacob in his hometown

Jacob's wedding band, worn on a chain after his death

Self-portrait, first vacation

Jacob sleeping, honeymoon

I am lucky to have you by side, as the time flies. They say 3 years until you'll have grapes or asparagus, and half that way to a 6 foot tall christmas tree. But to look at the sights we've seen, the people we've met, the home we've made, and the love we share, I cannot wait to see what the future brings. You are amazingly confident, extremely beautiful, and a goof to boot. That's what got me.. you being you. Don't ever change because you're just the best. I will love you forever & always.

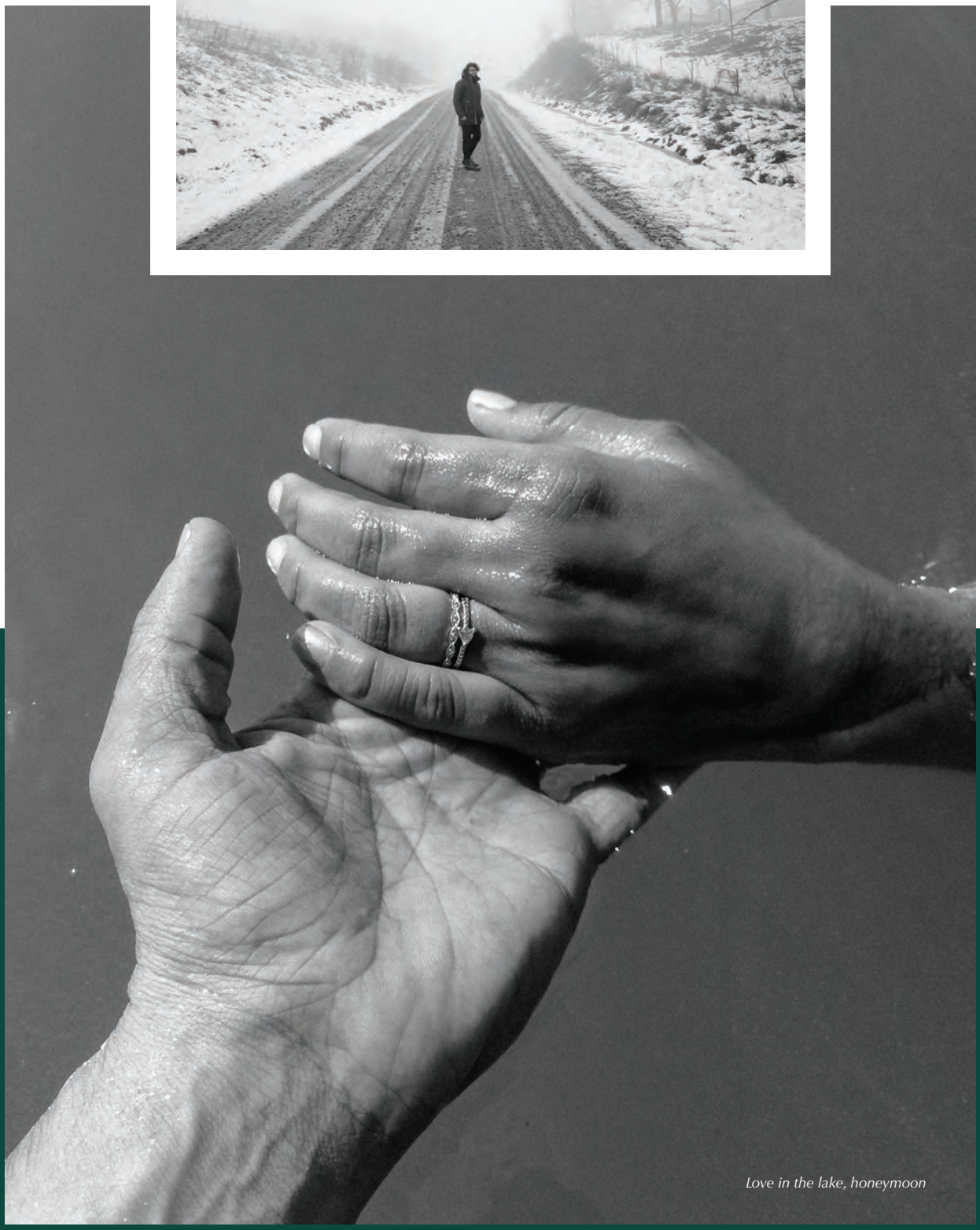
Happy anniversary lover!

& Jacob.

Jacob, the adirondacks

Portrait of Anjali in Lake Michigan by Jacob

Christmas in Iowa, the last portrait made of Jacob five days before his death



Love in the lake, honeymoon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from the HQ

Who makes the media at Bitch? You're about to find out! Here's a look behind the scenes at our HQ.

from the HQ

A legacy that will outlive us

It was an unremarkable day in August in the mid-1990s when, after spying yet another questionable *Vanity Fair* cover (featuring Hollywood's most celebrated actresses in their underpants), the idea for *Bitch* magazine was born. Twenty-two years after we created the first issue and hauled boxes of it to every independent bookstore in the San Francisco Bay Area (the original "distribution model"), *Bitch* has become much more than a homegrown zine, and Bitch Media has become more than we ever could have imagined.

But *Bitch* was far from the first feminist magazine, and even as we began this project way back when, we were building on the work of other feminist zines, newsletters, broadsheets, and magazines. You might be familiar with some of them: *Ms.*, founded in 1972 as an insert in *New York* magazine by Gloria Steinem and Dorothy Pitman Hughes; *On Our Backs*, the give-no-fucks magazine of lesbian erotica whose cheeky name referenced long-running feminist newspaper *off our backs*; the UK's *Spare Rib*; and Jewish feminist journal *Lilith*. And, of course, there was *Sassy*, whose thrift shop–inspired fashion spreads, acerbic voice, and open disdain for the pimples-and-proms pabulum of mainstream teen media still inspires nostalgia.

Andi Zeisler,
Cofounder

A few years into *Bitch*'s own life, we started getting the occasional letter or email reading "I'm so happy to see that *Bitch* is back!" We gathered, quickly enough, that a previous zine called *Bitch* had existed. But we were still surprised when a cardboard box showed up at our San Francisco HQ, filled with yellowing newsprint issues of *Bitch: The Women's Rock Mag with Bite*. The accompanying letter was from the husband of a woman named Lori Twersky, who started *Bitch* in 1985 after becoming fed up with how women rock musicians were covered in the independent music press. She edited it monthly until 1989, and was working with her cowriters on *The Bitch Book of Women in Rock and Pop* when she became ill. She died in 1991, her husband wrote, but would have been thrilled to see her work echoed by our own project. It was a moment that felt significant, an articulation of the connective energy of women's DIY media that exists in all of our work, whether or not it's visible.

Putting together an issue about ghosts and the words associated with them—haunted, lost, disembodied, disappeared—has us remembering the ghosts of independent feminist media past and honoring those who paved the way for *Bitch* to have made it this far.

It's also got us thinking about feminist media's future. Because if there's one thing we've figured out, it's that the real legacy of feminist media? That's all you, friends. You—reading *Bitch*, expanding your own understanding of feminism with each new article, challenging the perspectives you thought you knew, helping us shape our hope for a feminist future—that's the part of this legacy that will outlive us. And you are every bit a part of it.

Soraya Membreno,
Director of Community

illustration by Deanne Cheuk

fall 2018 no. 80
Your purchase of this digital edition makes it possible for us to thrive.

NASEEM'S PIECE
PAGE 30

FELLOWSHIP FREQUENCY

Naseem Jamnia

As their fellowship comes to a close, we sat down with Bitch Media's 2018 Writing Fellow in Technology, Naseem Jamnia, to talk about science literacy, pop-culture faves, and life as a fellow.

What has been your favorite movie or TV show of 2018 so far? My husband and I are on a huge *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* kick right now and loving it. I also managed to convince him to see *Black Panther* with me, even though he hates superhero movies—and he loved it, so I consider that a major win.

What got you interested in writing about technology with a feminist lens? Do you have any advice for other folks trying to do the same? After I left my PhD program, I wanted to find a way to use the knowledge I'd accrued over the years to address the serious lack of science literacy I saw around me. Writing about these issues with a feminist lens was intuitive for me, because being a feminist includes being critical of the world and media we ingest, which extends to issues of science and technology.

To anyone looking to do science or tech writing, I suggest you make sure you have a solid background in the field first. I don't mean you need to have studied it or have a degree in it; I just mean be prepared to do research into more than just the topic of your article. It's also helpful to narrow down your field of interest. Oh, and definitely learn statistics! You can pick up almost any paper and see if it's BS based on the stats. That's valuable in all fields.

What's one thing you wish people knew about science or technology that doesn't get addressed enough in journalism? In science writing especially, there's a fundamental lack of understanding about how science is done from start to finish—about things like university politics and funding, industry research, and who gets to become a scientist in the first place. I wish more journalists were trained—or allowed—to write about these topics more critically. Science [too often] seems untouchable. It's not. Criticize it—it's good for the field.

Now, the (in)famous Bitch check-in question: If one of your hands was a regenerating sandwich, what would it be? Okay, I have to cheat and answer this with both a commercially available sandwich and a homemade one. Growing up, my dad used to make me boiled egg/boiled potato/leftover chicken/pickle/mustard/butter-on-pita sandwiches, which, to this day, remain my favorite. But if I could go with something commercial, that's easily Potbelly's Turkey Tom with everything. Oh, and an Oreo shake, because Potbelly's literally makes the best Oreo shake in existence, don't @ me. In this scenario, I guess my other hand could be the shake.

What do you want to do next? I'm starting an MFA program in fiction this fall, so I'm super psyched about that. My agent and I are also getting ready to submit my middle-grade fantasy off to publishers, so cross your fingers for good news!

FOR MORE INFO ABOUT OUR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, VISIT: BITCHMEDIA.ORG/WRITING-FELLOWS

BUZZ BOARD

Remember those "How many _____ does it take to make a _____?" things—you know, like Mad Libs but with something that's supposed to be innocuous that actually ends up being relatively offensive? You know, like, "How many feminists does it take to pass the Equal Rights Amendment through Congress?" Well, if you haven't noticed, we like to reclaim things around here.

Today, we're playing: How many _____ does it take to _____ at Bitch Media?

50+

How many **editors**, **designers**, **artists**, and **writers** does it take to **publish a single issue of *Bitch* magazine?**

Publishing a single issue of *Bitch* magazine requires work from eight editors, four designers, a dozen artists, and nearly two dozen writers. (And that's not even counting the essential staff who run the finance and distribution side of the magazine.)

4,150

Well then, how many **B-Hive members** does it take to **publish an issue of *Bitch* magazine?**

When all is said and done, each issue costs about $44,000 to create, print, and mail to readers at home and on the newsstand—or about the amount that 4,150 B-Hive members contribute to Bitch each month.

70

How many **producers**, **hosts**, and **B-Hive members** does it take to **make an episode of one of our podcasts**, *Backtalk* or *Popaganda*, possible?

It takes two producers, one host (if it's *Popaganda*) or two (for *Backtalk*), and the support of 65 B-Hive members to make a single episode of *Popaganda* or *Backtalk* possible.

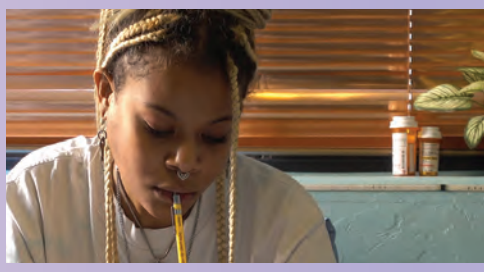
~22

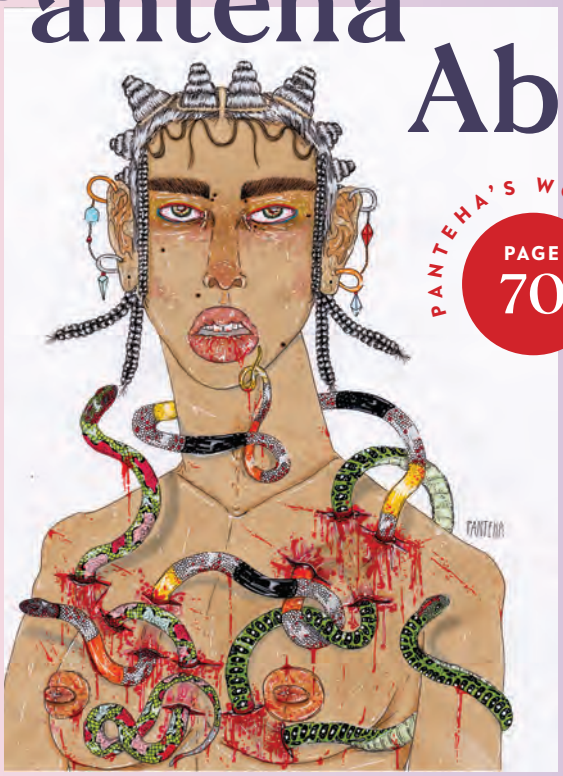
How many **writers**, **editors**, and **designers** does it take to publish **a week's worth of analysis** online at bitchmedia.org?

We release two to three unique articles at bitchmedia.org each day, not counting our popular On Our Radar weekday link roundup. Publishing a week of digital-first articles means work from our team of four editors and anywhere from 10 to 15 writers, as well as original artwork from our team of three art directors.

Wondering why we're reclaiming this game? Because this is the Ghosts issue, of course! And we're all about transparency here. (Too corny? We tried.) Bitch is community-funded media, and we want to be sure that you know how we're putting your generous contributions to work. Thanks for being a part of this feminist, independent media family, and for making Bitch Media possible!

Panteha Abareshi





PANTEHA'S WORK PAGE 70

ILLUSTRATOR

EARLIER THIS YEAR, BITCH RELEASED *IN SICKNESS*, a digital-first series of essays, interviews, analyses, and book reviews on the topic of living with chronic illness. Ten writers dove into subjects ranging from how disabled, sick, and chronically ill people are being left out of the body-positivity movement to in-depth analysis of YA literature featuring chronically ill protagonists that still uphold the usual stereotypes of adolescent femininity.

But beyond the stunning articles, what made *In Sickness* so special for our readers (as well as our staff, because yes, hi, hello, we are still gushing over here) was the accompanying art. Every piece of the series featured artworks by Panteha Abareshi, an 18-year-old artist and illustrator living with a combination of severe Sickle-Cell Zero-Beta Thalassemia and debilitating clinical depression and anxiety.

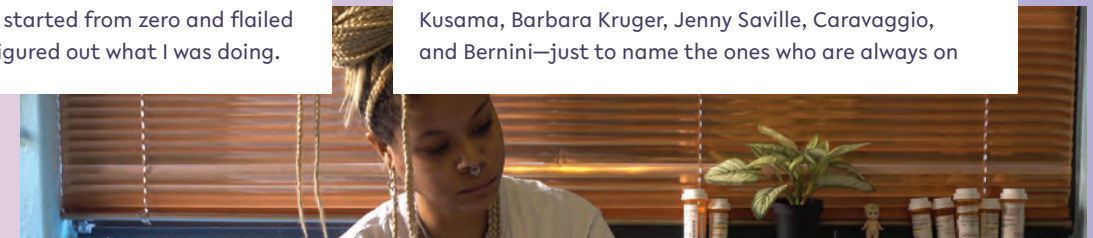
Abareshi's work brings pain and illness to the forefront with depictions of girls who are, as she explains on her website, "not fazed by broken bones or blood gushing from their wounds," standing alone and centered in a frame, looking at viewers with strength because of their vulnerability, not in spite of it.

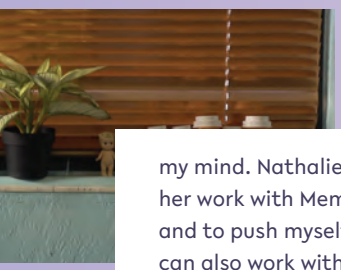
After putting out an open call for illustrators and photographers living with chronic illness that yielded more than 400 applications and portfolios, we kept returning to Abareshi's work as the series began to take shape. Margot Harrington, one-third of Bitch's art-direction team, knew that the series called for "something that conveyed the overall rawness and agony of chronic illness, but [that] wasn't focused on any one health condition."

And though the *In Sickness* series has wrapped up, Bitch's commitment to uplifting, highlighting, and hiring folks with chronic illness is not. So if you missed Abareshi's work online, take a moment to soak up her brilliance and process on the printed page.

Tell us a little about your background and how you got into drawing. I was born in Montreal, where my parents had immigrated from Jamaica and Iran. When I was two, I was diagnosed with Sickle-Cell Zero-Beta Thalassemia, and because of that I've spent my life constantly in and out of the hospital. Since my childhood was so filled with all things medical, it seemed like the only logical option was to go into medicine myself. I was planning on going into experimental neuroscience at the time when I discovered my love for drawing. Beginning around 2014, my health began declining, and it was during one of the hospitalizations that year that I asked my father to bring me a sketchbook and some pens, simply to distract myself. Prior to this, I hadn't really drawn creatively, or for myself, and I quickly realized that it was something I was passionate about, unlike anything I'd experienced before. Being self-taught, I started from zero and flailed for so long before I finally figured out what I was doing. But I was never deterred by messing up or disappointing myself, and I always just wanted to keep going, keep drawing. And that's how I knew it was something more than just a pastime.

Is there a particular person or teacher who you'd credit with helping you find your creative style? Honestly, none that immediately come to mind. I didn't have any art teachers because I got my GED and didn't really do high school, and before that I wasn't an artist. By the time I started college at the University of Southern California, I had developed myself stylistically to a point that I wasn't malleable in that way. The artists who have inspired me the most in terms of style are Nathalie Du Pasquier, Jenny Holzer, and Joan Cornellà. Emotionally, I am inspired greatly by Yoko Ono, Yayoi Kusama, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Saville, Caravaggio, and Bernini—just to name the ones who are always on

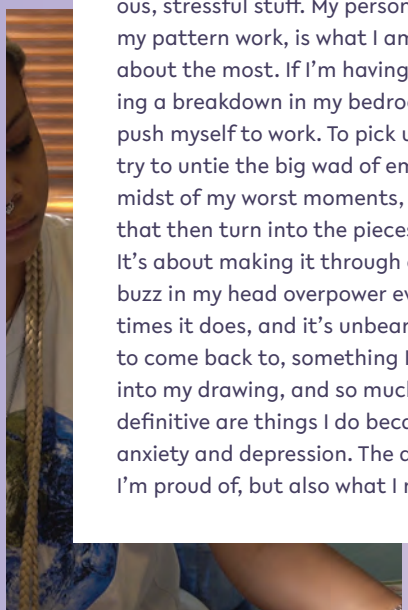




my mind. Nathalie Du Pasquier's design aesthetic, and her work with Memphis Milano, inspired how I use color, and to push myself to employ pattern in a way where I can also work with my love of biological structures and illustration. I appreciate all things groovy and funky, and so her work always sticks with me.

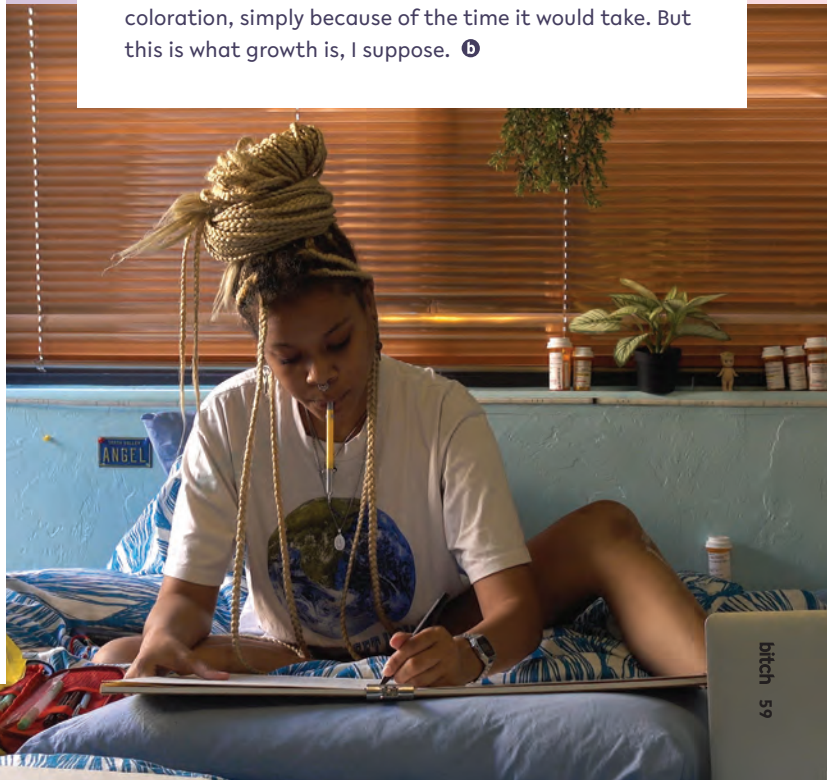
Haunted houses, ghost stories, witches, astrology, and all sorts of ghouls are having a moment now. Are you into it? If so, tell us your favorite scary story. If not, what else brings mystery into your life? I love horror! Give me something freaky, gory, scary! I dig being terrified, going through haunted houses, watching scary movies alone. But I don't believe in ghosts, or anything supernatural. I grew up hearing a lot about the supernatural elements of Jamaican folklore that come from West African traditions of witchcraft and magic. Storytelling is an impactful and deeply human thing, and so I appreciate lore in that sense, and I really dig the feminine power entrenched in witchcraft and spirituality. It's a unique and important source of solidarity, and for that I am thankful. Since I don't believe in the supernatural, the scariest stories for me are cases of mass hysteria, or just humans being awful, which happens overwhelmingly often, pretty much nonstop. The case of mass hysteria where in the 1500s, a group of people in France began dancing and didn't stop for a month! Many of them died from exhaustion or their hearts giving out or strokes. Also, I'm constantly spooked by just the entire history of mental-illness treatment, all of which is 100 percent true. Absolutely terrifying. Ghosts have nothing on that horror.

You mentioned your personal style helps you cope day to day. Describe an example of what this looks like. I have a lot of anxiety and sort of generally struggle day to day, and my depression makes it difficult to just *function* much of the time. It's an incredibly comforting thing for me to be able to draw, because my brain latches onto work in a way that distracts it from all the other tumultuous, stressful stuff. My personal style, with my girls and my pattern work, is what I am proud of, and what I think about the most. If I'm having anxiety in public, if I'm having a breakdown in my bedroom, it really does help me to push myself to work. To pick up my lucky yellow pencil and try to untie the big wad of emotion onto the paper. In the midst of my worst moments, I am often hit with ideas that then turn into the pieces I am the most proud of. It's about making it through one day, and not letting the buzz in my head overpower everything else. And sometimes it does, and it's unbearable. But I have something to come back to, something I care about. I throw myself into my drawing, and so much of what makes my style definitive are things I do because [they] help me through anxiety and depression. The detail work is an aesthetic I'm proud of, but also what I need to do to survive.



Do you have any advice for others doing creative work while living with chronic Illness? It's hard to give advice when I'm struggling myself and really taking it day by day. I think, as cliché as it sounds, what's important is knowing yourself. I am awful at listening to what my body is telling me and resting/taking care of myself as well as I should. I work for hours and hours, because my brain in art mode doesn't register the pain or the exhaustion until it hits me all at once and then I have to deal with the repercussions for days afterwards. Also, the art world is a notoriously rough, awful place, so you have to elbow your way to the front. Find other creatives who you respect, not necessarily to work with (though that's great), but just so that you can have a reminder that it isn't as lonely as it seems.

What sorts of projects would you like to do next? What are you excited about now? I want to travel, travel, travel. Luckily there's some national and international boogying in the next few months for me, so I'm thankful. I want to be as all-over-the-place as I can. In terms of projects, I have a few series mentally queued up, but what I'm most excited about is the project I've been working on for nearly a year now, titled *ODONTALGIA* that revolves around teeth (I love teeth quite a lot). I've realized how much I love creating sculptural work to accompany my illustrative work. It truly feels like 3D illustration, and I can't wait to do more of that. I've also been drawing a lot of naked gals, and while that's great, I miss doing clothes because of how much I love my pattern-work. In the past few months and with *ODONTALGIA*, I've been working bigger than I ever have, and it's great. My most recent piece was 19"x24", which feels massive compared to where I began. I was always worried that I would lose the detail in my work, or not be able to achieve the same coloration, simply because of the time it would take. But this is what growth is, I suppose. ⓑ



staff sound off

with KORIN LYKAM

YOU KNOW THE MOMENT. You're enjoying a perfectly entertaining movie about another world filled with fantastical things, and then—BAM! You realize the rules of this fanciful universe have huge, gaping holes in them. Like when you realized that J.R.R. Tolkien added giant eagles to Middle-earth in order to save Gandalf from a tower, but not to fly Frodo directly to Mount Doom.

So it goes when watching movies or TV shows about ghosts, spirits, and other formerly human entities rendered immaterial. Entire narratives rest on ghosts' inability to communicate with the living because they cannot touch earthly things. Like, say, a pencil.

My question is: *Why can these same ghosts stand on the fucking floor?*

What's so substantially different about the wood on the floor and the wood in a pencil that one can be utilized in the spirit realm and the other can't?

The movie that first comes to mind here is *Ghost*, whose premise is that Sam Wheat (Patrick Swayze) can't communicate with his wife, Molly (Demi Moore), because he can't touch anything. Yet there he is, standing in their house, inexplicably supported by the floor. Per the film's own ghost logic, Swayze should be sinking through it.

This phenomenon also occurs repeatedly in the science-fiction canon. Take the "Coda" episode of *Star Trek: Voyager*, in which Kathryn Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) experiences being ethereal as her body slowly dies. How is Janeway still on the ship? Is she subconsciously hovering at warp 5? If she can't touch the ship's walls, why is she not left several million light years behind, drifting in space? Why is *the floor* so damn special?!

Of course, addressing this would add a level of complexity with no narrative benefit. But I also want to say to creators: These are *your* fucking rules. If you can't follow them, change them. Or—at the very least—offer us a metaphysical nod to the hole in your universe so that I can stop obsessing.

Don't even get me started on ghosts who sit in chairs.

"Gold States" by RACHELLE BUSSIÈRES

CULTURE

books

screen

music

Missing, Murdered, but Never Forgotten

VIOLENCE, COLONIALISM, AND JUSTICE FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Matika Wilbur, You Are Never Alone. *Photo of Isabella and Alyssa Klain, Navajo Nation*

BY ABAKI BECK

PHOTO BY MATIKA WILBUR

On October 16, 2014, emerging actress Misty Upham was found dead after falling over a cliff in Auburn, Washington. Though she'd disappeared 11 days before, local police refused to help her family search for her, according to family friend Tracy Rector.

On December 21, 2015, my aunt Lonette Keehner was stabbed to death at a Super 8 hotel in Missoula, Montana, by two meth-addicted white supremacists. The judge said that their ties to white-supremacist organizations would not be taken into consideration in their sentencing.

On May 2, 2016, 11-year-old Ashlynne Mike was kidnapped from the Navajo Reservation in San Juan County, New Mexico. She was sexually assaulted and murdered. Mike's relatives claim that the local police didn't communicate with neighboring jurisdictions, which hampered the investigation.

Upham, Keehner, and Mike are just three of thousands of Indigenous women who have gone missing or been murdered in the past few decades. In Canada alone, according to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the count is more than 1,300 Indigenous women missing or murdered since the 1980s.

Unfortunately, there's no comparable database that keeps track of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) in the United States, but on some reservations, the murder rate is 10 times higher than the national average.

Too often, violence against Indigenous women is met with silence from authorities, thanks in part to jurisdictional limits that prevent some tribal courts from prosecuting nontribal members. Investigations are often delayed—and sometimes, authorities don't look into these cases at all. So in an effort to keep their communities safe, Indigenous activists have begun using crowdsourced databases, community patrols, and other methods to seek justice.

COLONIZING GENDER

Prior to the colonization of North America, sexual violence was almost nonexistent in tribal communities, according to legal scholar Sarah Deer's 2015 book *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*. Women, trans, and two-spirit folks were considered essential to community life, so violating them was an unforgivable offense. In her book, Deer notes that "unlike the American legal system, most indigenous legal systems were victim centered," with punishment often including banishment or death.

During colonization, sexual violence became a way of controlling Indigenous communities. Sex trafficking and rape were common during the forced relocation of tribal nations in the early to mid-19th century. Deer notes that U.S. soldiers often "coerce[d] Native women into providing sexual services to receive food, clothing, and blankets." In government and church boarding schools designed to "reeducate" Indigenous youth and sever their ties to their culture and family, upwards of 60 percent of students were subjected to rape or physical abuse from the late 19th to the mid-20th century.

Today, sexual and gendered violence is one of the greatest issues plaguing Indian country. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 34 percent of Native women are raped in their lifetime, and a 2009 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that 39 percent of Native women have experienced intimate-partner violence.

To make matters worse, tribes in the United States have historically been barred from prosecuting non-Native offenders without permission from Congress. The 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) improved these jurisdictional issues slightly, and tribes now have the authority to prosecute non-Natives for certain crimes related to domestic and sexual violence. Though it is a crucial first step, VAWA has its limitations—cases involving child sexual abuse, stalking, or sex trafficking are not covered—and only 18 of more than 500 tribes have so far gained this special prosecutorial authority.

REMEMBERING THE DEAD

Politicians are just beginning to compile data about this epidemic. When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was elected in 2015, he formed an inquiry to research MMIW cases over a two-year span and promised a "total renewal" of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples. Yet it took 10 months to appoint a community-liaison staff, and even longer to appoint a health team to provide support to victims and their families during the hearings.

Many activists and tribal political leaders have called on Trudeau to restructure the inquiry to center families and grassroots advocates rather than government-appointed commissioners focused on "truth gathering" (government hearings) and legal-system "justice." In August 2017, the families of 30 victims requested that the reset address the status of two-spirit, trans, and queer people, whose experiences they believe were overlooked in the initial inquiry report.

There's even less focus on MMIW in the United States, but things are slowly changing. In October 2017, North Dakota Senator Heidi Heitkamp introduced Savanna's Act, named in honor of Savanna LaFontaine-GreyWind, a pregnant Indigenous woman who was brutally murdered in Fargo, North Dakota, on August 19, 2017. The bill would require the U.S. attorney general to adopt standardized protocols for dealing with MMIW; train tribes and law-enforcement agencies specifically to deal with MMIW; and update federal databases to include each victim's tribal affiliation. Unfortunately, the bill has stalled in the Senate.

While working on her dissertation about using cartography to better understand the MMIW crisis, University of Lethbridge doctoral candidate Annita Lucchesi became frustrated by the lack of cohesive data on MMIW. So in 2015 she created the MMIW Database. Lucchesi updates the database biweekly, and has recorded more than 2,500 cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women, trans, and two-spirit people.

"I get at least five database requests a week, and most of them are from community members. I think it's very important for people to be able to have something like this to reach out to, especially something that isn't run by a journalist or a government agency. It's run by someone from their community," she told me.

Lucchesi gets most of her information from social media, and then finds the actual case information to enter into the database. "It's an emotional process to deal with this data, and it's not something I work with casually. I have to set aside a whole day for it."

COMMUNITY GUARDIANS

Community activists are currently driving the conversation around MMIW by organizing marches, creating

IT'S UNCONSCIONABLE THAT WE MUST BEG FOR JUSTICE FOR OUR SISTERS, AUNTS, AND MOTHERS—BUT THAT'S OUR REALITY.

art installations, and hosting teach-ins. In Winnipeg, the Mama Bear Clan (a group of Indigenous volunteers) patrol the city streets at night to hand out food, blankets, and sweetgrass (a spiritually important plant used for prayer or cleansing); collect dirty needles; and use their presence to increase street safety. Winnipeg has a high percentage of First Nations residents, and many of them live in North Point Douglas, a neighborhood with high crime and poverty rates. North Point Douglas also runs along the Red River, an area where the remains of several murdered Indigenous women have been found.

The Mama Bear Clan is also working to reclaim the streets because Indigenous residents—especially those who are poor, homeless, or sex workers—are criminalized by the police. Indigenous people face disproportionate rates of police violence; in the United States, Native Americans are more likely to be killed by the police than any other racial group, which creates a policing paradox. On one hand, over-policing burdens communities of color, but under-policing (due to jurisdictional issues or police bias) leaves Indigenous communities to deal with the violence on their own. Both over- and under-policing deepens distrust between communities of color and the police.

That's where Winnipeg's Drag the Red Initiative comes in. Volunteers dredge the banks of the Red River every spring to search for clues that might lead them to missing and murdered people. Drag the Red was founded in 2014 after the body of a 15-year-old Sagkeeng First Nation girl, Tina Fontaine, was found in the river. Some Drag the Red volunteers, including co-founder Bernadette Smith, have deeply personal connections to the initiative: Their own sisters, cousins, or aunts are missing Indigenous women. Smith's own sister, Claudette Osborne, has been missing since 2008.

The fact that the Mama Bear Clan, the Drag the Red Initiative, and the MMIW Database are led by Indigenous women shouldn't be undervalued. Many tribal communities formerly perceived gender as having "horizontal distinctions rather than a vertical hierarchy of authority," according to Deer. But colonial heteropatriarchy transformed tribal gender relations, forcibly shuffling women and two-spirit people from positions of political power into subordinate positions, first by the government and later in their own communities. The ancestors of these women are now reclaiming that power and leadership in a time when Indigenous communities are scarred by generations of sexual violence.

TRIBAL GENDER RESURGENCE

There are myriad reasons that Indigenous women go missing and are murdered at higher rates than others. In her dissertation research, Luchessi stumbled on the case of Jane Bernard and Doreen Hardy, two Ojibwe women who were found dead on a beach near Thunder Bay, Ontario, within a week of each other in 1966. A month before their deaths, the body of Lorraine Rivers, a woman identified in the press as white, was found on the same beach. The police department immediately offered an award for any information about Rivers's death, but nothing was offered for the two Indigenous victims until 2010—44 years after their deaths. Their murders remain unsolved.

It's unconscionable that we must beg for justice for our sisters, aunts, and mothers—but that's our reality. We must continue to build communities that value personal agency and gender equity. Violence against Indigenous women, queer, and trans people is not inevitable. Relying solely on state systems for justice doesn't challenge the legacy of colonialism. We deserve —and demand—better than that. ⓑ

Abaki Beck *is a freelance writer passionate about Indigenous community resilience and racial justice. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in public health. She is a member of the Blackfeet Nation of Montana and is Red River Métis.*

TURNING 20

THE MUSIC INDUSTRY TRANSFORMED LAURYN HILL FROM SUPERSTAR TO SPECTER

"YOU KNOW I ONLY SAY IT CUZ I'M TRULY GENUINE/ DON'T BE A HARD ROCK WHEN YOU REALLY ARE A GEM."

BY CATE YOUNG

In February 2017, the singer, songwriter, producer, and actress Lauryn Hill made headlines when she showed up three hours late to her own concert in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was the most egregious incident on a tour already marred by delays and no-shows caused by the artist's apparent inability to "align her energies with the time," and cemented the myth of Hill as a brilliant artist–cum–troubled has-been who just couldn't get it together. Looking back on *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* 20 years after its acclaimed release is an exercise in witnessing promise unfulfilled.

Hill's first solo release after leaving the Fugees debuted at no. 1 on the *Billboard* 200 chart and broke the record for first-week sales by a female artist. *Miseducation* then spent an additional 90 weeks in the *Billboard* 200 before setting the record for most Grammy nominations received by a woman in a single year. She won five of the 10 awards she was nominated for—including Best New Artist and Album of the Year—and became the first woman to nab that many Grammys in one night. (Her Grammy-winnings record remained intact until Beyoncé won six awards in 2010 for *I Am… Sasha Fierce.) The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill,* the only studio album she recorded, eventually sold more than 19 million copies worldwide.

In 2007, my high-school boyfriend gave me a copy of *Miseducation*. He had burned a CD for me after the melody of "Ex-Factor" had been stuck in my head for days, but I couldn't identify the song. I still remember playing that gleaming CD in my mother's car stereo, reconnecting with a song that was haunting me for no reason. The song remained on repeat throughout my freshman year of college because it somehow tapped into a hopeful melancholy I couldn't put into words. I was 8 years old when the album was released, but nine years later, it still felt like a jolt to the heart. And while nine years is a long time, so much more has changed for Hill, the music industry, and the world over the past 20 years.

In 1998, there was no social media, music-streaming services, or widespread access to the internet, but *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* still went platinum eight times and vaulted Hill to a level of fame she wasn't ready for—and that she never adjusted to. "I think Lauryn grew to despise who Lauryn Hill was," noted one of her friends in a 2003 *Rolling Stone* profile. "Not that she despised herself as a human being, but she despised the manufactured international-superstar magazine cover girl who wasn't able to go out of the house looking a little tattered on a given day." And then one day, Hill, in her friend's words, said, "Fuck it."

After the disastrous 2002 release of *MTV Unplugged No. 2.0,* Hill's live follow-up album to *Miseducation*, it became clear that the artist was in pain. On the recording,

The world has never had much patience for Black women who don't play by the rules, and even less for Black women who behave as though the rules don't exist in the first place.

Image courtesy of Columbia Records and Margot Harrington

she speaks repeatedly of feeling imprisoned by the artifice of celebrity. "I had created this public persona, this public illusion, and it held me hostage," she says during one of the song introductions. "I couldn't be a real person because you're too afraid of what your public will say. At that point, I had to do some dying." The *Village Voice* declared *Unplugged No. 2.0* "probably not the worst album ever released by an artist of substance," the first sign that the artist who had been the music industry's pulse only a few years earlier was already fading into obscurity.

The decline of Hill's career is a cautionary tale for artists who refuse to bend to the whims of the celebrity machine. The world has never had much patience for Black women who don't play by the rules, and even less for Black women who behave as though the rules don't exist in the first place. (In 2013, when her magnum opus turned 15, Hill was serving a three-month sentence for tax evasion.) So it's funny that *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* can now be interpreted as a fundamentally conservative album. On the smooth groove of "Doo Wop (That Thing)," Hill chastises women for wearing weaves and men for buying into a materialistic culture: *"Showing off your ass cause you're thinkin' it's a trend/ Girlfriend, let me break it down for you again/ You know I only say it cause I'm truly genuine/ Don't be a hard rock when you really are a gem."*

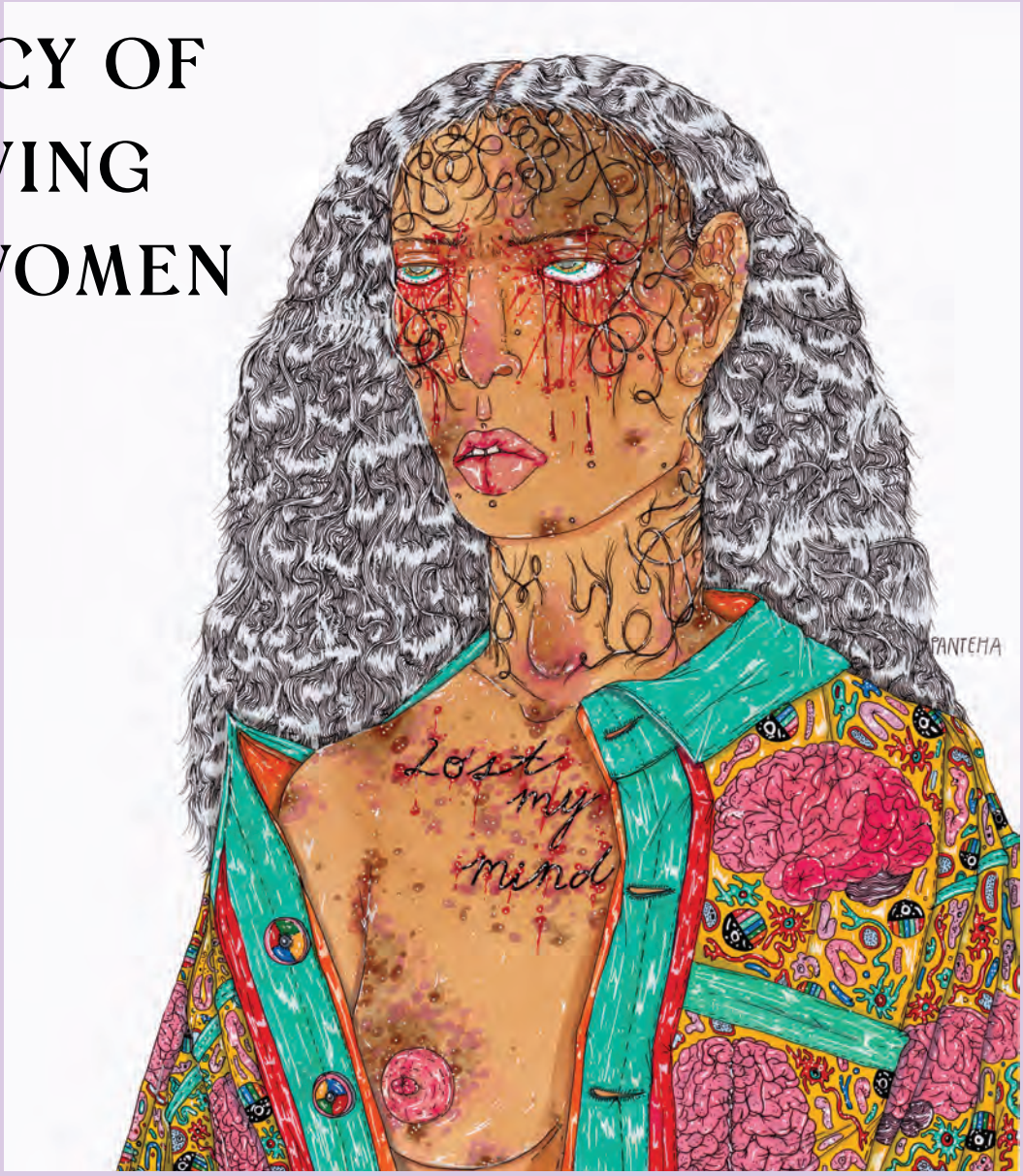
The themes that were so acclaimed in 1998 are now rightly regarded by some as a version of respectability politics. On "To Zion," she likens the choice to have her son to a divine intervention from God. On "Lost Ones," she uses Biblical references to reprimand an ex for losing her. But there's just still something about Hill. Her record-breaking studio album remains part of the soundtrack to so many people's lives, a time capsule of the moment when one of the mainstream music industry's most celebrated musicians was an uncompromising Black woman with a single-minded vision. Even today, the most famous rappers in the world are sampling her hits, with both Cardi B's "Be Careful" and Drake's "Nice For What" interpolating "Ex-Factor." We turned Hill into a living ghost, crushing her under the weight of our expectations and then punishing her when she could no longer rise. The artifice of Ms. Lauryn Hill, which is how she prefers to be addressed, was always more alluring than the truth. ⓑ

Cate Young *is a pop-culture writer and critic focused on the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality, with a specific emphasis on introducing an intersectional analysis to discussions of film, television, music, and critical commentary on media representation. Her writing has appeared in* Cosmopolitan, Bitch, Nylon, and Man Repeller, *and been recognized by Mic.com,* L.A. Times, *and The AFP. Cate has a* BA *in photojournalism from Boston University and an* MA *in mass communications from the University of Leicester. Cate was the 2016 Bitch Media Writing Fellow for Pop-Culture Criticism.*

LITERATURE'S TROUBLED LEGACY OF GRIEVING MADWOMEN

"[T]he grieving are very dangerous... They are like injured animals with fearsome claws, bloodied and pushed into a corner... They are deranged." —Laura van den Berg, *The Third Hotel*

by Ilana Masad
illustration by Panteha Abareshi



In Laura van den Berg's third novel, *The Third Hotel*, a grieving woman begins to go mad. Clare is used to traveling for work, but the circumstances are all wrong when she goes to Havana to attend a film festival. She is supposed to be accompanied by her husband, Richard, but he has died unexpectedly. Alone in Cuba, Clare's not certain why she bothered to come at all—until she sees Richard walking around, looking at art, drinking coffee, reading a newspaper. Is it really him? Or is the vision a manifestation of her grief?

After tailing Richard from afar, Clare follows him to a hotel room where they spend the night together. In the morning, she becomes violent: "The widow thrashing within knew she was lying next to an abomination, a delusion of grief, and that any moment she would wake up next to a corpse or alone and so she

straddled him," van den Berg writes. "She clawed his shorn hair, her nails piercing his scalp. She groped his face. She wrapped her hands around his throat and squeezed. You're dead, she kept saying, No one is in here. But there were his eyes popping open, wide and afraid."

The most recent edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) marked complicated grief disorder (CGD) as an issue that should be further studied. CGD afflicts those who are unable to resume their "normal" lives six months after the grieving process begins. More research is necessary because psychiatrists, like the rest of us, don't quite know what to do with grief. Is it a normal human behavior? A pathologized, if finite, event? The suggestion that a certain kind of grief counts as mental illness is troubling, but aren't the grieving maddened to some extent?

There are many literary tropes about so-called excessive grief. In male characters, grief often manifests as either revenge or redemption (think Achilles mutilating the corpse of Hector as revenge for the death of Patroclus in *The Iliad*). For woman characters, grief is often depicted as womanish instability: In "Shrouds" by the Brothers Grimm, a woman weeps nightly for her dead son until his ghost shows up to complain; Miss Havisham from Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* wanders her mansion in the wedding dress she hasn't removed since the day she was left at the altar.

We also promote trivializing characterizations of female "types": the Manic Pixie Dream Girl (unstable in a cute, quirky, and generally unthreatening way); the crazy cat lady; and, of course, the crazy ex-girlfriend. Labeling women as "mad" or "crazy" has long been a way to strip women of of both their agency and credibility. But it is worth looking at the ways woman authors have explored grief as a catalyst for mental illness. Jean Rhys's 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*—a postcolonial prequel to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*—is one such tale. Annette, a Creole woman living in Jamaica, loses her grip on reality after her disabled son dies in a fire. Annette's surviving child, Antoinette, then marries an Englishman (Edward Rochester, though he is never named in the book) who rechristens her Bertha. Antoinette/Bertha's own madness develops when Mr. Rochester rips her away from her island home, takes her to England, and shuts her away in an English manor, setting her on the path to becoming *Jane Eyre*'s madwoman in the attic. Despite her disintegration, Antoinette/Bertha isn't powerless: Whenever she can, she escapes her room. And finally, she breaks free by setting the house ablaze.

In Daphne du Maurier's classic 1938 novel *Rebecca*, the dead woman for whom the novel is named is remembered so fondly by her housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, that she maintains a haunting presence in Manderley. (Read more about *Rebecca* in "Female Trouble" on page 20.) The novel's unnamed narrator is unnerved by the ghostly apparition of this woman she's never met. Consider, too, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, in which Sethe, a woman who escapes slavery, kills her own daughter to prevent her from being recaptured and enslaved. When a young woman appears on Sethe's doorstep, she believes it's the reincarnated spirit of her dead daughter, Beloved. It doesn't matter if Beloved actually is Sethe's daughter; what matters is that Sethe believes she is.

PERHAPS SO MANY GRIEVING WOMEN BECOME MENTALLY UNSTABLE BECAUSE WE CULTURALLY REFUSE TO VALIDATE GRIEF AS A PART OF LIFE.

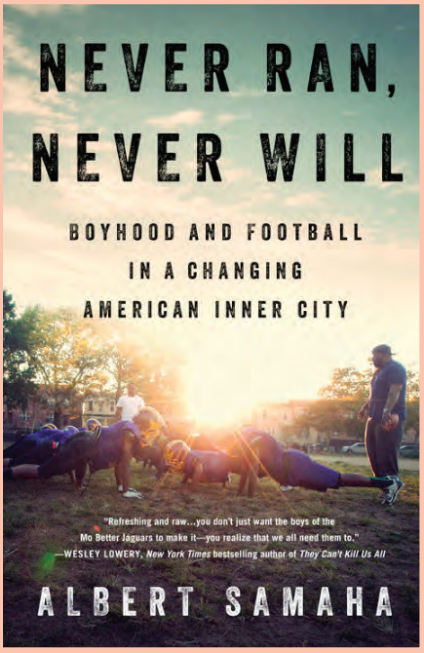
Perhaps so many grieving women become mentally unstable because we culturally refuse to validate grief as a part of life. Women may have it right, though, in literature as in life: Going mad may be the only rational response to losing a loved one, to losing one's own self, to losing one's sense of dignity and worth. Maybe we don't need to prioritize sanity and composure in the face of grief; perhaps we should all be allowed to go a little mad.

Ilana Masad *is a queer Israeli-American fiction writer, book critic, and essayist. Her work has appeared in* The New Yorker, *the* Washington Post, *the* New York Times, *the* L.A. Times, Broadly, Electric Literature, *the* Guardian, Joyland Magazine, StoryQuarterly, *and more. She is the founder and host of* TheOtherStories.org, *a podcast that features fiction writers at all stages of their careers.*

BITCH READS

"Nobody reads" is a sentiment I've been sharing a lot. Living in the age of Trump has convinced me that people are more likely to believe YouTube videos and memes than the actual research in journals and books. That's the reason our BitchReads lists, which also appear quarterly in a Powell's-sponsored newsletter and monthly on our website, are so important. Reading helps us make sense of the issues dominating our news cycle. So get your read on! And then encourage a friend to pick up a book too.

Evette Dionne, Editor-in-Chief



PublicAffairs

Never Ran, Never Will: Boyhood and Football in a Changing American Inner City
by Albert Samaha

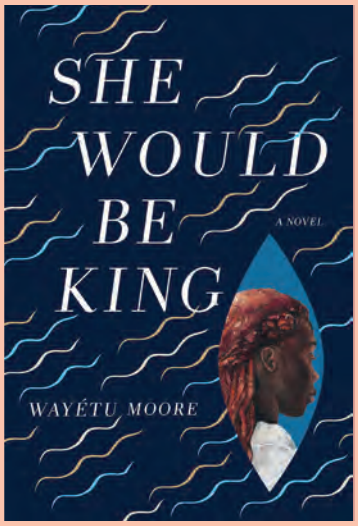
Release Date: September 4

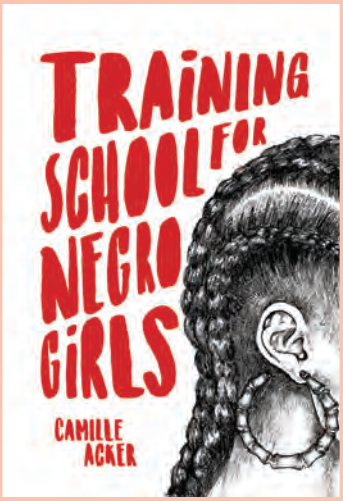
Albert Samaha, a national reporter covering criminal justice at *BuzzFeed News*, is a phenomenal journalist. In 2015, his story about a crooked narcotics unit in Mississippi led to the resignation of the state's police captain. In February 2018, Samaha reported on two New York City police officers who raped a teenager in their custody, and by April, New York, Maryland, and Kansas had passed laws that prohibit police officers from having sex with arrestees. In other words, Samaha's work has impact. In *Never Ran, Never Will*, he turns his investigative lens on the Mo Better Jaguars, a children's football team based in Brooklyn's impoverished Brownsville neighborhood, exploring how the team creates a sanctuary for children who don't have many resources.

Graywolf Press

She Would Be King
by Wayétu Moore
Release Date: September 11

She Would Be King is a fantastical tale about the early years of Liberia's independence. We're given three protagonists: Gbessa, a refugee who was exiled from the West African village of Lai; June Dey, an enslaved man living on—and escaping—a plantation in Virginia; and Norman Aragon, a multiracial child who has superhuman abilities. When they cross paths in Monrovia, a new settlement thick with tension between Black Americans and Indigenous people, they're forced to work together to figure out a way forward for their new home.





Feminist Press

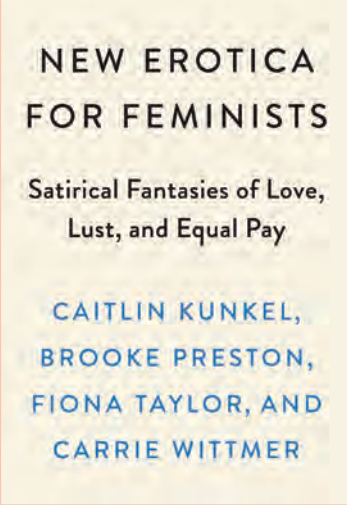
Training School for Negro Girls
by Camille Acker
Release Date: October 16

On October 3, 1904, Mary McLeod Bethune opened the Daytona Literary and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls in Daytona Beach, Florida. Camille Acker's debut collection of short stories takes its name from that historical institution, which eventually merged with the Cookman Institute to form Bethune-Cookman University. But it also seems that *Training School for Negro Girls* is continuing the school's legacy of instilling self-reliance in Black girls. One character wants to fight gentrification in Washington, D.C., but realizes that she is a large part of the problem. Another is a teacher who wants to improve the school at which she works but ends up harming students. No story ends neatly, and that's what makes *Training School for Negro Girls* so compelling.

Plume

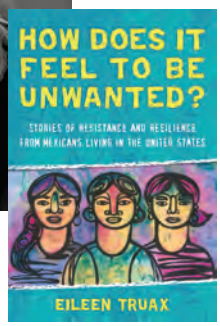
New Erotica for Feminists: Satirical Fantasies of Love, Lust, and Equal Pay
by Caitlin Kunkel, Brooke Preston, Fiona Taylor, and Carrie Wittmer
Release Date: November 13

In February, Caitlin Kunkel, Brooke Preston, Fiona Taylor, and Carrie Wittmer broke the internet with "New Erotica for Feminists," a surreal *McSweeney's* story about a world without patriarchy. When a construction worker approaches the unnamed protagonist, he comments on the book she is reading rather than her looks. When she reveals that she's gay to a stranger, he says, "I won't try to convince you that you need to sleep with a man to know if you're really gay, because only a huge jerk would do that." Their eponymous book is a satirical look at what life would be like in this magical world.



what we're reading

eileen truax



Migrant children are being separated from their parents at the Texas border, DREAMers are being deported to their deaths, and the Trump administration refuses to take responsibility for its policies. But Mexican journalist Eileen Truax is refusing to let them off the hook. Her books, *We Built the Wall: How the U.S. Keeps Out Asylum Seekers from Mexico, Central America, and Beyond* and the forthcoming *How Does It Feel to Be Unwanted?: Stories of Resistance and Resilience from Mexicans Living in the United States*, get to the heart of these vital issues. —*Evette Dionne*

image courtesy of Eileen Truax

On reclaiming dignity in immigrant narratives

When did you know you wanted to be a journalist? I knew that I wanted to be a writer since I was 8 or 9 years old. I spent a lot of time reading. Certain writers have the ability to construct characters who have abilities or marks that make them special. Of course, Gabriel García Márquez, to me, is the master of these things. Outside Latin America, he's a well-known fiction writer, but he was a very good journalist. I also liked chronicles. When I was a teenager, I read *Three Men in a Boat* by Jerome K. Jerome. If you can find it, read it. It's fantastic.

How did you make the choice to become a journalist who covers immigration? I didn't choose the subject; the subject chose me! I covered Mexico's Congress for five years, and I fell in love with politics. In 2004, I decided to come to Los Angeles to make a documentary, and I fell in love with the city's immigrant communities. I realized that I didn't know Latin America until I came here. I had the chance to go to these people's homes, to see their lives, to talk to them. I realized that you have to talk to real people order to tell the real story.

Do you see journalism as a form of activism? The purpose of activism is to convince people to do something. I don't think journalism has that purpose. Journalism is about giving people information in order for them to take a position. There are so many angles about immigration, so what I'm trying to do is give audiences a more complete picture before they make decisions.

Why did you decide to write *How Does It Feel to Be Unwanted*? at this particular time? [*How Does It Feel to Be Unwanted?*] is not a book about Trump, but it speaks about his administration from the perspective of the Mexican community. Anti-immigrant narratives are not new in this country, especially for Mexicans. This has been happening for a long time, and the immigrant community in the United States is pretty well organized. That's why they go to work, drive, have their kids in college, and pay taxes. They can do that because they've created a support network and they have changed local legislation and they have worked toward this for a very long time. And they're going to be able to resist the Trump administration.

What's the one thing that voters should be paying attention to ahead of the 2018 election? The best thing you can do is talk to an immigrant—learn about their journey, about their struggle—and realize that this is what makes this country great. I hope that person stays with you when you are voting. You are deciding not only your fate, but the fate of many other people.

IMPACT OF

How gloria calderón kellett

Turned TV Into Her Playground

Whether you're into crime-solving zombies, close-knit friends seeking justice for their murdered companion, or the struggles of a working-class mom and her family, Gloria Calderón Kellett is responsible for some of your favorite television shows. She's also increasing and improving onscreen representation for Latinx communities.

Before writing and producing for TV, Kellett garnered critical acclaim for her plays, including a sold-out run of *In Her Shoes* at the Hudson Avenue Theatre in 2003 and *Bedtime Stories* at the National Comedy Theatre in 2007. The Loyola Marymount University graduate was awarded the LMU Playwright of the Year Award for her first play, *Plane Strangers*.

Dick Wolf, Shonda Rhimes, and Ryan Murphy might get all the showrunner shine, but Kellett is a powerhouse creator in her own right, and she's perfectly poised to take over television.
—Cate Young

Getty Images

2005: Kellet begins her TV writing career on the CBS sitcom *How I Met Your Mother*, where she is credited at various points as a writer, executive story editor, and coproducer. She's also nominated for her first American Latino Media Arts (ALMA) Award in the Outstanding Script for a Television Drama or Comedy category for the "Duel" episode of *How I Met Your Mother*.

2008: Kellett wins an ALMA Award for Outstanding Writing for a Television Series for the "How I Met Everyone Else" episode of *How I Met Your Mother*.

2009–10: Kellett spends three years working as a writer and supervising producer on another CBS Sitcom, *Rules of Engagement*. The show wins an American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers Award for Top Television Series in 2009 and is nominated for four primetime Emmys in 2010.

2013: Kellett joins the Lifetime show *Devious Maids* as a writer and supervising producer. The show is executive produced by Eva Longoria and Marc Cherry (of *Desperate Housewives* fame) and well-received by critics, but ends after four seasons. During the show's first season, nearly 19 percent of its audience was Hispanic, and the show enjoyed a series high of 3 million viewers.

2013: Kellett also becomes the supervising producer for *Mixology*, ABC's short-lived comedy. The show is not renewed for a second season, but Kellett gains critical experience writing for half-hour comedies, a skill she uses to great success later on.

2015: Kellett serves as a writer and supervising producer for the CW's *iZombie*, her first foray into one-hour procedurals. The cult-favorite show features a diverse cast and draws critical praise; three of its four seasons receive a 100 percent Fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

2017: Kellett develops and executive produces *One Day at a Time*, a Netflix remake of the 1975 sitcom of the same name. Here, she finally writes about her family and her experience growing up with immigrant parents. The show is met with critical acclaim in its first and second seasons because of its warm portrayal of a teenaged coming-out story, as well as its focus on Cuban American culture and experiences. After a groundswell of critical support and a fan-orchestrated campaign, Netflix renews *One Day at a Time* for a third season. The new season is expected to be released in early 2019.

2017: Kellett appears as an actress on the hit CW show *Jane the Virgin*, playing a senior network executive. *Jane the Virgin* earns the CW its first major nomination and award: Star Gina Rodriguez wins a Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series, Musical, or Comedy.

by Sezín Koehler
photography by Angela Deane

EXCAVATING TRAUMA AND THE HEALING POWER OF HAUNTED-HOME FILMS

The horror-film subgenre that could be called "trauma of the home" has a straightforward formula: A person (or group of people) returns to the site of a formative trauma—generally, their childhood home—and is forced to confront whatever monstrous things happened there. Sometimes the confrontation involves spirits and haunting (*The Awakening*, *Beloved*, *Mama*). Sometimes it's accompanied by a mental or physical breakdown (*Lovely Molly*, *Silent House*, *Atrocious*). And sometimes an external force like a creature, abuser, or burglar provokes the protagonist's showdown with their past (*Honeymoon*, Rob Zombie's *Halloween II*, *Gerald's Game*). Once in a blue moon we get a film that explores childhood trauma by proxy (*Split*, *Get Out*, *The Lords of Salem*), but most of the time, the hero/es of these films vanquish the immediate threat, healing their trauma in the process. What makes this subgenre even more psychologically complex and chilling, however, are the instances where the protagonist is destroyed by the entity that is haunting them, implying that it's possible to never truly be free of these foundational horrors.

Themes of childhood abuse and incest, addiction and violence, mental illness and redemption fuel trauma-of-the-home films as we watch their characters attempt to move forward and away from these terrors. And while the metaphors in these movies are often straightforward and sometimes even predictable, they still have the power to demonstrate human resilience in the face of terrible things. (This is also the rare horror subgenre that often crosses over into mainstream film and television territory since the themes of survival, endurance, and mental illness are so universal.)

I had a nomadic childhood, so it's impossible for me to return to the scenes of my original traumas, all those pretty houses that hinted at none of the ugliness transpiring inside. But I still need to return to those moments and confront the violent specters that continue to haunt me almost into my fourth decade on this planet. Through trauma-of-the-home films like *Dark Touch*, *IT*, and the Lifetime adaptation of the classic house-of-horrors tale *Flowers in the Attic*, I'm able to sit in the safety of my own home and join a fellow trauma survivor on their journey to the place where all the bad things started. These films give me an opportunity to work toward my own healing.

The film that most helped my recovery from childhood horrors is Pascal Laugier's 2008 *Martyrs*. In it, a young orphan named Lucie (Mylène Jampanoï) is subjected to gro-

tesque torture at the hands of her guardian, Gabrielle (Patricia Tulasne), who aims to turn her ward into a living martyr. Upon her escape, Lucie is placed in an orphanage, but, broken and haunted by her experience, becomes obsessed with getting revenge. When Lucie tracks down Gabrielle and murders both her and her family, the specter of trauma intensifies. Lucie and her one ally, Anna (Morjana Alaoui), rescue Gabrielle's newest torture victim from the basement of her perfect French chalet—a metaphor for the ugliness that can live underneath beautiful facades. But even after confronting her ghosts, Lucie cannot overcome her trauma, and eventually kills herself.

I don't often revisit *Martyrs*. I don't have to. What Lucie, Anna, and the unnamed torture victim endure encapsulates the various levels of psychological pain I have felt since experiencing violence from country to country, city to city. Like mine, Lucie's trauma transcends a specific place and instead transfers to the people who created those traumatic experiences. For transcultural and transnational individuals, "home" can signify those we love, those we are related to, and those who hurt us. *Martyrs* isn't for the faint of heart, but its themes of violence and transcendence are universal and timeless.

"I like the paradox within horror film: Take the worst of the human condition and transform it into art, into beauty," Laugier said in a 2009 interview with the U.K. film site *Electric Sheep*. "It's the only genre that offers this kind of dialectic, and I have always found this idea very moving—to create emotion with the saddest, most depressing things in existence."

(From left to right: Can't Sleep; Get your chucks off the table, Roy; Couch Snuggle; On my way, *2012–2016*)

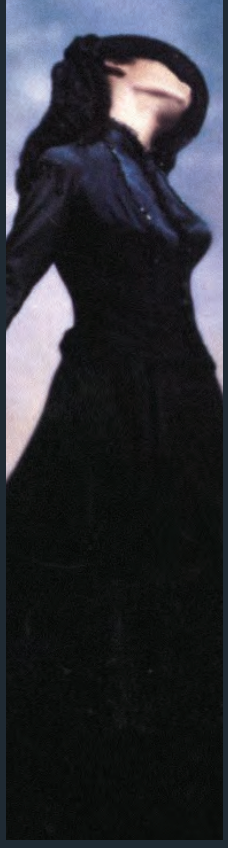
Ultimately, we can't expect the ghosts of childhood horrors to fully leave us, even when we manage to confront the trauma. But we can acknowledge terrible things, take note of how they have shaped our lives, and ultimately move toward an inner peace rooted in awareness. I used to watch trauma-of-the-home movies several times a week to process my grief. Now, thanks to their help, I sometimes go months before revisiting them or seeking out new ones. As a result, much of my own art and fiction contains more hope and joy than ever before. How ironic that scary movies have helped me sleep better at night. And when it comes to the healing power of horror, trauma-of-the-home films continue to be my strongest guiding light to navigate what used to be overwhelming personal darkness. ●

Sezín Koehler *is a biracial Sri Lankan American novelist and blogger whose writing has been featured on* Wear Your Voice, Bitch, Teen Vogue, Broadly, The Mary Sue, Ravishly, HuffPost, *and more. An adult third-culture kid, Sezín has lived in 13 countries and 18 cities around the world, and now calls Lighthouse Point, Florida, home. You can find her tweeting about politics, Facebooking about writing and culture, and Instagramming her growing collection of art and tattoos.*

MOVIES WHERE WOMEN UNSPOOL INTO MADNESS

There's a long history of women going mad onscreen. Whether it's Joan Crawford (Faye Dunaway) screaming "no more wire hangers!" in *Mommie Dearest* (1981) or Dr. Miranda Gray (Halle Berry) realizing that she killed her husband in *Gothika* (2003), movies tend to show women descending into psychosis without fully exploring how they arrived there. It's as if hysteria is an inherent state rather than one induced by trauma. But this Flixtapes list highlights four movies that show how loss and grief can have unexpected side effects, especially for women.

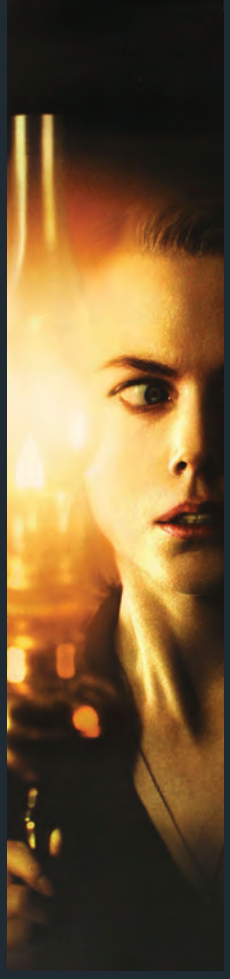
Images courtesy of Vintage Books, Dimension Films, Umbrella Entertainment, Samuel Goldwyn Films



BELOVED

Buena Vista Pictures
October 8, 1998

Sethe (Oprah Winfrey), a formerly enslaved Black woman, escaped the Sweet Home plantation eight years ago and eventually settled in Cincinnati, Ohio. Ever since, she's been haunted by an angry spirit that refuses to leave her and her daughter Denver (Kimberly Elise) alone. After Sethe begins dating Paul D. (Danny Glover), a fellow Sweet Home escapee, a creepy young woman shows up on their doorstep. Beloved (Thandie Newton) is a reincarnation of the daughter who Sethe killed while fleeing the plantation, and she's come to seek revenge on her mother and destroy her sister. Beloved may be just a demon taking on the form of Sethe's dead daughter, but once she's been exorcised from the home, Sethe becomes permanently bedridden—a grieving mother forevermore.



THE OTHERS

Dimension Films
August 10, 2001

Grace Stewart (Nicole Kidman) and her children Anne (Alakina Mann) and Nicholas (James Bentley) live in a secluded house in Normandy as they await the return of the family patriarch, Charles (Christopher Eccleston), from World War II. Grace and her children begin hearing unfamiliar voices and footsteps, and they start to believe their manor is haunted. After Charles Stewart returns, Grace realizes that her servants are dead, and that she and her children are the actual intruders. In actuality, Grace went mad and smothered Anne and Nicholas with a pillow when she discovered that Charles would never come home from the war. It turns out Grace is already dead by suicide. She, Anne, and Nicholas are the real ghosts.

THE BABADOOK

Umbrella Entertainment
January 17, 2014

Amelia Vanek (Essie Davis) has been in despair ever since her husband Oskar (Benjamin Winspear) died in a car accident. And now she's worried that their 6-year-old son, Samuel (Noah Wiseman), is hallucinating an imaginary monster called the Babadook. Samuel begins misbehaving because of the Babadook, from pushing his cousin out of a treehouse to putting glass in Amelia's food. Amelia eventually discovers that the Babadook is indeed real, and the beast is trying to convince her to kill her dog, Bugsy, kill Samuel, and then kill herself. Oskar even returns as an apparition to persuade her to follow through with the Babadook's plan. After being possessed by the Babadook, Amelia is able to overcome his influence, capture him, and lock him in the basement. But no matter her victory, her grief still lingers.

LILA & EVE

Samuel Goldwyn Films
July 17, 2015

After Lila's (Viola Davis) son Stephon (Aml Ameen) dies in a drive-by shooting, she decides to join a support group for mothers whose children have been murdered. While the other mothers want to help Lila heal, fellow attendee Eve (Jennifer Lopez) has a taste for revenge. Eve helps Lila investigate Stephon's murder, and when they encounter reluctant witnesses, Eve encourages Lila to shoot them. Soon, Eve and Lila are moving through an underground criminal world in search of the drug kingpin who murdered Stephon. But it turns out Eve isn't real; Lila conjured her to give her the courage to avenge Stephon's death.

Take My Wife, a sitcom starring comedians and real-life wives Rhea Butcher and Cameron Esposito, portrays queer domesticity while also managing to address sexual assault, racism, and sexism with levity and compassion. I recently spoke with Butcher about the impact of their online and onscreen visibility as a queer nonbinary person. —*Katie Knepler*

image courtesy of Rhea Butcher

rhea butcher

On Comedy Beyond the Binary

I love the show's focus on the relationship between you and Cameron and your careers rather than on coming out, which is really helpful to other LGBTQ people trying to imagine their own futures.

For a lot of people, coming out is the first step. So if we're only watching them walk up to the door, the door opens, and that's the end of the story, you're not really getting shown much of a road map for your life. You're like, "Well, I came out! And now I really don't know what to do!" A lot of times people say at my shows—or they'll comment on my Instagram—that [Cameron and I are] their "queer moms." I really love that! We're all just trying to give each other some idea of what kind of life we can have.

You recently tweeted that you're going by they/them/their pronouns now. Can you talk about your decision to make a public statement on the subject?

It's interesting that you said "the decision to make a public statement," but you didn't say I "came out," and that's an important distinction. That's not to say that a person couldn't come out as nonbinary, but for me, I didn't feel like I was coming out. I decided to tell people because I just wanted to have a little more clarity around what I'm doing. I prefer being called "they" because it feels better, but I know that pronouns are not always a preference.

I would live a very happy life, I think, if people called me whatever pronoun *they* thought was accurate in the moment and everything was fine. But that's not the world that we live in. People [are always] trying to put everybody in a box; there are two boxes, and you can only fit in one of them. There are a lot of people who feel like they exist between a lot of identities, and that's a hard thing to describe. It's very complicated. But that's not a bad thing—it's just that we happen to exist here. So that's why I try to be very public about [my identity].

Given the delayed release of Take My Wife's second season, has it been weird to see onscreen Rhea in a different place with gender than real-life Rhea?

It doesn't bother me to be called "she" [on the show] because part of my experience is how bad it used to make me feel to be called "he." Finding nonbinariness and being called "they" was like removing this sort of daily external and internal misogyny that I was experiencing because I don't present fully as "one gender or the other gender." And so I was continually being ping-ponged between these two pronouns—like being called "he" as a joke, and then "she" didn't feel accurate, but it also wasn't inaccurate? I removed that for myself, and now I don't feel it as much. If we were to make another season, it would probably be about me deciding to go by "they" pronouns. That would be somewhere in there.

***Katie Knepler** is a Minneapolis-based writer and performer who is passionate about using comedy to explore queerness, gender, and mental illness. Follow her on Twitter @rebel_ghoul.*

BACKSTAGE PASS

NIJLA MU'MIN BRINGS A RADICAL PORTRAIT OF BLACK MUSLIM WOMEN TO THE BIG SCREEN

by Imran Siddiquee

In Islamic mythology, jinn are said to be supernatural creatures who live parallel to human beings, created from "smokeless fire" but capable of taking physical forms. In Nijla Mu'min's film *Jinn*, Summer (Zoe Renee) is fascinated by these unseen spirits as she struggles with her mother's decision to convert to Islam. As a Black teenage girl, Summer feels invisible in many ways too.

Mu'min, a Black Muslim American woman, is very aware of her film's unique place in the white patriarchal world of Hollywood, where Islam is either ignored or portrayed as a monster to be conquered. I recently spoke with the director about *Jinn*, which won a jury prize at SXSW earlier this year, and why it was essential to tell Summer's story with such care and precision.

Jinn is in many ways a radical film that confounds stereotypes about both Black Americans and American Muslims. Did you set out to tell a radical story?

I knew that telling a story about Black people and Black Muslims would inherently be a little subversive or radical, but it was a very human story to me. The characters were just people that I was crafting. That really was the process: just writing a story that was intimate, human, and specific, but [also] pulled on these different emotions that anyone can relate to.

How much of the specificity onscreen comes from your own experience?

A lot of my experiences are reflected in the story, but not always [directly]. I was born into Islam, so there was no choice about [what] religion I would be. My father was Muslim. My mom was Muslim. Everyone around me in [my] Bay Area community were [mostly African American] Muslims.

But I attended public schools and a lot of my friends were not Muslim. It was a little jarring. And that's where Summer originates. Out of the girl that I was: very curious, inquisitive, and open, but also struggling with who I wanted to be and what was deemed spiritually, religiously, [and] personally okay. The film's strong Black female friendship thread comes from my experience too. I touch on intolerance within that group [because] that was something I experienced—a lot of closed-mindedness toward Black Muslims.

I recently saw a play called _An Ordinary Muslim_ that challenges how Western media portrays "typical" followers of Islam. Yet it is still centrally about straight non-Black men. Have you experienced a kind of limitation within the American Muslim community itself? Did that inform the film?

There are more and more visible African American Muslims making space, but we didn't have that in the past. The mainstream image of the "ordinary" or "regular" Muslim was not an African American Muslim. Or if it was, it had to do with the Nation of Islam, but there are a lot of African American Muslims who are not in the Na-

photo courtesy of Nijla Mum'in. Image courtesy of Sweet Potato Pie Productions/Morgan's Mark

tion of Islam. There are orthodox Muslims, and that's the community I know. I wanted to bring that into our understanding of "regular" Muslims. Islamophobia affects Muslims differently! As an African American woman, my experiences of racism and sexism are mixed in with Islamophobia.

Recent incidents of violence against Black Muslims have highlighted some of those tensions. Once some non-Black Muslims found out that recent victim of police shooting Stephon Clark was Muslim, they seemed more interested in talking about him. How do those intersections show up for Black Muslim girls in the United States?

Most of my friends in school were African American Christians, and I [often] felt like an outsider. The Christian tradition within the African American [community] is very deep—[from] when our ancestors were enslaved and Christianity was introduced to them to the Civil Rights Movement. It's a big part of the African American experience, and I didn't always feel like I had that. It made me go inward, define my spirituality for myself, and not be very public with my religion.

Then there's this bigger issue of just being a Black woman in the world—the racism, the harassment, [and] the physical violence you encounter just walking down the street. Then, add on speaking about Islam. Though I don't wear hijab, [more] questions are added to whatever stereotypes people already have of me.

The hijab and hair plays a unique role in the lives of the Black women in the film.

When I was growing up there were so many women wearing scarves—so colorful and beautiful, with all these textures. My father would sell scarves at the masjid. I knew I wanted Jade's [Simone Missick] scarf to be an expression of herself. Summer doesn't know [whether] she wants to wear that every day.

For a long time, natural hair [was] stigmatized. We are just beginning to see Black women celebrated [for wearing] their natural hair. So I wanted to see Black women's hairstyles as amazing, *and* I wanted to see Black women wearing hijab as beautiful. I wanted to honor the beauty of the choice and not keep going down the same path of "I'm wearing it and I don't want to." I'm not interested in that narrative of the oppressed woman.

You also challenge stereotypes through your approach to sex and relationships in *Jinn*.

There have been a lot of stereotypes [that] devalue Black girls and women's sexuality. A lot of us don't want to be seen as "loose" [or] as a "ho." Slut-shaming is a big thing that happens to Black girls and girls of color. So the characters [are] trying to figure out who they are through this atmosphere.

At the beginning of *Jinn*, we see Islam from the perspective of Jade, who is newly enamored of it. We also see many Muslims who aren't perfect—some slut-shame, some are unfaithful. It's never as simple as heroes and villains.

Mainstream representations of Muslims have been extreme, like terrorists or this pious person who doesn't do anything wrong. [Neither] of those are real, and I'm interested in real people. Yes, there are Muslims who are struggling, [but] that's just the reality of the world we live in. I didn't want to shy away from presenting flawed, complex people. We can only get to a true place when we [have] representation moving toward a real place, not a wish of who we want to be. I just want to get to a real place when thinking about Muslim characters. ⓑ

***Imran Siddiquee** is a writer, filmmaker, and activist. His words on gender, race, and the media have appeared at* The Atlantic, Buzzfeed, *and* Bitch, *among other publications. He's a collaborator at the South Asian American Digital Archive and was also on the founding staff of The Representation Project. Find him on Twitter @imransiddiquee.*

DIGITIZING THE DEAD IS CAPITALISM'S NEXT GHOULISH MOVE

BY CHANELLE ADAMS
COLLAGE BY VERONICA CORZO-DUCHARDT

I FELT THE LOSS OF MY FIRST LEGEND IN 1997, WHEN I was five years old. Hiding behind the couch, I peered over my mom's shoulder to watch the final moments of *Selena*. I watched the cuts between the ambulance and Selena's empty stage and tears rolled down my cheeks. It didn't matter that I was two years late to the news of Selena's 1995 death; I was devastated because until that moment, I still believed that the young, talented, and beautiful lived forever.

Twenty-three years later, the once-rising star's image and voice are still being used in highly visible and lucrative ways: the chart-topping 1995 release of *Dreaming of You*; M.A.C.'s 2016 commemorative cosmetic line (and most successful celebrity collaboration to date); and even Selena-themed bodega prayer candles available on Etsy. When celebrities, especially musicians, die, fans rightfully grieve for them, but what happens when mourning marries capitalism? In death, these stars often become even larger—and more profitable—than they were in life.

Musicians accompany us through our most intimate and vulnerable moments, including breakups, teen angst, weddings, and funerals—and this often fosters a false sense of intimacy. It's unsurprising, then, that fans attempt to keep the memory of their favorite musicians alive by sharing memorabilia, #ThrowbackThursday photos, old videos, autographs, and stories in both in real life and on social media.

But the "dead famous people" economy occupies a gray area between fans expressing dedicated admiration and savvy business types cashing in on the fact that dead celebrities can no longer offer—or deny—consent. Celebrity deaths become something we can ingest; there's buy-in for an unfinished, unreleased Amy Winehouse track; for a performance by the very-much-alive Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg performing next to a Tupac hologram at Coachella; for M.A.C. releasing yet another posthumous line, this time inspired by Aaliyah.

Yet many of these same artists struggled to retain copyright and creative control over their work when they were living, and aren't here to correct misinterpretations, oversee a project being released, or negotiate for proper compensation. Sometimes, promoting and consuming a creator's image and music after their death violates their wishes. For instance, Prince battled throughout his career with record labels and streaming services so he could maintain sole ownership of his work, so it's troubling that his music is now available across all music-sharing platforms, including Spotify and Apple Music. In 1998, Prince told *Guitar World* that using technology to bring back performers who had died was "the most demonic thing imaginable." But Justin Timberlake still orchestrated a posthumous duet with a projection of the artist during the 2018 Super Bowl halftime show. Timberlake may simply have wanted to pay homage to The Purple One in Prince's hometown of Minneapolis, but the larger question remains: Is it possible to consume a dead person's art without exploiting them?

EVEN IN THIS TABLOID-OBSESSED CULTURE, IT'S POSSIBLE TO CONSUME AND APPRECIATE A PERSON'S ARTISTRY WITHOUT DISRESPECTING THEIR LEGACY.

It's easy enough to shy away from the glut of tell-all books, documentaries, and autopsy reports that threaten to soil a deceased person's public image, but we should also question which aspects of their personal lives even belong in the public domain—not only because the onslaught makes us uncomfortable, but also because it's disrespectful. Photos of Whitney Houston's drug-littered bathroom should be off-limits, yet Kanye West licensed the photo for $85,000 and used it as the cover for Pusha T's 2018 album *DAYTONA*. This particular photo trivializes Houston's death and years-long struggle with addiction and turns it into a spectacle for public ogling. Other instances—such as art dealers selling an intimate letter that Tupac wrote to Madonna in 1995, or Seattle journalist Richard Lee attempting to release photos of Kurt Cobain's body after he died by suicide—are breaches of privacy. If we're all entitled to an intimate life, then we need clearer guidelines around what is considered private after someone, especially a public figure, has died.

Even in this tabloid-obsessed culture, it's possible to consume and appreciate a person's artistry without disrespecting their legacy. Maybe it means boycotting new music that hasn't been authorized by the celebrity's estate, or refusing to listen to leaked tracks. Maybe it means refusing to consume media, like the *National Enquirer,* that displays images of dead celebrities in their last moments or laid to rest in their caskets. Honoring a famous person's legacy should be about remembering and celebrating their talent and influence—not about capitalism, the media that feeds it, and all its consumers demanding a final encore. Let's pay our respects and allow our musical icons to rest in peace. b

Chanelle Adams is a Marseille-based writer and researcher. Committed to platforms that prioritize experience as a way of knowing, she colaunched feminist web platform Bluestockings Magazine before later becoming managing editor at Black Girl Dangerous. Find her on Twitter @nellienooks or at chanelleadams.info.

what we're listening to

image courtesy of Claire Gohst

claire gohst

Rocks her own old haunts

Claire Gohst is a pillar of perseverance. When she was forced to leave home because of her sexuality, the Singapore-born musician funneled her pain into her art. Now, as the lead singer of Paper Citizen, she's helping others face—and heal—their own traumas. *—Evette Dionne*

What was the first song, artist, or album that really stuck with you?

Linkin Park's *Hybrid Theory*! I played that CD over and over again. It spoke to me, and I'm sure many angry teens and adults felt that way too. Linkin Park was also the first concert I ever went to; we stood in line from midday so that we could get spots up front.

When did you realize that you wanted to be a musician?

I knew I wanted to be a rock musician the very first time I heard pop/rock music on the radio. It was in the '90s when we were just getting mainstream access to Western entertainment in Southeast Asia. Initially, my life was centered around tradition and conservative values, so music became something I could realistically pursue once I was out on my own as a teenager.

When you were 17, your family kicked you out of your home in Singapore because you were gay. How did you handle that trauma?

My parents are very religious, so rules and curfews were always in effect. I got kicked out whenever I rebelled against my mother, but when she changed the locks, I knew I was on my own for good. I was hurt and angry, of course, but also secretly excited about figuring out what to do with my newfound liberty. My first priority was finding a place to stay, followed by finding work. I was still enrolled in school, so I had to look for jobs that hired at night, like waiting tables, bartending, and eventually playing music. I made friends in Singapore that shaped the course of my life. I fell in love with [Zsa Zsa Scorpion], a local Singaporean singer and songwriter, and I insisted on playing music with her; that's when I began singing as well. Everything in my life slowly started coming together. I felt like I was learning something every day about myself, emotions, love, music, and life. Music became my religion.

Who do you hope to reach through the music you're recording with Paper Citizen?

I'm doing my best to write music that is true and honest to myself. Though this music is very personal, I know that others will experience these songs and the feelings and struggles I write about with a sense of familiarity. I hope to reach the people I've been surrounded by: people from my hometown, friends who endlessly show their support. I wouldn't be where I am if not for them.

Is there anything in life that you feel haunted by? Why is it haunting you?

My own fears. I think it's a combination of the way I was raised and the difference in Eastern/Western cultures. There is a conflict between what others tried to ingrain in me and the values that I've developed independently. It's a battle with deep-set feelings of guilt and shame that often leads to periods of depression.

FEATURED PODCAST

Lore Unmasks Humans as the Real Monsters

image courtesy of Lore

by s.e. smith

Lore could be just another lurid horror podcast that uses dramatic music while repackaging frightening stories. Instead, host Aaron Mahnke does considerable research about North American and European folklore to thoughtfully delve into what myths about everything from vampires to haunted buildings can teach us about how we relate to each other.

Lore isn't just about telling eerie tales; Mahnke repeatedly emphasizes that humans are often the real monsters. Murder, neglect, abuse, harassment, and persecution are at the root of many of his stories because we do horrific things to each other in the name of religion, superstition, justice, and love; in essence, *Lore* turns the lens back on the listener in a media climate where the worst of humanity's inhumanity is regularly displayed.

Fathers murder families in misogynistic rampages; people stand by while refugees drown in the Mediterranean Sea; and immigrants die in the harsh stretch of desert along the United States–Mexico border. Sometimes *Lore* eerily echoes these modern-day events, but often, the podcast feels calculated to make us uncomfortable, challenging our beliefs about ourselves and society. In "A Stranger Among Us," for example, Mahnke explores the Pied Piper of Hamelin and how a village cheated the traveling ratcatcher out of his fee—not the usual way the story is told. "If Walls Could Talk" delves into the dark, abusive history of asylums to completely flip the "haunted asylum" trope.

It's sometimes difficult for long-running podcasts to keep listeners engaged, especially as a show expands to include books and an Amazon Prime series. However, Mahnke keeps *Lore* fresh by constantly exploring new and fascinating stories and through them perpetually challenges listeners to think about their own capacity for committing or tolerating evil. Plus, each *Lore* episode is self-contained, so listeners can jump into the show at any time. Perhaps 100 years from now, podcasts will explore conversion therapy, the school-to-prison pipeline, or contemporary health fraud because—as *Lore* shows—nothing from the past is ever truly over.

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*s.e. **smith** is a Northern California–based writer and journalist who focuses on intersectional coverage of social justice issues. smith's work has appeared in* The Guardian, Time, In These Times, Esquire, Rolling Stone, Vice, Rewire, *and numerous other publications, in addition to several anthologies, including Get Out of My Crotch!, The Feminist Utopia Project, and the forthcoming (Don't) Call Me Crazy.*

lyrics

"Ex Factor"

"Is this just a silly game/
That forces you to act this way?/
Forces you to scream my name/
Then pretend that you can't stay/
Tell me, who I have to be/
To get some reciprocity/
No one loves you more than me/
And no one ever will"

"I Used to Love Him"

"I chose the road of passion and pain/
Sacrificed too much and waited in vain/
Gave up my power, ceased being queen/
Addicted to love like the drug of a fiend/

Torn and confused, wasted and used/
Reached the crossroad, which path would I choose/
Stuck and frustrated, I waited, debated/
For something to happen that just wasn't fated"

"Everything Is Everything"

"I philosophy/
Possibly speak tongues/
Beat drum, Abyssinian, street Baptist/
Rap this in fine linen, from the beginning/
My practice extending across the atlas/
I begat this/
Flipping in the ghetto on a dirty mattress/
You can't match this rapper slash actress/
More powerful than two Cleopatras/
Bomb graffiti on the tomb of Nefertiti"

"Lost Ones"

"Now, now, how come your talk turn cold?/
Gain the whole world for the price of your soul/
Tryin' to grab hold of what you can't control/
Now you all floss, what a sight to behold/
Wisdom is better than silver and gold"

"To Zion"

"How beautiful if nothing more/
Than to wait at Zion's door/
I've never been in love like this before/
Now let me pray to keep you from/
The perils that will surely come/
See life for you my prince has just begun/
And I thank you for choosing me/
To come through unto life to be/
A beautiful reflection of His grace/
For I know that a gift so great/
Is only one God could create/
And I'm reminded every time I see your face"

Fugees, "Ready or Not"

"Ready or not, here I come, you can't hide/
Gonna find you and take it slowly/
Ready or not, here I come, you can't hide/
Gonna find you and make you want me"

we love

THE LAURYN HILL EDITION

a ghosts playlist

This BitchTape, curated by Frankie Simone, explores our personal ghosts and shadows—the parts of ourselves that are hardest to face. These ghosts mask our truest selves—our light—but by doing deep, necessary work, we can experience otherworldly growth. Simone has challenged herself to do that, and this year, she's fully and unapologetically stepping into the world as a proud queer Puerto Rican pop musician. This BitchTape is full of the queer and allied artists that helped keep her in a positive, self-loving state of mind.

image courtesy of Abby Gordon

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bitchtapes

Hayley Kiyoko, "Curious"

In her album *Expectations*, Hayley Kiyoko is shattering just that: society's expectations of love between women. This song from the album is just so damn real. In this case, the ghosts are my ex-girlfriends.

Jessie J, "Queen"

"Queen" helps us rid our lives of our own shadows and ghosts. Yes, looking at yourself in the mirror and repeating positive words can uplift your spirit and attract more positivity, abundance, and light into your life. "Queen" is three minutes and 23 seconds of exactly that.

Rihanna featuring Drake, "Work"

I chose "Work" for every reason possible. It's a classic, sexy song that I play any- and everywhere and for (almost) any and every occasion. Imagine eating grilled shrimp and sipping on a piña colada and either dancing with your girls or with that special someone to this song. It will never get old. Ten years from now, we'll still be listening to this timeless record.

Kehlani, "CRZY"

Kehlani is one of my favorite queer artists. I listen to this song whenever I experience and/or observe blatant homophobia, sexism, racism, and the like. "CRZY" helps me get any angst, anger, or energy out. It reminds me that we are the future and that our positivity and love for ourselves and all people is going to change this world.

Lizzo, "Water Me"

"Water Me" is the perfect song to learn all the words to, bump real loud, and dance to like you don't give a fuck. Self-love is always the answer.

Demi Lovato, "You Don't Do It for Me Anymore"

I covered this song the day after Demi released it. It was during a time when I was so ready to let go of my ghosts, my old self. It was time for me to level up into the more compassionate, self-worshipping, confident, and worthy goddess that I've always been.

Sevdaliza, "Human"

Whoa, Sevdaliza is a next-level artist. She gets to the fucking point and hits you where you'll feel it most. I listen to this song when I'm face-to-face with the darkest parts of myself. This song is the best reminder that we're all just human.

Janelle Monáe, "Django Jane"

"We gonna start a motherfucking pussy riot/ Or we gonna have to put 'em on a pussy diet." Need I say more? Listen to "Django Jane" when you need to remember that your ghosts and shadows (like that negative voice in your head) aren't real; they're a product of the patriarchal system in which we're currently engulfed. Your light and divinity are real.

Doja Cat, "Go to Town"

Society teaches us, especially women and queer folks, to be disempowered when it comes to sex. Doja Cat is reclaiming the fuck out of this societal ghost and I'm down with it. I personally like to change pronouns in songs to reflect my own life so that they're that more relatable, like "If you're down girl, really down, baby let me watch you go to town."

Troye Sivan, "My My My!"

Read every word in this song and get lost in it. I love love, especially queer love.

Frankie Simone, "LOVE//WARRIOR"

I was inspired to make a song that would silence that dark voice in my head that said I wasn't worthy or capable of living my dreams. This song was written for all the LOVE//WARRIORS, but most specifically for my LGBTQ LOVE//WARRIORS. Our time is now.


AS LONG AS I REMEMBER HER, SHE WILL NEVER DIE.
we are all elders
WRITTEN BY VIVI VERONICA
ILLUSTRATED BY SYAN ROSE
TRANS WOMEN SURVIVE, LOVE, & EXIST BECAUSE OF THE KNOWLEDGE WE PASS DOWN. SHE'S MY SISTER, SHE'S DEAD & ALIVE. SHE'S MY AUNTIE. MY MOTHER. ME.
SHE TAUGHT ME HOW TO MOVE MY FACE, HOW TO CHANGE EVERYTHING WITH MAKEUP, HOW TO MOVE MY BODY IN MOTIONS THAT FELT SO NATURAL. EVEN MY EYES MOVE DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF HER. SHE TAUGHT ME THAT
FEAR & COURAGE OFTEN LOOK THE SAME. HOW SITTING WITH UNCERTAINTY IS NECESSARY EVEN IF IT'S PAINFUL.
I FEEL HER IN EVERY PART OF MY BODY - EVEN THE PARTS I HATE - BECAUSE I KNOW HER PAIN & SHE KNOWS MINE.
ALL THE TRANSFEMININE BODIES & SPIRITS I'VE KNOWN CONTINUE TO TEACH ME. NOT ALL OF MY SISTERS ARE STILL ALIVE, BUT THEIR WISDOM IMPACTS THE FOOTSTEPS OF THOSE STILL HERE. I FEEL OUR ENERGIES MOLDING & SHAPING TO CHANGE WITH EACH OTHER.
THIS WEB OF CONSCIOUSNESS IS SO VAST. I FEEL THE RIPPLES OF THE UNIVERSE FALL DOWN LIKE RAIN UPON ME, & AS THE RAIN TOUCHES ME, MY BODY BECOMES THE RAIN & WASHES ME AWAY INTO THE VASTNESS OF THE WEB. I FEEL YOUR SPIRITS AS THESE RIPPLES & I KNOW YOU ARE FEELING ME TOO. TOGETHER ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS WE UNITE. WE ARE ALL ONE, WE ARE ALL EACH OTHER, & WE ARE ALL THE WISDOM OF OUR SISTERS, OUR ELDERS, OUR SELVES. ONE DAY I DECIDED MY BODY WAS NOT A TRAGEDY.
ON THAT DAY I KNEW I WOULD LIVE FOREVER.