

Full Moon, Full Circle

Senior Thesis Fall 2019

Halley Sun Stubis

Artist Statement

Halley Sun Stubis is a storyteller. She mainly shares her narratives through handmade books, embroidery, and paintings, and enjoys focusing on intimate, hidden tales that might normally go unheard. Halley loves feminism, psychology, and family history, and works to weave all three into her artistic practice. She explores the disturbing nonchalance of everyday sexism, mental illness in the heavily female world of classical ballet, and transgenerational trauma through maternal family lines. She has been making art since she was young, and has been heavily influenced by her artist grandfather, ballet dancer grandmother, and two literature and music-loving parents; one could say that art is in her genes! She was a classically trained ballet dancer for 12 years before turning to the world of visual arts at the SMFA at Tufts, which has become a second home to her.



A photograph of the artist by Margot Mitchell-Nockowitz

Artist Statement Cont.

By making artwork about people's lives and inner narratives, she hopes to inspire people to be more empathetic in their day-to-day lives and to seek out the beautifully complex stories behind each person they encounter. At the core of Halley's artistic practice lies her love of people. Their narratives have a huge influence on the way she lives her life, and she aims to share those perspective-changing stories with as many people as possible.



The artist and her work

Project Statement

Halley's thesis project, *Full Moon, Full Circle*, explores her relationship with her mother, as well as transgenerational trauma brought on by violence against women in everyday life. *Full Moon, Full Circle* consists of an embroidered cloth book, displayed atop a pedestal draped with cloth, and an acrylic portrait of mother and daughter.



Detail shots of the installed work by Beca Piascik

Part One: The Painting



Full Moon, Full Circle, 2019, Acrylic on Canvas.

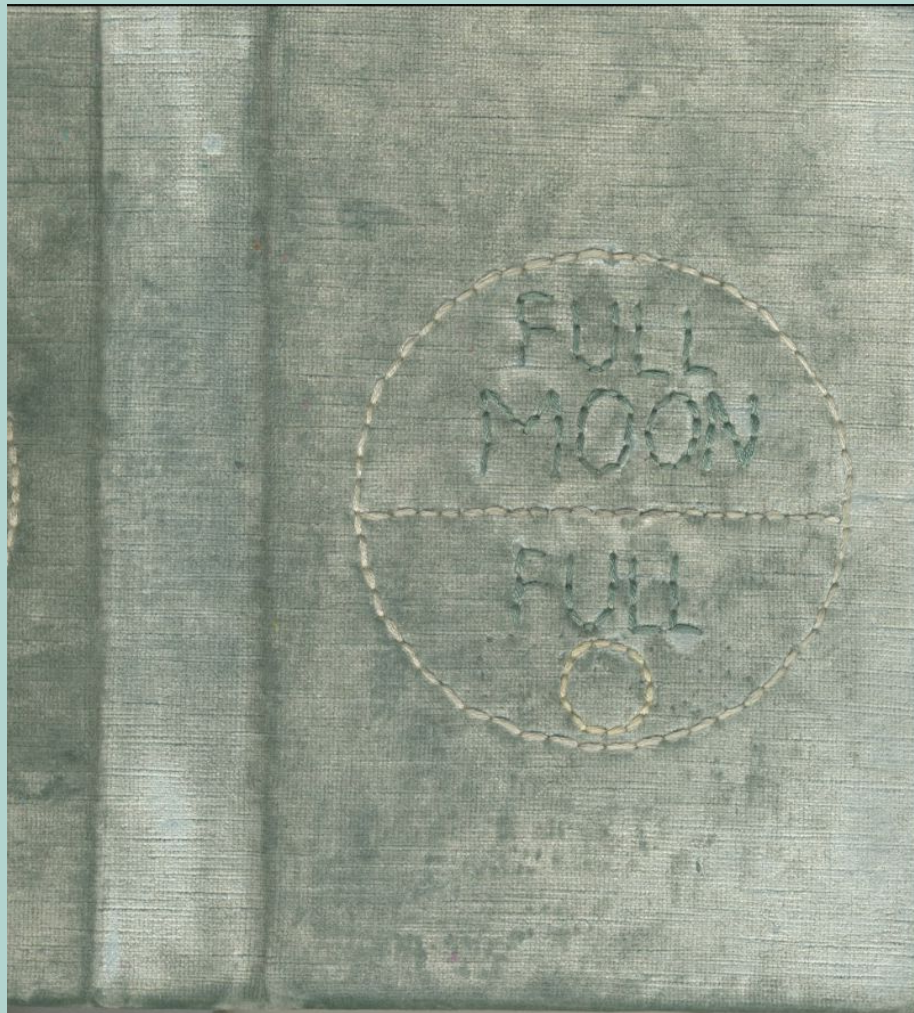
Halley's painting displays a double portrait of herself and her mother, their backs turned to the audience and towards a full moon.

Multiple recurring symbols are used throughout *Full Moon, Full Circle*, including the moon, a pearl necklace, and a white picket fence. These symbols, both personal and universal, suggest themes of traditional femininity, solemnity, containment, and solidarity among women. Standing strong and shoulder to shoulder, mother and daughter contemplate the future of women's experiences, and examine the dualities of Asian American women's lives.

Full Moon, Full Circle is a hand-embroidered cloth book consisting of sixteen teal pages. Each page tells the dual narratives of mother and daughter, exploring the topic of gendered assault and harassment through personal thoughts and stories. The text within this book was taken directly from a conversation between the artist and her mother, the voices of both women entwined within the pages.



An in-progress shot of the embroidered cover



Detail shot of front cover

MY STORYTELLER
MOTHER LIVED
THROUGH THE CULTURAL
REVOLUTION IN CHINA,
LATER MOVING TO
AMERICA WITH
HOPE FOR A BETTER
FUTURE -
BOTH FOR HERSELF
AND HER
FUTURE
CHILDREN.

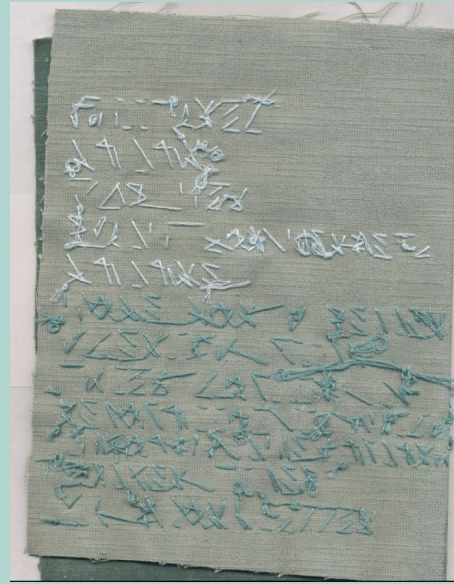
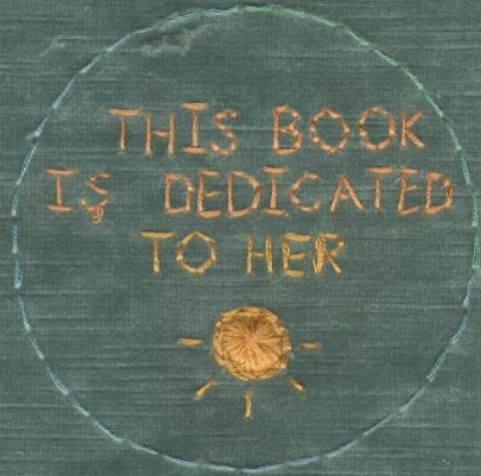


Image of the embroidery
back

*"My
storyteller
mother lived
through the
cultural
revolution in
China, later
moving to
America with
hope for a
better future-
both for
herself and
her future
children."*

R
CULTURAL
CHINA,
TO
LETTER
SELF.

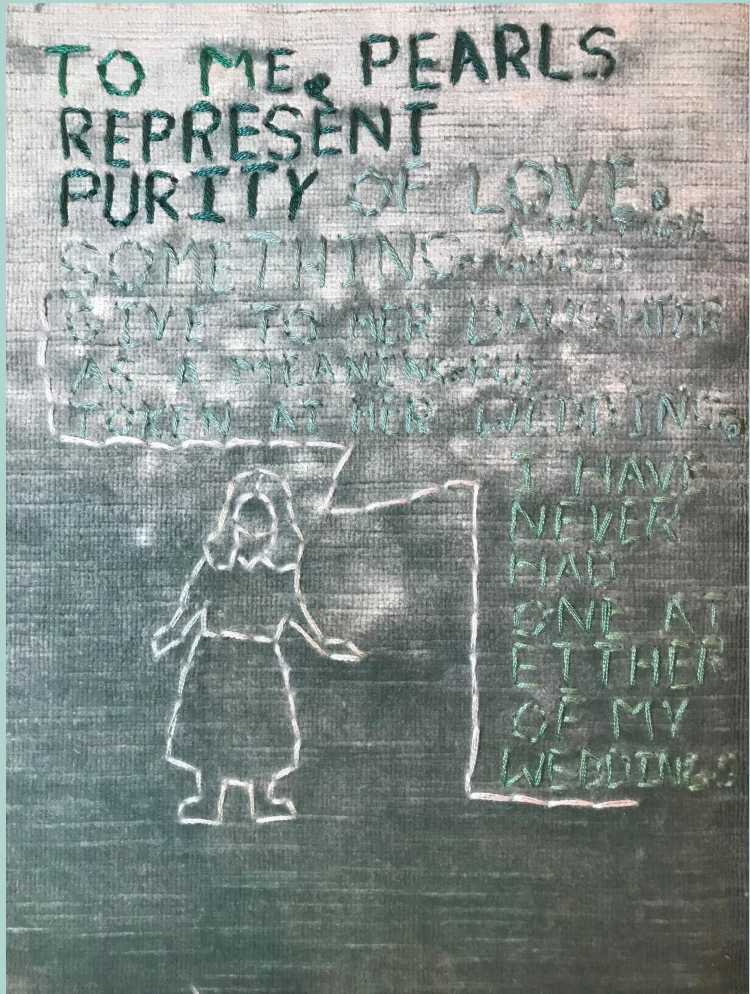
THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED
TO HER

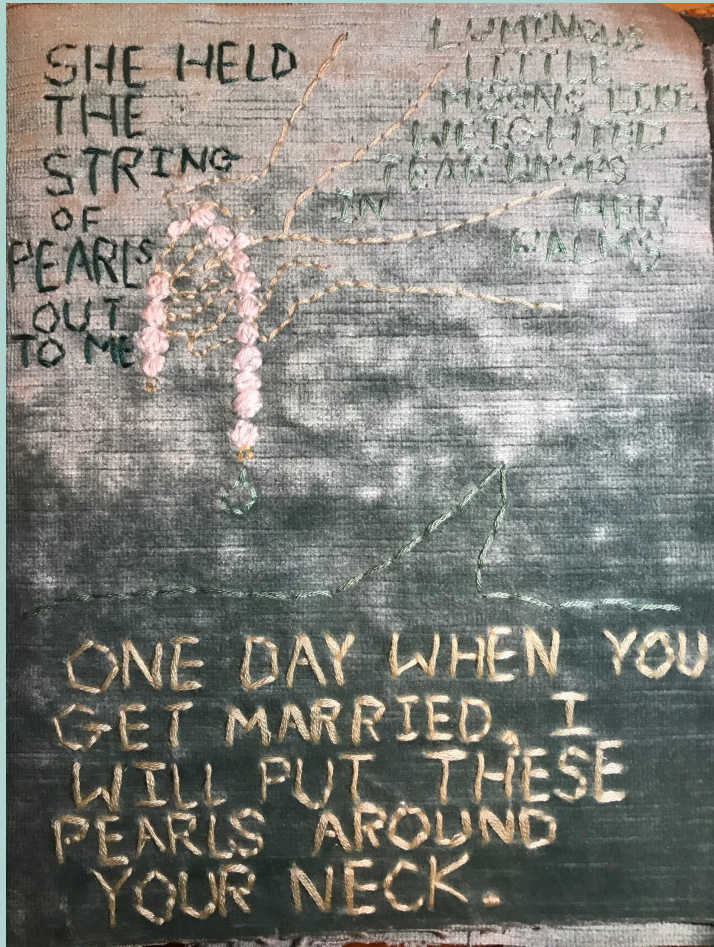


THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED
TO HER

"To me, pearls represent purity of love.

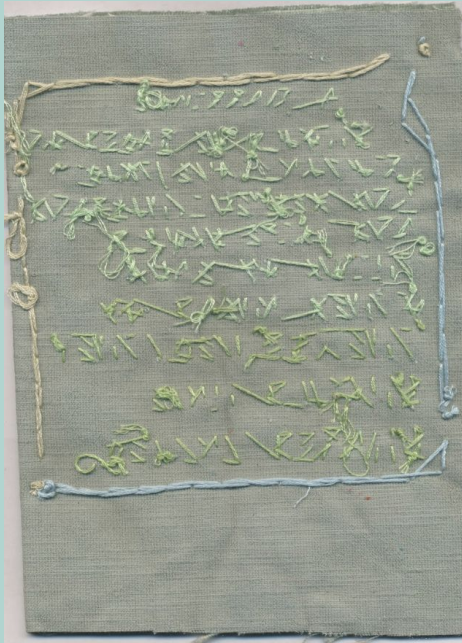
Something a mother would give to her daughter as a meaningful token at her wedding. I have never had one at either of my weddings."



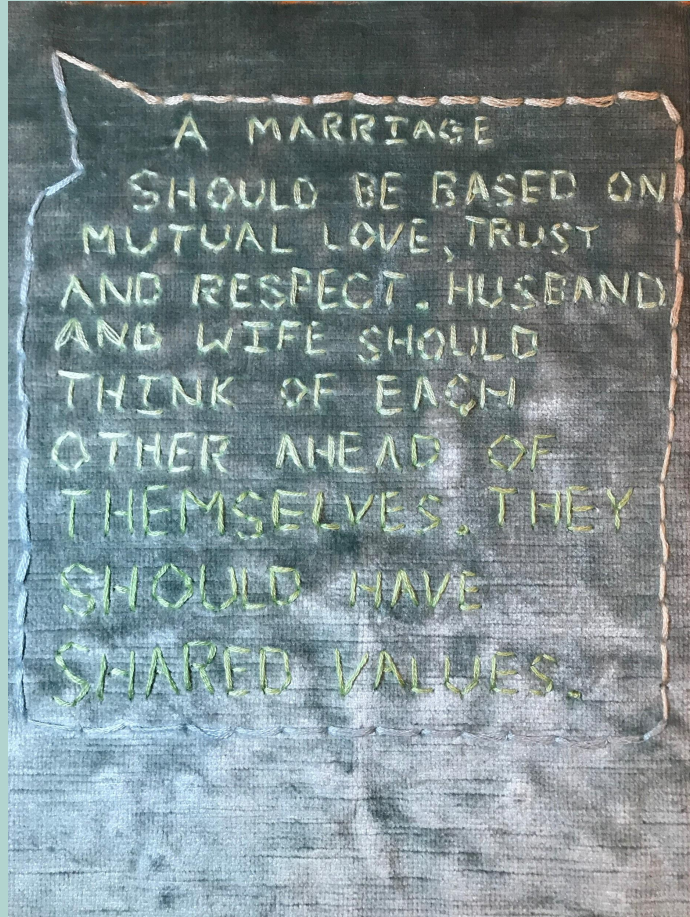


"She held the string of pearls out to me, luminous little moons like weighted teardrops in her palms..."

"One day when you get married, I will put these pearls around your neck"

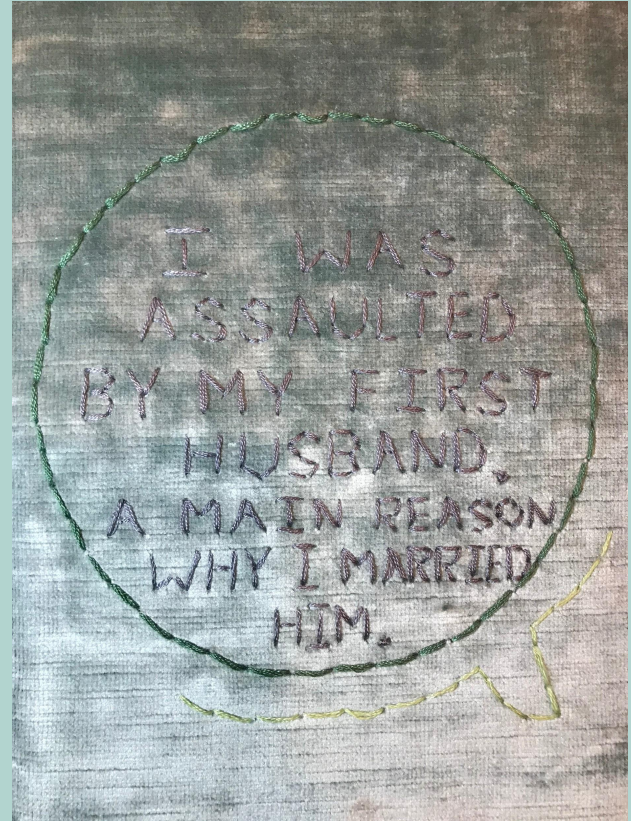
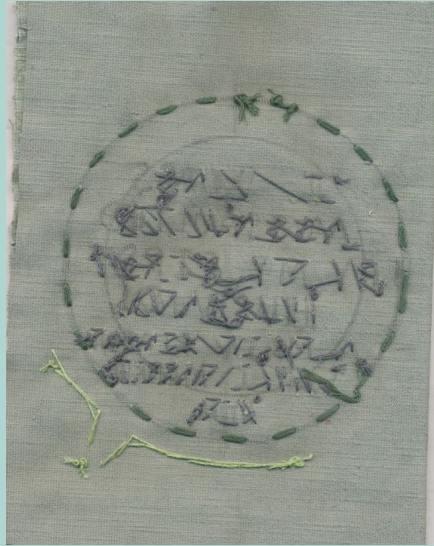


"A marriage should be based on mutual love, trust, and respect."



"Husband and wife should think of each other ahead of themselves. They should have shared values."

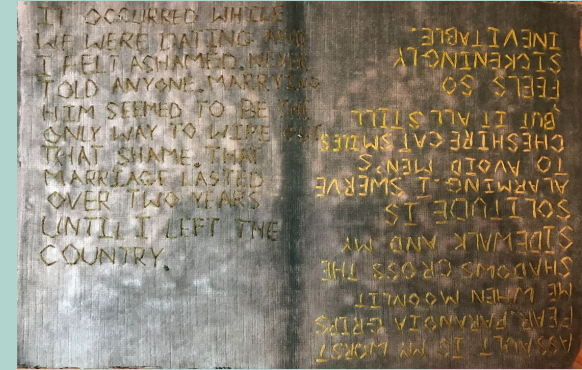
"I was assaulted by my first husband. A main reason why I married him."



"It occurred while we were dating and I felt ashamed. Never told anyone. Marrying him seemed to be the only way to wipe out that shame. That marriage lasted over two years until I left the country."



Marrying him seemed to be the only way to wipe out that shame.

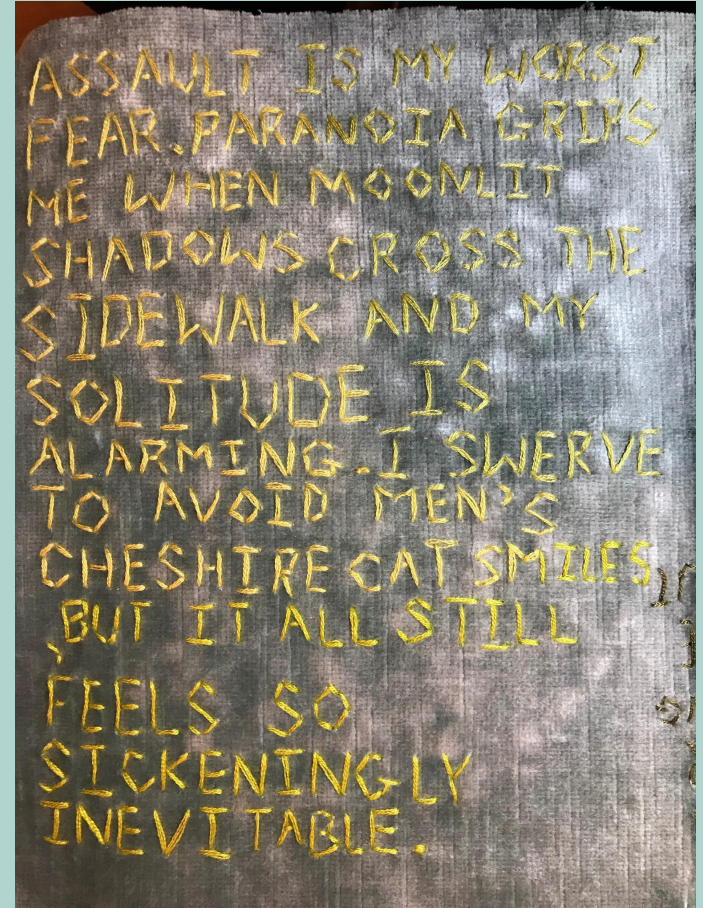


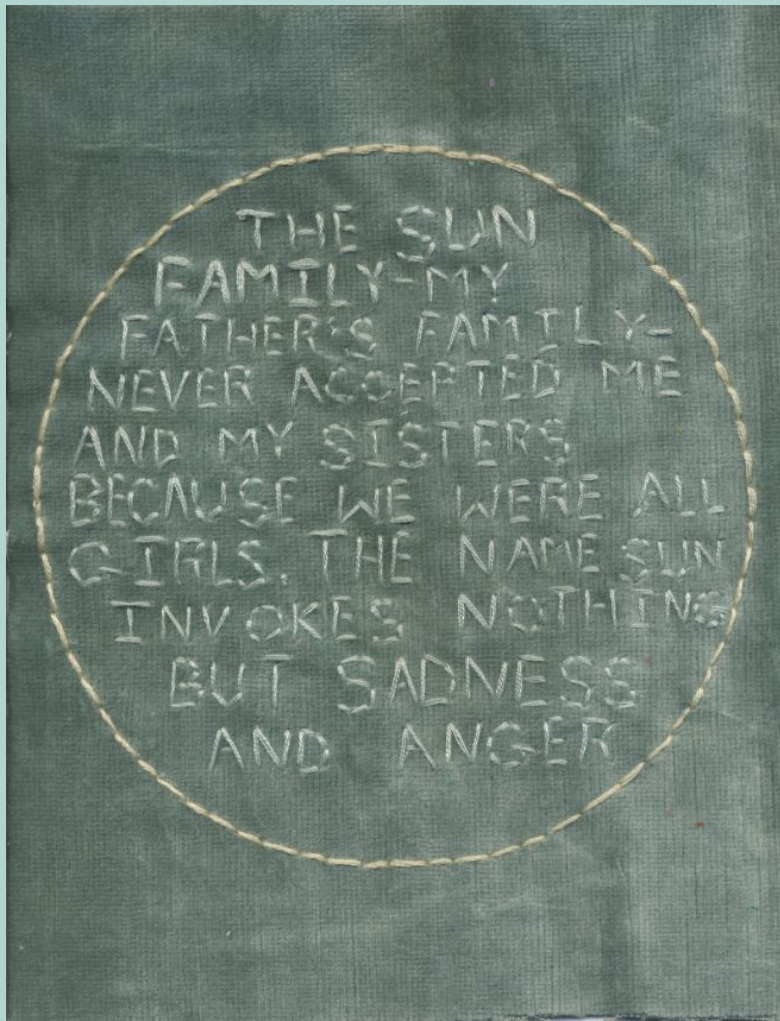
That marriage lasted over two years until I left the country."

*"Assault is my worst fear.
Paranoia grips me when
moonlit shadows cross the
sidewalk and my solitude is
alarming.*

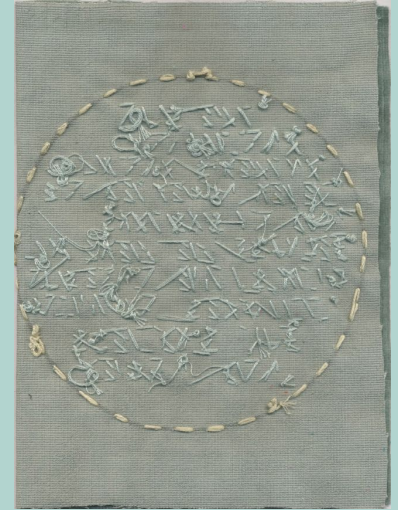


*I swerve to avoid
men's Cheshire
Cat smiles but it
all still feels so
sickeningly
inevitable."*

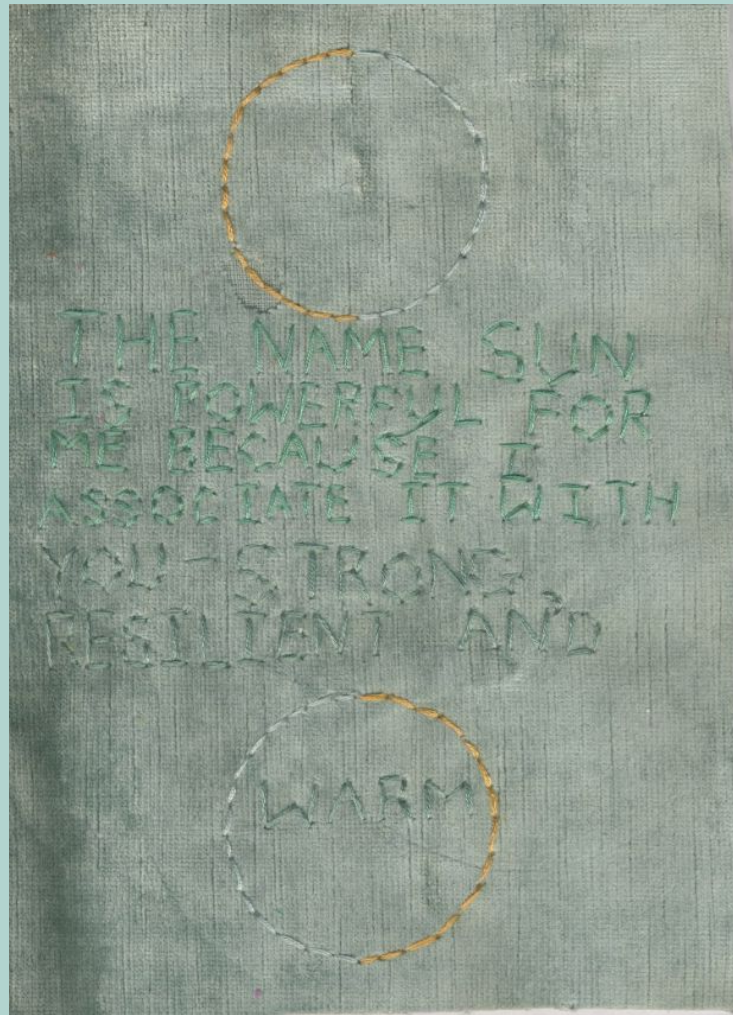
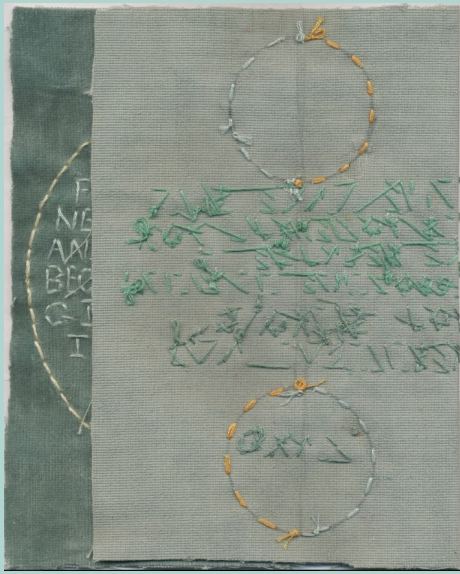




*"The Sun family-
my father's
family- never
accepted me and
my sisters
because we were
all girls."*

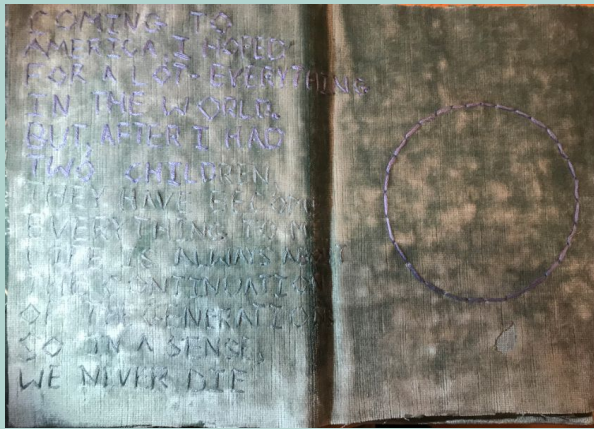


*"The name Sun invokes
nothing but sadness and
anger."*



*"The name Sun
is powerful for
me because I
associate it with
you-*

*Strong,
resilient,
and warm"*

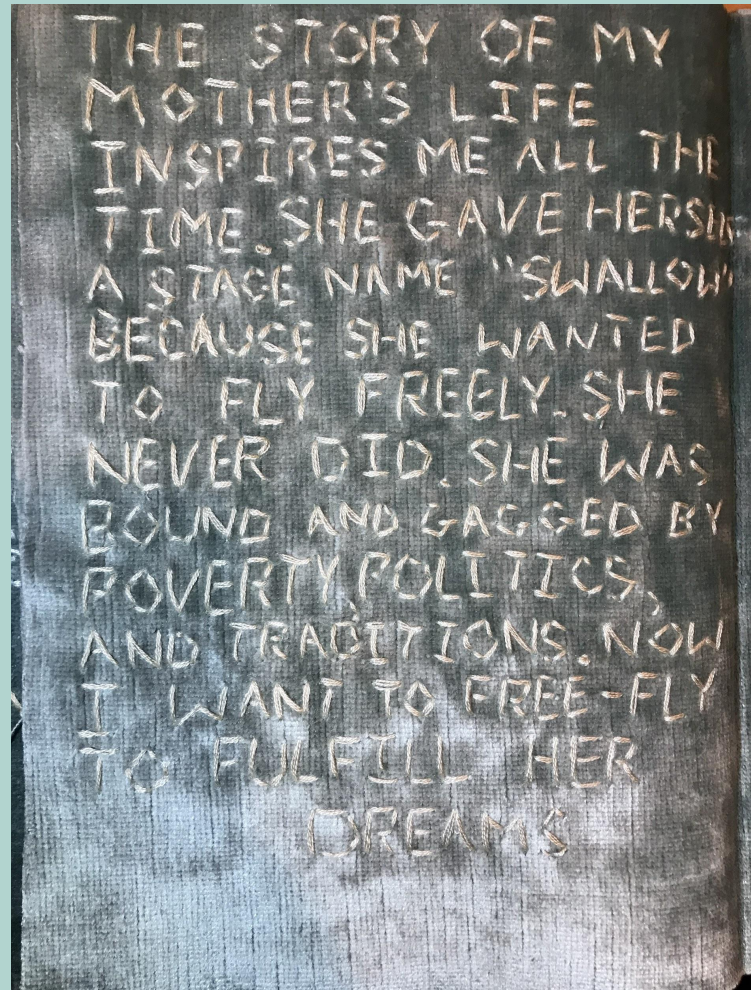


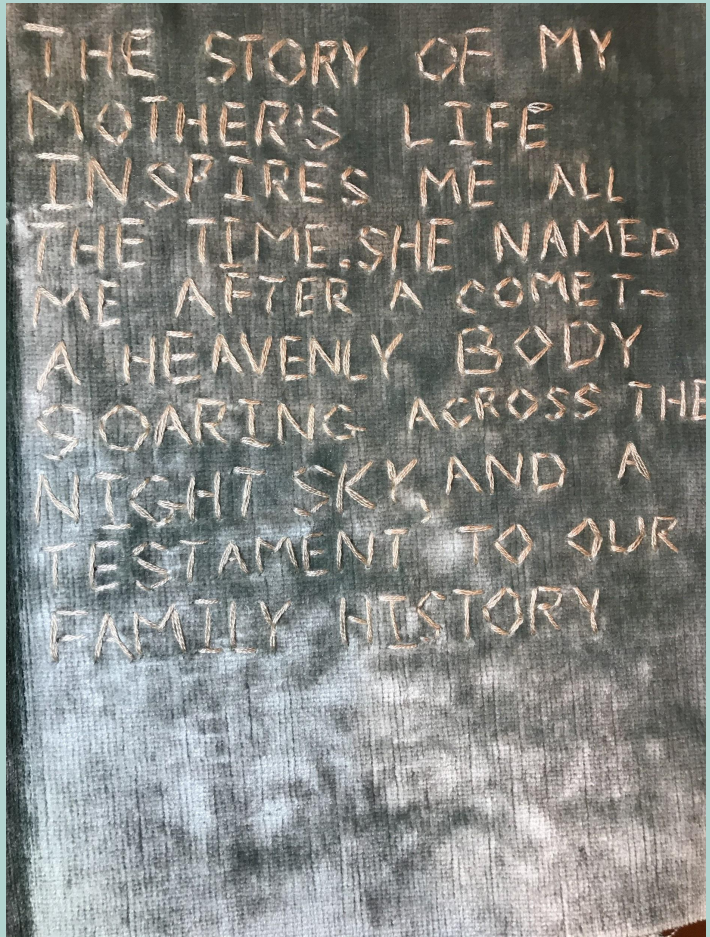
"Coming to America, I hoped for a lot- everything in the world. But, after I had two children, they have become everything to me. Life is always about the continuation of the generations, so in a sense, we never die."

THE STORY OF MY
MOTHER'S LIFE
INSPIRES ME ALL THE
TIME. SHE GAVE HERSELF
A STAGE NAME "SWALLOW"
BECAUSE SHE WANTED
TO FLY FREELY. SHE
NEVER DID. SHE WAS
BOUND AND GAGGED BY
POVERTY, POLITICS,
AND TRADITIONS. NOW
I WANT TO FREE-FLY
TO FULFILL HER
DREAMS

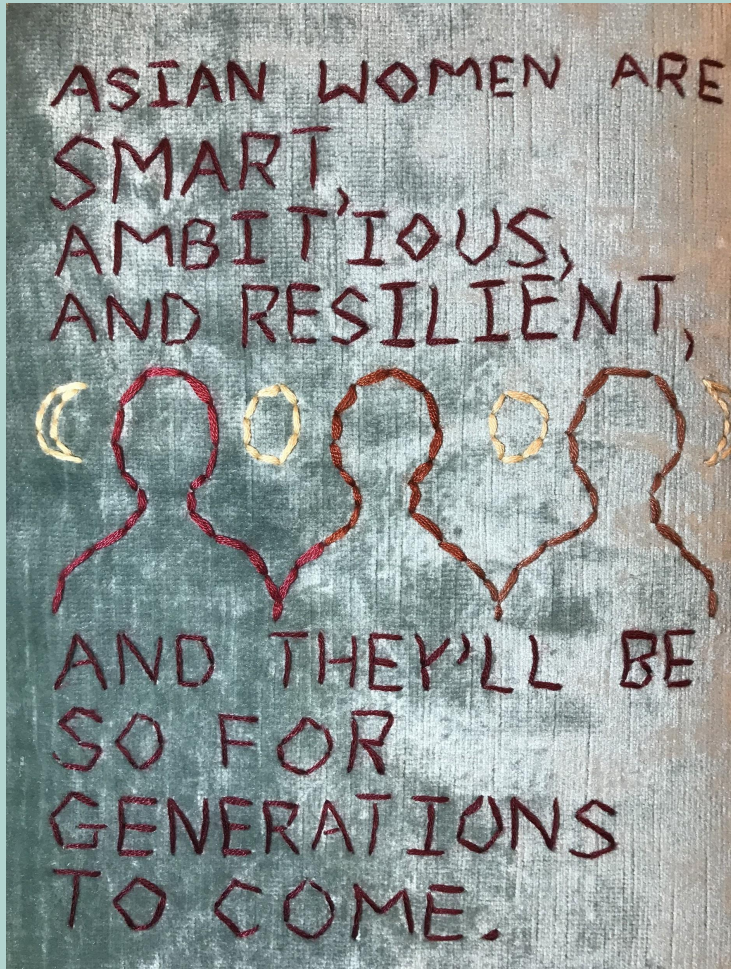
THE STORY OF MY
MOTHER'S LIFE
INSPIRES ME ALL
THE TIME. SHE NAMED
ME AFTER A COMET-
A HEAVENLY BODY
SOARING ACROSS THE
NIGHT SKY, AND A
TESTAMENT TO OUR
FAMILY HISTORY

*"The story of my mother's life
inspires me all the time. She
gave herself a stage name
"Swallow" because she wanted
to fly freely. She never did.
She was bound and gagged by
poverty, politics, and
traditions. Now I want to
free-fly to fulfill her dreams."*

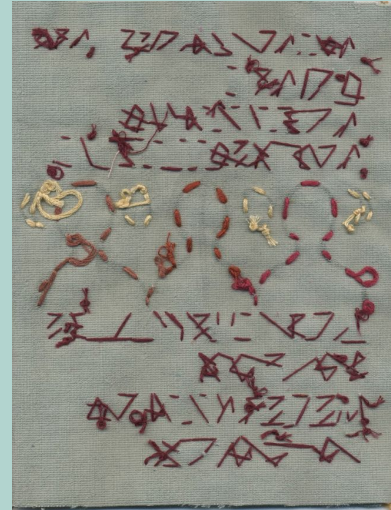




"The story of my mother's life inspires me all the time. She named me after a comet- a heavenly body soaring across the night sky, and a testament to our family history."



"Asian women are smart, ambitious, and resilient,



And they'll be so for generations to come."

*"Fly like a
swallow*



*And
be
brave!"*

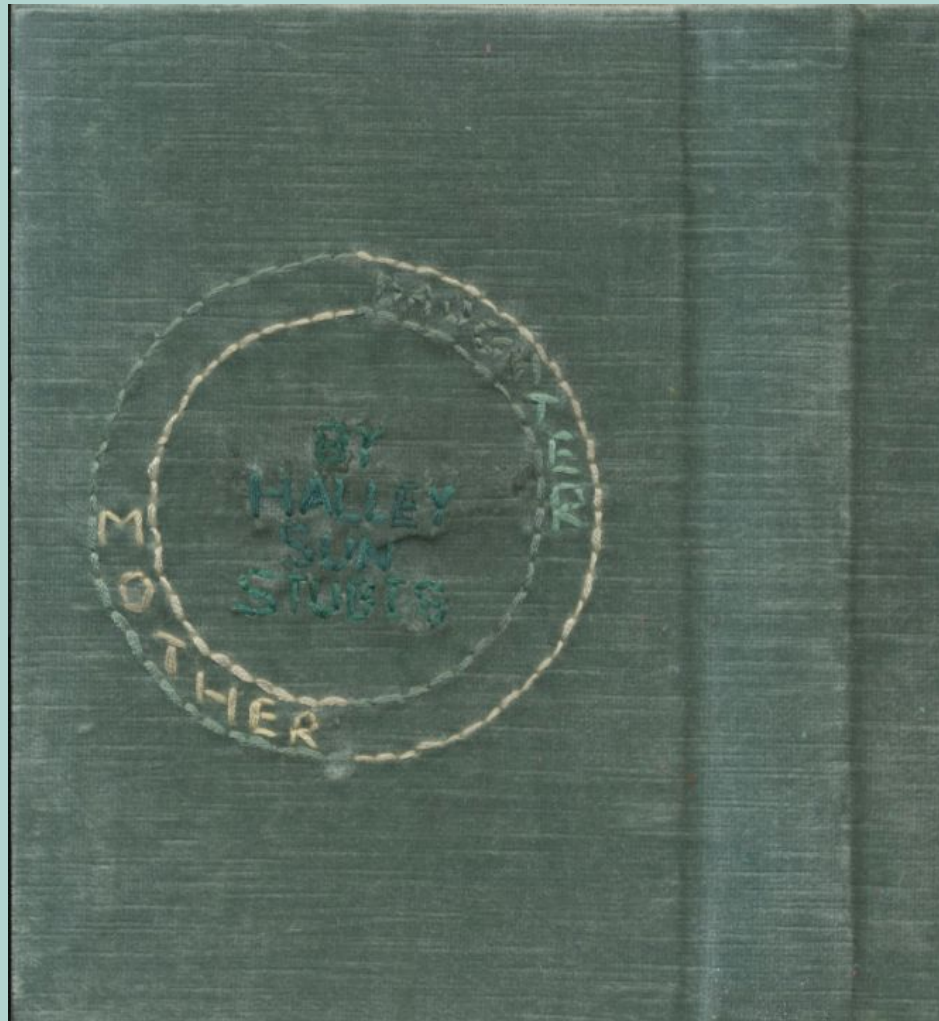


Image of back cover

COVID-19 amendment:

Due to the worldwide pandemic and the subsequent closing of the SMFA at Tufts, the project that was originally going to be documented here was unfortunately not able to be completed.

Instead, the artist has chosen to document *Full Moon, Full Circle*, her Fall 2019 Senior Thesis work, as her primary Thesis project. *Full Moon, Full Circle* was on view in SMFA's Mission Hill gallery from October to November of 2019 in the Senior Thesis show *From Ethos To Ether*. For information on Halley Stubis' more recent thesis work, please see her second document in the TDL, titled *The Sun, The Sky, and The Ocean*.