

I

AM

THE

NOT

RAIN

navigating life as survivors of
childhood sexual abuse

Lean Into the Wind

Lean into the wind.
Lean into the sun and wind
That brushes harsh against your skin
The sun and wind across your cheeks
That has burned and blown for a million years.
Carried whispers of a million hearts
Before your life has touched it here.

Now you may lay down with hopeless tears
Running into you hair.
But know it all passes away
Like crumbling stone and burning wood
Like an ocean swells, dies, and comes again.
Run with the streaming tears
Let the life and loss run through you
Let it all run through you.

Remember, it is fire at the center of the earth
And it is fire at your core.
It is that fire that is your anger and your passion
It is this fire that is your beauty.
While now the fire may be dying
Keep on dreaming your dreams.

Lean hard into the wind
For this life you touch it with is fleeting.
Lean in and live
For those whose heart do not feel
The suffering and joy that's rich and real.
Know you're where you're meant to be,
Cheeks burned and blown in the sun and wind.

Why in blazes we're writing this zine:

Writing this zine was very scary. Raw. And healing. It brought up all kinds of fear. About what people will think of me, their perceptions of me. I am still the same goof as always, just a multi-faceted silly-goose. And then there is the child-like fear around talking. I am usually very quiet, private about my pain. But for me, it's time to stop pretending it wasn't a big deal, holding the secrets, perpetuating the stigma, holding the shame for something that's not my fault. The mask, the pretending to be naive and smiling- it's exhausting. I want others to know its okay to be all of who they are around me, that they can speak out if and when they feel safe to. We survivors must be gentle and patient with ourselves. The fear is there for a reason and should be listened to. I know what its like to feel like I am alone on an isolated boat, feeling different and empty. I want all the other little boats to know- you are not alone. It will get easier. It is time for people to know. There is ugliness in the world. There are children and adults all around us carrying these heavy burdens. But we can create something beautiful and powerful out of something ugly. I have done a lot of hard work enduring, holding, sitting, contemplating the nature of suffering. I have insight and really good hugs I can offer now. Feeling, sitting with our vulnerability, experiencing our humanness in all its extremes, resisting being jaded by it, is the toughest strongest thing we can do. I cannot control or heal all the suffering that has and is going on in the world. All we can do is to scream and rage and cry and have a laugh with friends and maybe a cheese fondue. All we can do is to hope. And to do our part to make things a little lighter, a little softer, to create meaning in our suffering and leave things a little more sunny while we're on this earth.

US

Sarah G.

I first witnessed Sarah's genius and knew I needed to be her bff when we studied for our final exam on the psychology of sex- discussing sexy cabbage, cucumbers, micro-penises, vacuum -pumps, and raging rants about the state of the world. If you ever need to vent about Degrassi or need to do some cathartic ranting, Sarah is your woman.

Sarah has come to be an inspiration to me with the way she has shown me through her courageous spirit how to be a radical, a fighter for human rights, a feminist, an activist, a revolutionary. But from a place of deep gentleness, shy strength and loving-kindness. Sarah's constant openness, honesty, bluntness, frankness, is the reason I was able to speak and to write this zine. I watched her take back her voice, with her quiet strength, and thought "maybe I can do it too".

Sarah's philosophy of life revolves around tea, hugs, vulvas, and feminism. She is a 19 year old part quick-witted hilarious Brit from Hull, and part diner cruiser American from New Jersey. It's really funny actually. She sounds 100% British only when nervous or debauched. She presently studies Sociology at McGill Uni in Montreal and dreams of running a social work practice from a cosy English tea-house. Something else that's funny is she calls sea-horses "horse-fish". Hah.

Ⓜ Amber



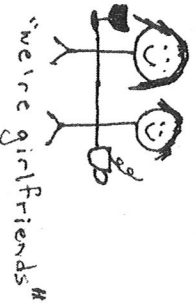
About

Amber Green

Amber will make you laugh. Whenever she's around, you will not escape her presence before a serious fit of the giggles comes over you. As we say, she massages people's silly aura. Amber also has an unprecedented ability to be sweet, supportive and warm. She has the grandest heart of compassion. The more I have gotten to know her the more I have been able to see a woman who runs deep with oceans of courage and strength. She is one of the most amazing and inspiring people I have ever met.

Amber is 24 years old and spent most of her life growing up in Halifax, Nova Scotia where she learned how to pronounce things funny and to occasionally resemble a chilli pepper. Saint Mary's University recently adorned her with a degree stating she's one of those wee geniuses who graduated with distinction and is now of expert status in all psychological and religious. Currently, she lives in Montreal, Quebec, but is on the eve of heading on back to Halifax and travelling the world. We will miss her dearly but our city is just swelling with pride that we were ever lucky enough to have snatched her up and into the greater arms of Montreal in the first place. I hope that her travels bring to her life as much wonder and beauty as she has given ours.

♡ Sarah



Whenever the pain is
too much I switch
perceptions of myself

SUPERIOR



LIAR

In the back of my mind I always knew and remembered the abuse. I remember the first time. I remember the last time. I remember hazy pieces in between. It was always in the fabric of who I was. I understood it as the piece of my life that I did not think about, but knew was there. But if you'd asked me for details, I would have said I don't remember. I don't want to remember. I choose not to remember. I separated my mind from my body, I separated my abuse life from the happiness and lightness of my childhood.

It is like I have had a functional skeleton to understand my experience, but in recent years as I have become safer, stronger and more independent, I get vivid flashes and fragments or memory I didn't know I had. And my body remembers. Where it's like my cells are physically re-experiencing events my mind was absent from.

My memory. What he did to me. What he made me do. It's like a million glass pieces that rain down on me. There is nothing linear, chronological, logical, symmetrical about it. It is more a watery stream of images, sensations, emotions. All I have are these sharp glass fragments of my life that cut as I try and hold them. I've always had difficulty describing the sensation of remembering. I just think of it as a cold, white wave that I feel is coming and can sense its inevitability and my complete lack of control. Sort of like walking underneath a streetlight in a snowstorm, face upraised to the sky, and in the light you can suddenly see all of the white flakes rushing through space towards your bare skin and stinging your eyes. What felt vague and could not be grasped is instantly vivid, present, raw.

I used to (I sometimes still do) say to myself "you must be crazy". "You made it up". "You saw it on TV". "It was a bad dream". "If it actually happened you should be able to remember better". "Memory is unreliable"...
But deep down I know.
My body remembers.

It was quite an intelligent, adaptive thing I did, to cope.
And it makes sense why I can't remember large parts of my life, why its effects permeated my life and the way I felt about and viewed myself.
I separated myself. My mind from my body, and abuse from my regular life, so that I could go to school, climb trees with my friends, have skipping contests and spelling lessons. The problem is that as human beings, we are meant to be whole, fully present. Our mind cannot exist without

TRY TO CATCH
ME NOW,
YOU SICK FUCK!

I WON'T
KEEP YOUR
SECRETS
ANYMORE!

body, it is one in the same, not separate entities. So it is a long, but incredibly rich struggle to heal it back together.

I can remember the first time I stepped out of my body during the abuse it was like being held under water. At first you panic and your body wretches and spasms and protests and fights. And then surrender comes and you look upwards from underneath and see the sunlight made a beautiful and soft dance in its distortion on the surface of the water. Everything now is slow, muted, painless, far away.

After that day I would often step out of myself and lay my body across the sky. When I was little, I saw gods everywhere and I imagined that god laid a blanket across the sky, making the world dark at night. I'd lay my child body across the sky and stars, on god's blanket. In this place between where the earth ends and heaven begins. Or where a child thinks the earth ends.

I have always intimately understood the concept of "soul loss" that exists in many cultures. That your soul can be scared or stolen out of you body and wanders lost in another realm, leaving your body on earth sick until you journey to retrieve it. I know the feeling of waking up and feeling changed, a little more hollow and empty like a part of me had died. For a very long time I thought that this was a matter of growing up. What every child and adult must go through as their innocence is slowly taken away from them, as they harden with the suffering they experience. But I know now that it has nothing to do with growing old. That I have what I envision as a pool of sun, or a chalice inside that can be filled up again, the light spilling into these empty spaces.

Hurting myself
was the only
way I felt
safe

For the longest time I'd convinced myself it'd never happened. That night I first remembered was just some fucked up reaction to all the pot we'd been smoking at a house party back in Jersey. At fifteen years old, after a few tokes, I was huddled over and shaking, heart racing out of my chest and through my mind with a marathon's thumping pace. Intermittent flashes of darkness collided with blurred and distorted images of him, his bedroom, his hand gripping me- and then like a click of a finger the backdrop of reality would re-emerge.

It was the first time I'd ever remembered the abuse, six years after it had occurred. Writing it off as some weed enhanced, twisted subconscious construction of my past was remarkably easy at first. The inconvenient part was that the memories didn't stop prying their way out. Just as I would be drifting into sleep I'd be jolted by small, intimate flashes of abuse- or even just his torso, the stairs to his room, his alarm clock. Small images so scary I'd curl into the corner of my bed not knowing how to interpret the fear they struck in me. The memories were so nondescript and blurry at first that I had no idea who my abuser was, when the abuse had occurred, for how long, and what exactly had happened. To this day, I can't answer any of those questions with absolute certainty.

A few months ago was the first time I called myself a survivor. Before that my twisted bundle of memories seemed so superficial compared to the concrete memories others who'd been through abuse had. How could I claim to be traumatized by something I couldn't even remember? Wasn't that just trivializing the very real experiences of so many? And why do I remember my abuser as being a trustworthy, charming man who I adored? Doesn't that mean either it didn't happen or that I'm really fucked up?

Breathe

I'm just tryin to keep alive.
Right now all I can trust is our breathing
in and out
eternal
and the waters on the shores breathing
in and out.

I'm just tryin not to bleed forever.
After seeing tenderness ripped from a child,
after knowing broken men and women, broken lives
littering god's green earth.
I'm just tryin not to break with them and fall
with the white feathers that fall from the brave birds.
I'm just tryin not to blow away.
When I can't lift my heavy chest from the floor
When stillness fills the body that's had all the air beaten from it.

The body that has forgotten visions and thirst.
Right now when I can't think or I'll give up,
all I can trust is the waves breathing,
and the wisdom that's told me I'm not the rain
but the light that shines behind it
so it's seen.

Now when I'm too tired and bruised to lift my head
I stay still
And trust in the passage of footsteps on roads,
in wind that moves sand,
in today's stars that have already gone.

Now when I'm so weary I don't wanna open my eyes,
all I can let myself trust
are the arms I feel around me
'cause somebody's holdin me while I breathe
in and out while the waters smash the land
and I'm just tryin to keep alive.



Quiet Child

Never saw you standing there
when the monsters tortured my nights
The wind and blood flood over the dawn
Mind, body, spirit suspended in muted ice

Never saw you stopping him
When he locked up silver-eyed swans in my memory
Innocence seeps out with my faith in you

Never saw you carry me away from his stealing
Vacant, I build a beacon in the fog
Petals fall with me as I cry into tomorrow

Is it too late for the quiet child waiting?
Already the fire is hating
I have become the flames and I corner you into burning
bushes

While clinging to iron statues
When will the guardians open their eyes?
When are you going to save your baby?

Every day I find I still doubt myself. I get so scared of what if maybe I am wrong? What if I tell people he did this to me and I find out later that it's all just lies, or that it was somebody else, somewhere else entirely? What if this is just an attempt to excuse all the pain and all of what that pains meant for my friends and family? Maybe the pieces I have put together were forced matches that never did really fit.

Often I'm silenced out of fear that nobody will ever believe me. My jury of peers will say my evidence doesn't add up. It's so hard to move beyond reasonable doubt let alone to deal with the pressure of holding onto my convictions before others. On a topic so taboo and misunderstood and uncomfortable that nobody wants to hear it.

Without a clear image of his face or most of the abuse itself, I've had to piece together the parts- his voice, his house, his hands- to have any spine to my story. Instinct has been the most powerful tool. I couldn't explain how, but there are some things in life that you just know, knowledge you arrive at without being able to recall where you learned it from.

I wish I had some type of confirmation, something real to hold on to. To just know. But whenever I have flashbacks, new memories, new gut wrenching emotions, I'm reminded of how fucking terrifying the truth is. Why I've spent most of my life protecting myself from it. I'm still locked into ambivalence between desperately wanting to know truth and wishing I knew nothing at all.

I hold on to patience. Trust that when- if - my mind decides I'm finally ready, I will know.

4. presence of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation.
2. Identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self.
3. Impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., promiscuous sex, eating disorders, binge eating, substance abuse, reckless driving). [Again, not including suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in criterion 5]

I must be disordered, I must be in this box between these lines through this lense in this cage? You try, Dr. You try sleeping, muscles cramping, waking, choking, gagging on a penis shoved into your mouth. Then going to work.

4. Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, threats, or self-mutilating behavior such as cutting, interfering with the healing of scars, or picking at oneself.
5. Affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days).

Can't you see? I am old now. Grown up. But my fear is a 4-year old child smelling of sunscreen and bubble-bath and terror. My grief is an 8-year old, wanting only to be rocked to sleep in tears.

- A. Exposure to a traumatic event
- B. Persistent reexperience (e.g. flashbacks, nightmares)
- C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma (e.g. inability to talk about things even related to the experience. Avoidance of things and discussions that trigger flashbacks and reexperiencing symptoms. Fear of losing control and harming another ~~person~~, worthlessness.
6. Chronic feelings of emptiness, worthlessness, frequent displays of anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of inappropriate anger or difficulty controlling anger).
7. Inappropriate anger or recurrent physical fights).
8. Transient, stress-related paranoid ideation, delusions or severe dissociative symptom (The diagnostic criteria for PTSD, per the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (Text Revision) (DSM-IV-TR), may be modified as!!!

The Pain. is looser now. I cough it up. In front of you. I hold it. It is mine. Don't judge my private, ~~and~~ Pain. My ancient sorrow, my wisdom, beautiful like the wind that blows cold and destroys and heals. Can't you see? I am wise. I am okay. I have walked such a long way.

There was a time when i only felt safe, secure, okay, if there was some part of my body that was injured

I did it because I thought there was no point in screaming

I hurt my body, my temple, the place that holds my peace

I did it to express all the suffering I saw in the world

I did it because I wanted to feel something

I did it to feel like I was human

I did it to feel like I exist

I did it to feel like I was solid, real

I did it to cope

Survive

I did it to punish myself

personality disorder: is a psychiatric diagnosis that describes a long-term disturbance of personality function. It is one of four related diagnoses classified as cluster B ("dramatic-erratic") personality disorders typified by disturbance in impulse control and emotional dysregulation. The general profile of the disorder typically includes a pervasive instability in mood; extreme "black and white" thinking, or "splitting"; chaotic and unstable interpersonal relationships; self-image, identity, and behavior; as well as a disturbance in the individual's sense of self. In extreme cases, this disturbance in the sense of self can lead to periods of dissociation. These disturbances have a pervasive negative effect on the individual's life. This is of the psychopathology of life. This

The psychiatrist said to me we all go through hard times in life. But we don't hurt ourselves. It happened in the past. "Stop acting like a little child. You're an adult. How can we ever trust you?" Attention-seeker

includes the ability to maintain relationships in work, home, and social settings. Common comorbid conditions are "Axis I" disorders such as substance abuse, depression and other mood disorders. Attempted suicide and completed suicide are possible outcomes. DSM-IV-TR criteria. A DSM diagnosis of BPD requires any five out of nine listed criteria to be present for a significant period of time. There are thus 256 different combinations. Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment. [Not including suicidal or self-harmful behavior as noted in Criterion 5]

- D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (e.g. difficulty falling or staying asleep, anger and hypervigilance)
- E. Duration of symptoms more than 1 month
- F. Significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (e.g. problems with work and relationships.)

I know, I say. Do I look like I'm having fun? Like I want to hate myself? And you make me feel so small and weak and guilty when you tell me I'm disordered. That there's a fundamental flaw in my personality.

I am trying so hard. Can't you see? I take your pills. I get A's. I study full-time I work 35 hrs a week to pay for therapy I work so hard I am so bone-weary. Exhausted why can't I just be seen as a human being who is tired. Coping. I am not disordered. I am human. I am strong.

HAVE

STRENGTH

BEYOND MY

MILDEST

DREAMS

My only shoes were the converse hitops ripped heel to toe, coated with layers of ice as I shovelled his private driveway beneath the swaying bare skeletons of Berkshire trees.
Shovelling for the house of a man who can say to my roommate,

"you fucking liar"

When she, shaking through her tears in group therapy, confessed to having been raped.

He responded "we have no reason to believe you. When have you ever been trustworthy? You have to earn that trust."

It was my first week in this 'therapeutic' boarding school.

I was so frozen. So sick to my stomach. I didn't say a word.
(I'm so sorry. I should've stood up for you. I didn't know how. But I believed you. I still do. You earned that trust by staying alive.)
I retreated into years more of silence.

Those social workers were fucking assholes.

Pandering with delicacy to parental aesthetics, they wove their way into the minds and wallets of parental desperation and tightened the bind no slack. Adults so quick to sing its praises, sounded to me like fingernails screeching their way down a chalkboard. Tough love sells well and we are signed away.

Really, wasn't this our last great chance at life?

As timing would have its luck with me, I was bequeathed into the school just as it was stammering into 'lockdown'. A phase of schooling where classes are cancelled, sleep is deprived to a five hour maximum, hours of mandatory labour enforced, meals are left only to basics, all forms of media banned, conversing is only to occur between approved individuals, and naturally there's no outside world contact. The rest is day long group 'therapy'. This way they could make our minds so tired, our stamina so fragmented and our positions so disempowered that they could break us down to our core. Break us down to confession. Break us down to conform.

A therapeutic cult.

So it's awkward.

You don't really know what to say.
Nobody teaches you how to react.
To two girls like us.

To survivors speaking up about the wrongs they've experienced in the world.
Everyone's caught off guard when survivors start to speak their minds.

When we start saying no to abuse.
Start saying no to violence.

Start saying no to silence.

So how do you respond?

It's so much easier when it's in the distanced abstract.

But this violence and pain surrounds all of us.

Don't ignore it.

We are the person sitting next to you on the metro, in class, at some party. We are your friends, your best friends. We are your daughters.

We are here, this is real, and we're not shutting up so that you can feel more comfortable.

Think about how difficult it is for you to say something then imagine how hard it is for us to finally stand up and speak but have everyone look the other way.

All it takes is three seconds for you to say "that takes some guts, girl. Good for you."

Just acknowledge this.

(And for those of you who have supported and acknowledged us. YOU ROCK!!!!)

HOW

DARE

YOU

BE

PROUD

OF

ME

NOW,

MOM

YOU

HAVE

NO

RIGHT

I said "no."

The \$50 tucked in his office draw was only enough to get me to New York City.

Or to Boston. "Your choice", he said. No arrangements for shelter, food, safety. It's life on the streets.

If I leave he can say, "Irrational, unstable, what was she thinking? She needs us."

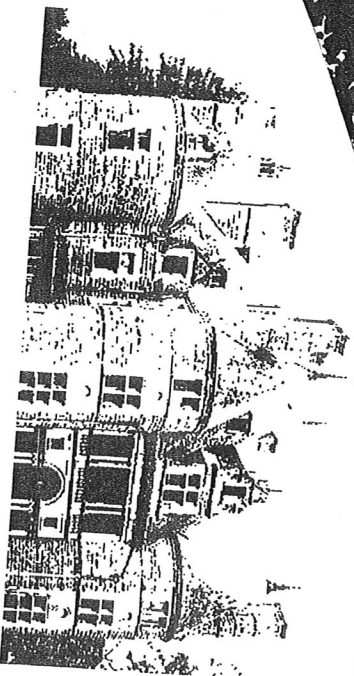
If I stay he can say "Secretly, she knows this is where she belongs. Otherwise why wouldn't she just leave?"

The kind of a 'voluntary institution'. Maybe I would've done it. the streets. But then my father opened his home, his respect, his trust to me when nobody else would have given it a thought.

(Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!)

The stone grey walls stand tall as the castle to their thrown. As I turned my back, only footsteps from the door, my social worker said to me:

"In three months, either you'll be back here or you'll be dead."
It's been five years.
And excuse me but fuck you I am still breathing.





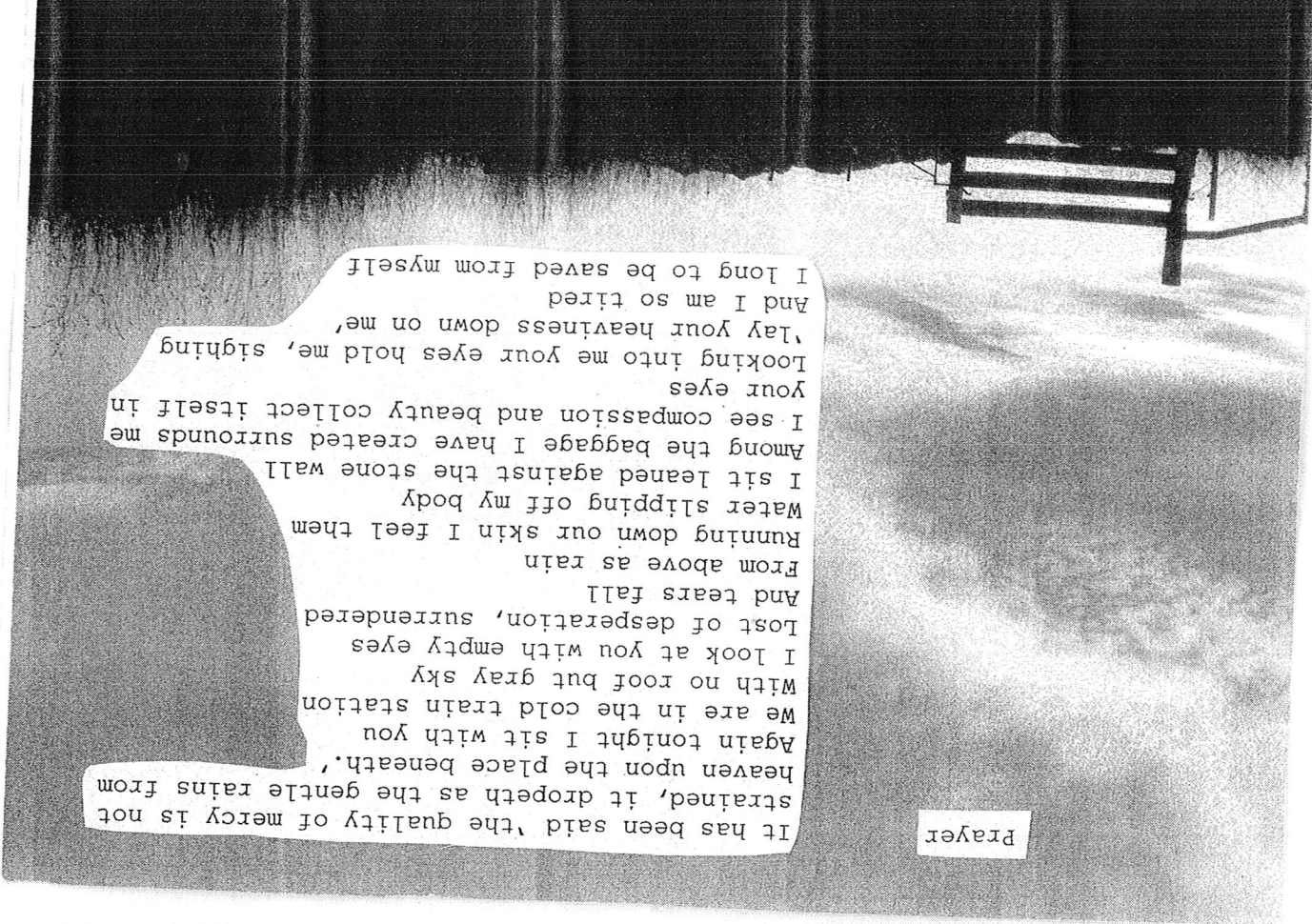
Mum

I wish it was as easy as letting you drift away
As easy as closing myself to you
Like a flower burnt by the frost
But I have always known, it's so much deeper than that.
Indescribable yet simple like the scent of earth
Our connection mother to child runs so deep and so natural
As ancient moss and strong trees and the migration of the
wild

I am reminded of it each time I look to the painting on my wall
You, the spirit-bear surrounding me, the wolf
Your silver spirit speaks to me long into my dreams past sleep
and stillness

I can never look away or fall from this
This realization both hurts and swells my heart, a bitter-sweet
ache.

We must walk into many lives together and find rich wisdom
Our beings connect where words, where hands, where great
waters cannot.



Prayer

It has been said 'the quality of mercy is not
strained, it droppeth as the gentle rains from
heaven upon the place beneath.'
Again tonight I sit with you
We are in the cold train station
With no roof but gray sky
I look at you with empty eyes
Lost of desperation, surrendered
And tears fall
From above as rain
Running down our skin I feel them
Water slipping off my body
I sit leaned against the stone wall
Among the baggage I have created surrounds me
I see compassion and beauty collect itself in
your eyes
Looking into me your eyes hold me, sighing
'Lay your heaviness down on me'
And I am so tired
I long to be saved from myself

When was the last time you thought to ask a straight survivor if their heterosexuality was the result of same sex aversion after childhood sexual abuse?

Stop treating my sexuality like it's some sort of psychiatric disturbance, a phase, an image, or an attempt for your attention.

It is not about hating men. It's not about loving women. It's about loving beautiful people.

I couldn't have been more blessed for the people in my life who I've been able to share my joy, my pain, my laughter, and my love with.

QUEER...

What's it to you what my lovers genitals look like anyway?

\$20 and I am yours

We can be pranksters, giggling our way around your house
Hiding in nooks, under beds, waiting for your parents to flip out
Gossiping about celebrities, classmates, and crushes
Shove tissues down our knickers and training bras

I guess somewhere along the line I must've said no

Otherwise I would've been free

But as it stands all I took was enough for the latest cd

I didn't really mind much. I don't remember how it felt

Something new, I guess

\$20 and I am on key

All I am is your daddy's money and I won't disagree

I will play the boy or the girl

Depending on your mood this weekend

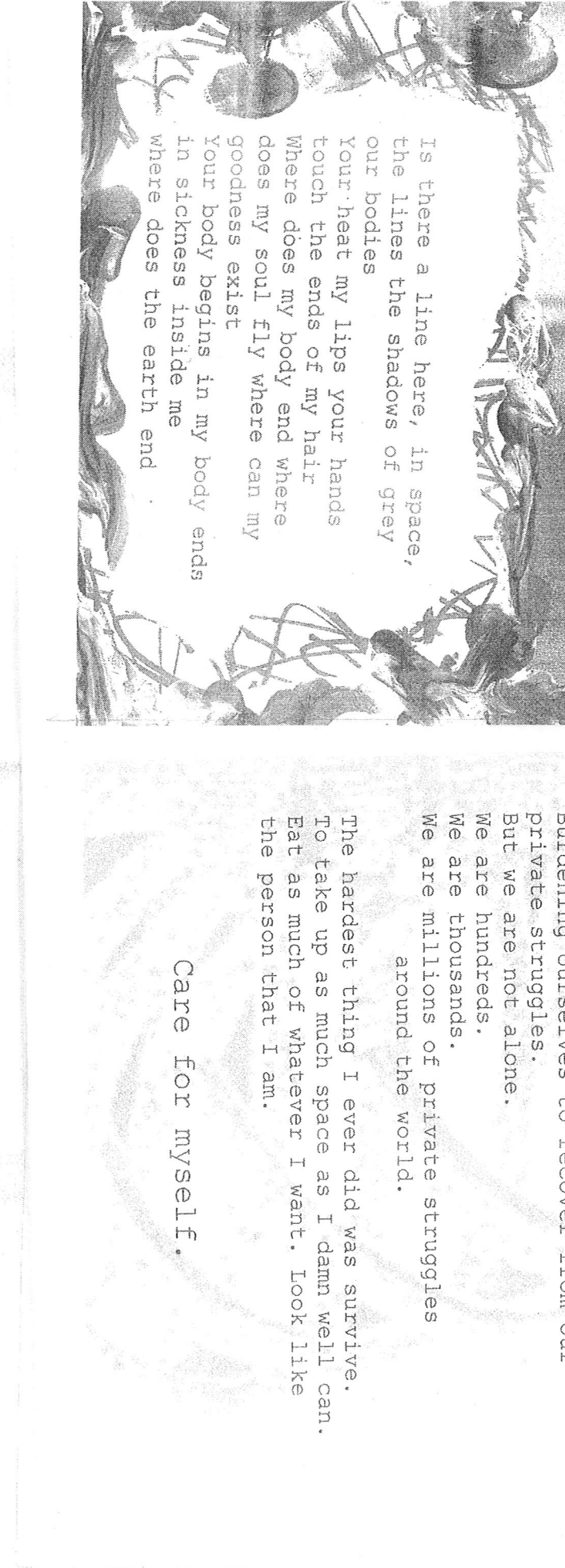
Just play the song I like on your boombox

Give me my money

And tell me what position to take

\$20 is all this body is worth to you

All I am worth to me.



You asked me
You asked me how does it feel
Do not know where my body ends
and his begins

Is there a line here, in space,
the lines the shadows of grey
our bodies
Your heat my lips your hands
touch the ends of my hair
Where does my body end where
does my soul fly where can my
goodness exist
Your body begins in my body ends
in sickness inside me
where does the earth end

I needed to be punished.
For my selfishness.
For my burdening presence.
For my weaknesses.

Only enough food so that they didn't notice.
Only enough truth so that they didn't
intervene.

They always try to tell girls what to do.
How we should behave. How we should react.
They tell us we're *disordered*. We are women
standing out of line.

We are silenced again and again and again.
Instead of taking it out on our perpetrators
or the system which creates and protects
them, we're trained to internalize that
rage.

Devaluing ourselves to
rationalize the injustice.

Burdening ourselves to recover from our
private struggles.

But we are not alone.

We are hundreds.

We are thousands.

We are millions of private struggles
around the world.

The hardest thing I ever did was survive.
To take up as much space as I damn well can.
Eat as much of whatever I want. Look like
the person that I am.

Care for myself.

A child would rather believe s/he is

dirty

bad

crazy


sick

than believe s/he is a good person

and have to live with the fact

that her protectors betrayed her.

It's a pale sacrifice



I am beyond the bounds of statistics
Between the text of diagnoses
I am above the webs of hush-hush
Crushing the pessimism of pity
What he didn't take society
Packed up and ran away with
But for every day I am alive
I am outpacing their injustice
Every breath is defiance
Every word is an uprising
Every time I open my eyes is power
Every moment I learn to love myself a little more
Is Revolution.

"you know, you can't be a
feminist and be anorexic"

She said to me.

Me- blanketed beneath the layers and layers
of baggy clothes. looking up at her with
sullen eyes always half resting in the
cradles of my protruding bone structure.

My body slumped against the faded tile
walls of our high school hallway.
Exhausted.

This wasn't some attempt to look more like
their magazines. More like their superwoman.
Your plus size models can't fix this. So
don't even try to spin that one on me.
No feminism is going to dictate to me the
confines of my pain, my healing. That is
mine to hold. You can't take it from me.

Starving was my self-worth. I didn't deserve
food. I wasn't good enough for it.

Every calorie a testimony to my weakness.
My selfishness.

I was just so FAT that I was in
everybody's way.

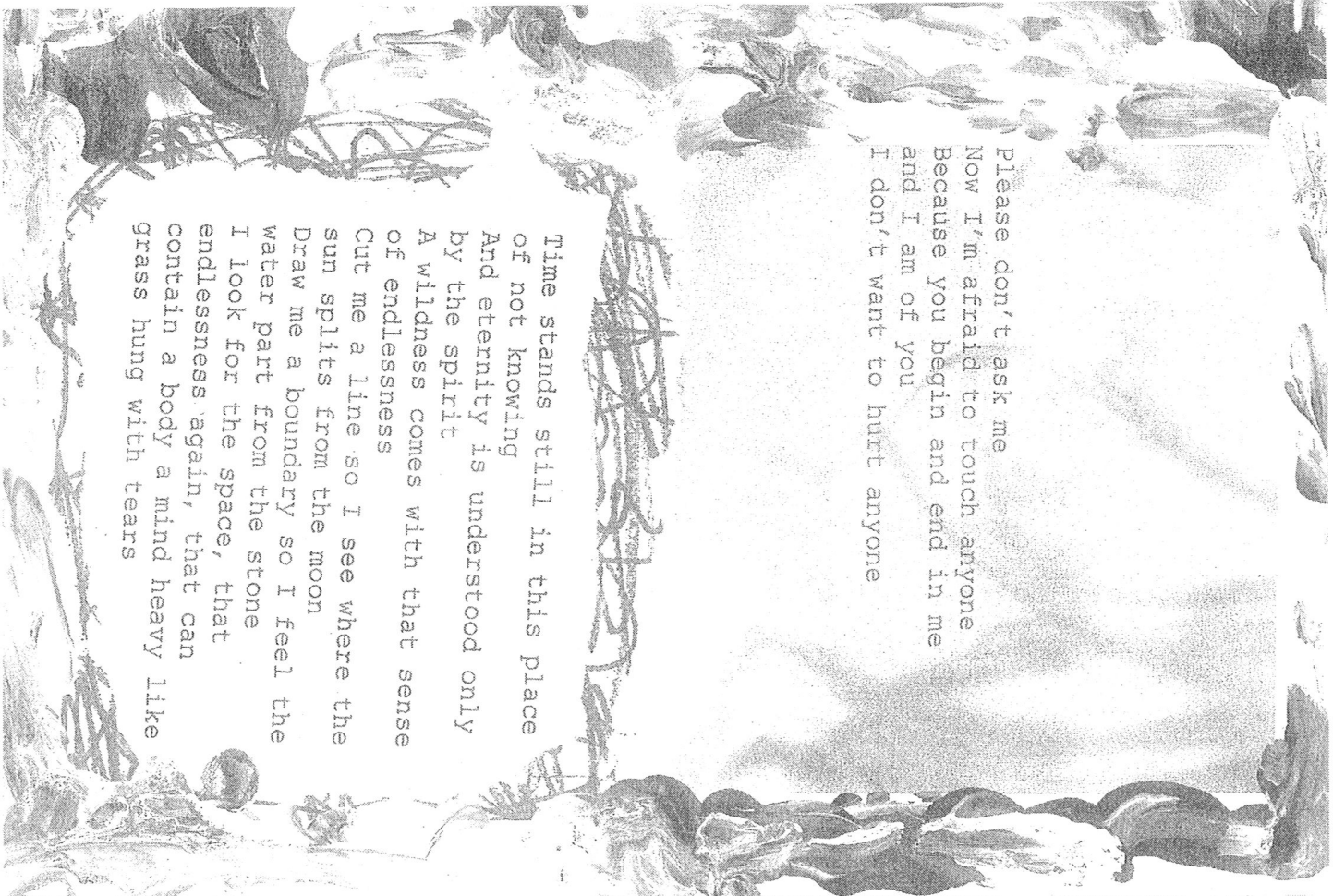
All the time.

My presence was selfish.

I was manipulated into hating my body. Not
trusting my body. The way it looked, the way
it felt, the way others looked at it, the
way others felt it.

I was disgusting. Dirty. Worthless.

Starve it out of me. Purge it out of me.
Every pound I weighed was one less
pound I had control over.

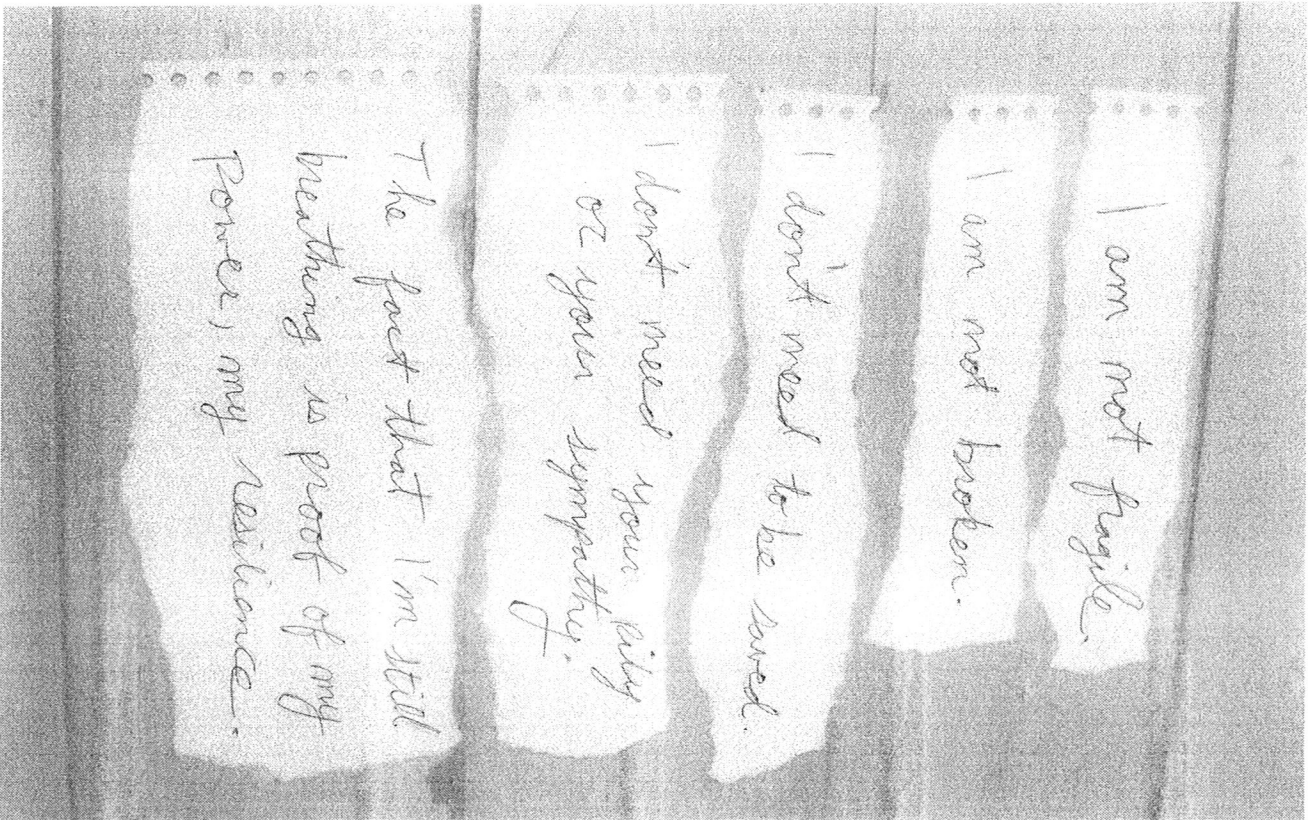


Please don't ask me
Now I'm afraid to touch anyone
Because you begin and end in me
and I am of you
I don't want to hurt anyone

Time stands still in this place
of not knowing
And eternity is understood only
by the spirit
A wildness comes with that sense
of endlessness
Cut me a line so I see where the
sun splits from the moon
Draw me a boundary so I feel the
water part from the stone
I look for the space, that
endlessness again, that can
contain a body a mind heavy like
grass hung with tears

Then the next morning
I will walk down his stairs
He'll be making us all pancakes
And, with a smile,
Give me the ones with extra chocolate chips

Everything is totally normal.



All they ever noticed was my report card. So preoccupied with forcing me to achieve. Adament that I could be surmised on an A to F continuum.

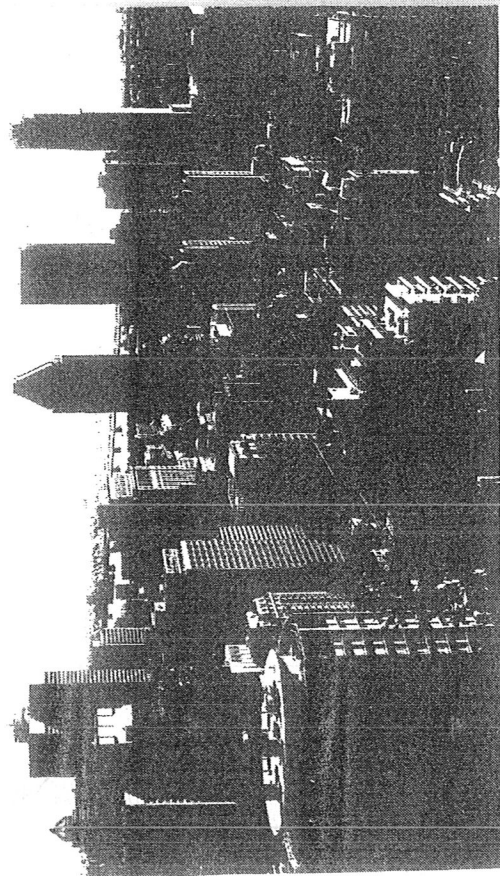
As far as I was concerned they could take their self-congratulatory educational system and jerk off to a climax of their own biodegradable fucking paper degrees.

What was so relevant about school when I was a 13 year old professional cynic armed with the audacity to destroy myself?

Trying to drag my sorry ass along a conveyor belt towards their vision of success. But every time it was just like pushing me against a brick wall and the harder they tried, the tougher their punishments, the higher the bricks would climb.

Maybe next time if everyone hadn't been so busy squeezing me into the cookie cutter of "but you have so much potential," somebody would've seen through to my pain. Maybe instead of telling me I was throwing my whole future away, somebody could've just leaned over and given me a hug.

Instead of all the academia I think I could've done with some love.



This time I'm going
to take the pain

NO

NO

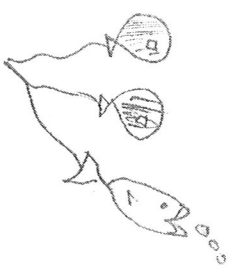
NO

and not
make instead

Looking up at
the sky

HAPPY

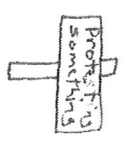
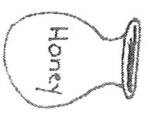
Copings



Tea and honey
waded hikes and
city strolls



Strolling
Cats



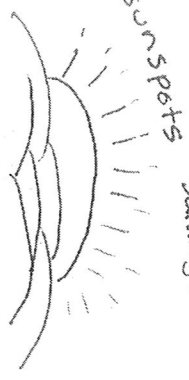
Community
action



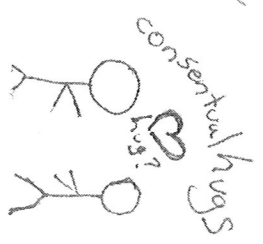
listens to
the rain



sailing and
sea

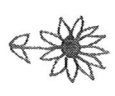


laying in
sunspots

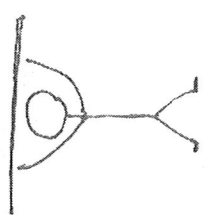


consensual
hugs?

gardening

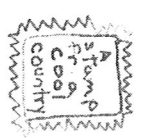


yoga



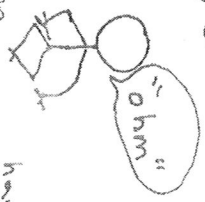
music

Travel



hands stands in strange places

Meditation



Drained.

Gone.

Just give me a bottle.

A joint. A pill. A line. A razorblade.
Whatever.

Anything to numb this.

Squeeze the aching pain buried here in my chest
out,
out,

out.

Numb me.

Make my body leave this space.

Another hit.

Another. Another. Again.
Please!

A little more. Just a little bit more.

A little more and it will be ok (more. again. now.
Please.)

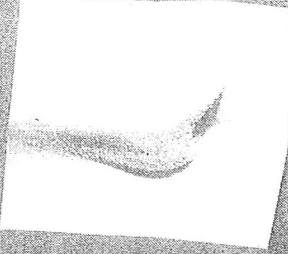
Just make the hurting stop.

escape.

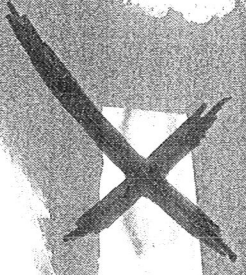
Whenever I talk about it
It still feels like
Dorahon he will know

...
...

He will
find out



Come
get me



Rape
me

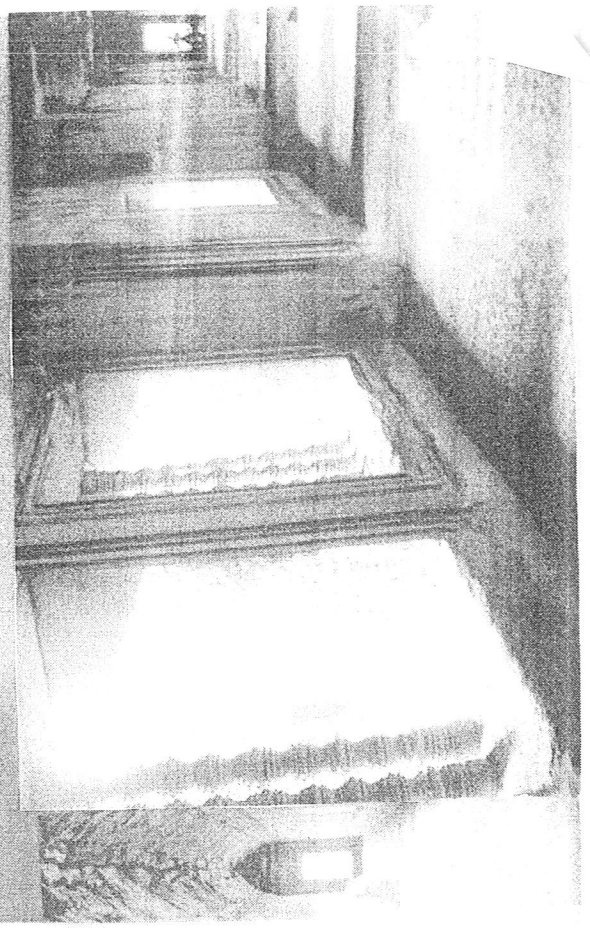
Kill
me

And would be
powerless to stop him

because I'd left my pajamas in a messy pile on the
bathroom floor before I had a shower and went away, I
had been there and then I was gone. All these little
things I'd touched here on the earth were attached to her
life with me, her experience of me. It's funny somehow
that this love and this sadness was not of the earth, non-
physical, something understood only by the spirit yet
could only be captured and held by me staying in this
physical body, and my mother would only know it if I
was on earth here with her.

This scene so often replays in my mind. I can't think
about it without feeling a deep sense of sadness I will
always carry with me. I always think about all of the
people who have taken their own lives or who weren't
ready to die and I wonder whose faces they saw when
they felt the sadness. When they ached for a little more
time.

I had this dream where I was flying through this Arabian
styled stone building. Vaulted ceilings, dark, cool stone
with long slits carved in the stone that looked outside.
Like if you've ever biked past the railroad bridge that
overlooks the sunlit river. The outside glittered through
but I could not really see anything because of the
blinding contrast. I think it was kind of like that. I was
flying so fast inside the pain that I couldn't make out any
forms out there where there was light.



I remember looking for an open expanse of untouched snow. There was a blizzard that night, one of the nights I thought I should die. I just wanted to be able to only see the quiet whiteness, to fill me like in my dream where I'm riding bareback on a white horse through fields and fields of soundless white snow. I searched for this world with no sound. I remember laying down and thinking I needed to sleep. Except the thing was that the only thing I could see after laying there awhile was my mother's face, my mother, like the raven, who leaves behind silver footprints, my mother of silver footprints and chunks of turquoise jewels and my little cat at home with her beautiful black markings and softness and how my love for them overflowed in my chest with bitter-sweetness. It was sort of like my mother's life flashed before me instead of my own like. Like her humanness and life and experience of me came clear. The care she put into me from before I was even born, there was a love that reached me. The ways she'd brush my baby hair with a little soft-bristled baby brush that she still keeps, the stained glass unicorn I liked to stand and look at from my crib, the poster of a waterfall she put on my ceiling so that I'd have something beautiful to look at from my bed. Her letting me use all the toilet paper to make roads for my cars; how she'd bring me along anywhere because she said she liked me around way more than her friends, the way she'd stop the car on the highway so I could run through the wheat fields and the cornfields on our way into the country. My mother once showed me a photograph of a pencil mural drawing she did on the bedroom wall of one of her old apartments when she was in her early twenties. It was a drawing of a girl who looked just like me. Like she loved me before I even existed.

I kept thinking of all this. And of time. All I wanted was time. I hadn't spent enough time with them, and that hurt like cold sea-water through my chest. My life felt so fleeting, a match being struck. I remember this time on the phone when my mother said she missed me



Who gave you the right
Emerge out of the woodworks
Like a warning sign- never out of sight
How dare you have the safety
To ever be reminded of me
When you took all that I am
Spoiled me down to your commodity
But you don't own me anymore
The strings are unwinding, oh puppeteer
My feet firm to the ground
I am rooted in this earth
I am bursting with the light of life
That's been shining since my birth
So come- fight me, fuck me, kill me
Do what you like
You are too late
I have already grabbed the mike
I may not have muscle but I have art
Words that violence cannot render undone
This way when I have spoken up
I will have won

SO

THAT

THE

MANS INSTUTIONS

WHITE

CAN

CALL

MY

FREE

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

Major Depression

Anorexia Nervosa

(with Bulimic Features)

Psychosis- Not Otherwise Specified

Dysthymia / Chronic Depression

Alcohol Dependency

Polysubstance Abuse

COPING

CRAZY

SAFE TEST

MY UNHARMED BODY
MY CHILDHOOD

HOPE

MY MEMORIES

HEALTHY

BELIEVING I'M WORTHY +

KNOWING I'M BEAUTIFUL

IT WILL BE OK A TIME WITH NO PAIN

ALIVE WITH NO SECRETS OF

LOVE FOR MYSELF SHAME

I WANT IT

BACK!