

voices  
2021

# anger

an asian american  
literary & art magazine



# What makes you angry?

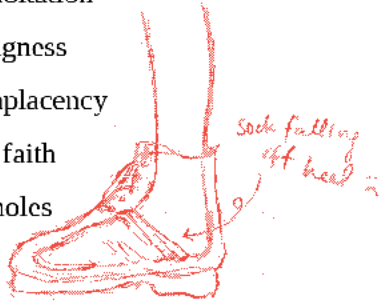
exploitation

smugness

complacency

bad faith

potholes



the western gender binary



when what i love is boxed in



When I'm made to feel small

Feeling unseen. Being unheard.

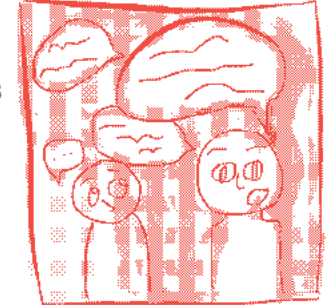


white people / cis men taking up way too much verbal and emotional space

Anti Vaxxers and Flat Earthers



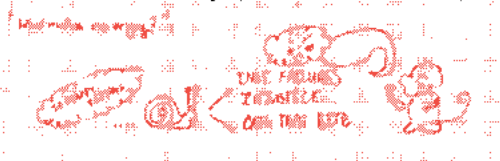
the scars on my 爸爸's hands from decades of oil splatters and burns from working in restaurant kitchens



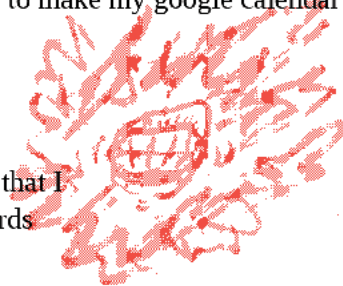
Trauma from the past and how it has changed me.

when i don't have time to make my google calendar on Sunday night.

Insensitivity (even unintentional)



when people chew loudly I am filled with an overwhelming fiery anger that I truly cannot explain in words



when the icing of my cake gets stuck on the cover of a container : (





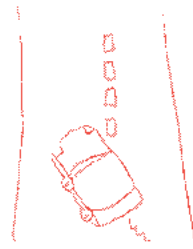
When people ask me if I have my license.  
hangry



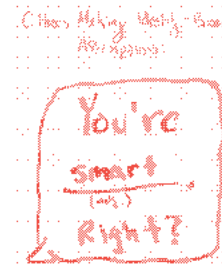
when the spaces i want safe aren't



people who wear their masks below their nose



police



when the right to basic needs and a life of content are hindered or even threatened by external powers

Making mistakes while knitting

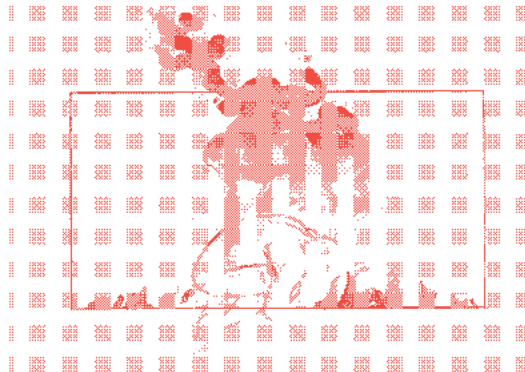
Protections being taken away from people and discrimination being written into legislation.



Drying hands on the doorknob instead of the TOWEL

Mansplaining.

Or white men being extremely entitled. Or just white men.



my family (love them)

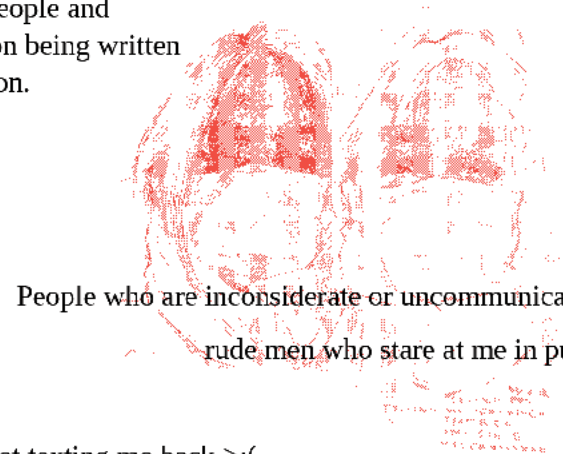
people being mean/racist to my friends

White people taking up the entire sidewalk (pre-pandemic I would just crash into them like wtf)



Slow walkers

when people aren't listening



People who are inconsiderate or uncommunicative. rude men who stare at me in public

Men

kelly not texting me back >:(

When people are rude to waiters at restaurants

everything!

# voices: anger

2021

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## MISSION STATEMENT

*Voices* is published annually by the Tufts Asian Student Coalition. We are a Pan-Asian student-led organization seeking to mobilize toward progressive change. Recognizing the multiplicity of global diasporas, TASC aims to reflect on and celebrate our collective histories and lived experiences. We publish *Voices* annually because our realities are inextricable from the wellbeing of communities of color beyond our campus gates — whether they are a few train stops or an ocean away.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to our community members who have seen our anger and given us space to hold it. Thank you to the Asian American Center's Aaron Parayno and Emily Ding, and Professor Emeritus Jean Wu for all their guidance and support. Thank you to new TASC members whose enthusiasm nurtured our community even during this virtual year.



# Dear Reader,

When I first heard that our theme was “anger” this year, I had difficulty submitting a piece because I didn’t think I was an angry person. My whole life, I’ve believed back-handed compliments like, “It’s so good you don’t get angry easily.” I initially wrote a series of stories where my parents suppressed my anger, preventing me from standing up for myself and my body. I blamed my parents for teaching me shame instead of anger. But since the shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16th that took the lives of eight people, six of whom were Asian women, I know now that my anger hasn’t been suppressed by my parents but by white supremacy and a generational trauma rooted in survival in this country we call home.

While I’m processing my personal connection to the Atlanta shootings, I’m also tending to my newborn anger. I’m scared for my life. I’m scared of betrayal by people close to me, realizing I trust people who will kill people who look like me, then say it wasn’t racially motivated. I’m living in fear of white men, surrounded by them on a predominantly white campus. I’m angry that I can’t attend my in-person classes or walk home at night by myself. I’m angry that my grandparents left everything to come here, silently breaking their backs in labor, for their children and their children’s children to go to college in the US. And here I am in college, unsafe and unseen.

Though the events in Atlanta are already last month’s news, it’s only one in a series of “hate crimes” against the Asian American community on the rise since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The increased anti-Asian violence are not isolated events but rather direct byproducts of the structure of US settler colonialism and white supremacy that has originated since

Asians first stepped foot in this country. Asian America is not a monolith, so the oppressions we experience takes many forms: colorism, deportation, Islamophobia and other discrimination based on religion, Japanese Incarceration, Yellow Peril, the Model Minority Myth, etc. Yellow Peril paints us as the Other, coming here and causing terror. But I’m the Other, here, and I’m terrified. The Model Minority Myth teaches us that Black and Brown communities are our competition, but this is not true. Asian American and Black solidarity have existed for decades. The Model Minority Myth doesn’t protect us. It’s at the whim of white supremacy who can choose when to see us and when not to see us, then at the greatest extreme, take our lives so casually.

I’m grateful for my Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and APIDA friends who checked in on me, reminding me that I’m not invisible. I ask for their continued solidarity, knowing that our relationships are reciprocal and much work needs to be done in my own Asian community. I find the most comfort in spaces with other Asian women and femmes — some of these words are theirs. As you read, flip, look through *Voices*, I as that you sit in the discomfort you feel with our anger, allow our anger to take up space, and be angry with us.

In Solidarity,



Maddie Wong  
(*Voices* writing editor)

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# You're Getting the Mask Wet

*by Juliette Wu  
digital drawing  
2021*



# Abiotic

by Ansel Link

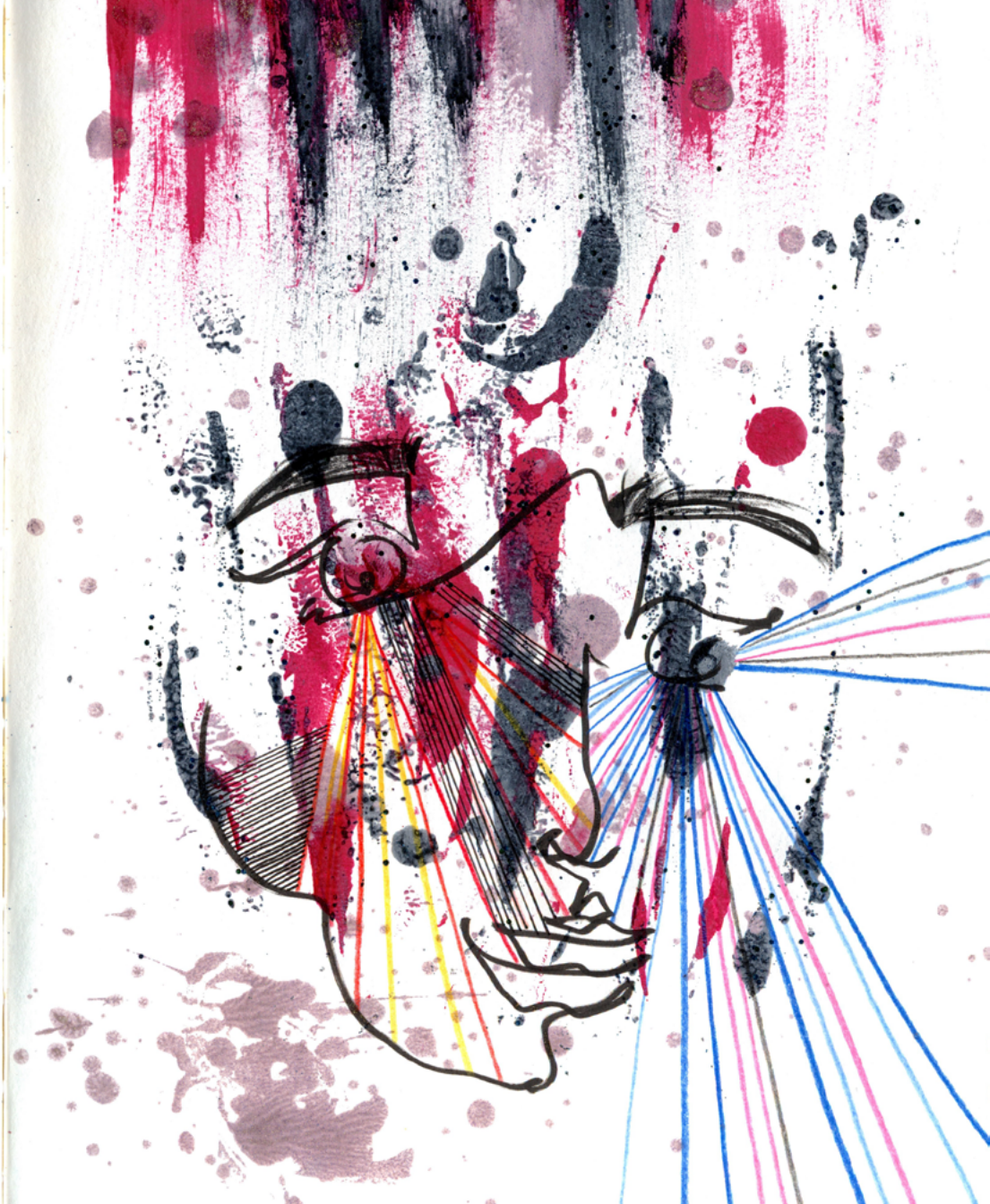
a narrow stream embraces the unsettled sea  
hold me for a moment in your restless currents  
for the future pours over me like rock

I peer into a small puddle deep as the moon  
I'm a skipping stone  
sinking  
watching the surface slowly slip away  
the last ripples disrupting the peace

I feel my head lifted by the southern breeze  
the smell of jasmine and lavender  
carrying the memory of rolling in the mud  
I'm too tired to think about where my skin ends

I don't have time to wash up  
so put me down  
on the blue lagoon  
to drown in swirling time and  
taste the peaches of longevity  
so put me down

smash back into routine  
diving off the contrail  
sucked into through the shifting sea endless blue  
Rolling  
and rolling  
with rage





## Mirrored in Rage

*by Katherine Wang*  
*drawing/painting*  
*2017*

# M\*N

*by Gabe Reyes*

Manhood is a weapon yielded for power, used to belittle those who don't conform to its ideals and to justify harm--even murder. Men use anger to protect manhood from its own instability and contradictions.

I'm angry, but not because I subscribe to manhood. I'm angry because of what manhood took from me, takes from me, will take from me. I'm angry, but not because I don't fit into manhood. I'm angry because I, my people, and our ancestors before us were never meant to fit into manhood, but are perpetually alienated for not being men or 'man enough.' I'm angry, but not because my ancestors weren't considered as manly as those who invaded their land. I'm angry because these invaders killed, subjugated, and exploited my ancestors just to prove their manliness.

My anger is stronger than theirs--not because I am more of a man, but because I am not a man. Their anger was used to defend their manhood and impose it on others, whereas my anger works to put it to rest.

Their anger is  
oppressive,  
life-sucking,  
deadly.

Mine is  
regenerative,  
vibrant,  
liberating.

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啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
**I AM ANGRY**  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
**I DON'T UNDERSTAND**  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
**ENOUGH,**  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
**AND ANGRY**  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
**I UNDERSTAND**  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
**TOO MUCH.**  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊  
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啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊 啊

啊 (a)

by Simon Jiang  
pen and ink  
2021

# tell me again

by Madeleine (Maddie) Oh  
digital media  
2021





# lidocaine

*by Ariel Zedric*

i bite so hard it bleeds  
and the smell leads all the sharks in the ocean  
to me. chomping at an inflatable yellow life  
raft losing air in the middle of the pacific  
defeat is just anger with no one else to blame

help has come and gone  
i tend to drive these things away

egg yolk saliva thick in my mouth  
familiar muddy taste  
this is what they teach you to eat  
when you have something to say  
in a place you don't belong

i do this so often  
i'm beginning to think i like it

the frustration, the direction  
treading water with anchors for feet  
silently wading toward the shoreline  
when they rescue me to the rocks  
they expect me to be calm

i swallow the blood in my mouth  
and smile with no teeth



# Letter for my Cat

Jessie Lan



In this past year of isolation, I adopted a cat. I think there's been more time to check in, and to attach ourselves to each other, being at home for so long. I'm no longer running out the door only to return for a forgotten notebook; to run and shower jammed into the afternoon, a quick meal-prepped dinner before an evening club meeting. My thoughts then were squeezed within walks to Eaton and Lane Hall.

So I can sit on the sofa, staring idly, or journal baby thoughts with my notebook in

hand. And this cat sidles up to me, subtle at first, until it nips my toes; jumps on my lap, nails first; and nestles itself perfectly onto my Bluetooth keyboard.

A sigh. The cat is capricious, but difficult to ignore. We both attend carefully to its whims—I put my notes away, delicately extract my keyboard. The cat sprawls across the desk and stretches into a comfortable position. My hand strokes its back mechanically. The two of us on an evening night; finally, the cat purrs.

I'd go on walks this summer, warm sun—sometimes too warm. I burrow into my thoughts to lose myself against this oppressive heat, briefly noting the green on each tree, the green of the leaves. I forget about my cat until I feel a sudden tug on my wrist. The cat, pulling on its leash—ready to go home.

So we slink into the air conditioned haven of home and it plops onto my stomach. I'm lying down sprawled face-up on the bed. I stroke the cat's fur steadily, and it feels like a warm rub stoking fire in my own belly. But just as I settle in, the cat scrapes my stomach and jumps off the bed. Damn cat. My fiery tummy only grows as I poke at the lines left on my stomach.

Sometimes my cat hides away—when a friend visits, too loud, or maybe put off by a task I'm thrilled to be caught up in. The cat must find it boring. It sulks away. Though I pay no mind until I'm alone again, certainly, in the moments after, the house is quieter without the soft pid-padding of paws on wood floors.

These days I can hardly find my cat anymore. I'll call its name, whisper an approximation of feline-noises to every corner of my room. Tskskskksskkskksk. I miss your solid presence. I whisper under the bed, behind the bookshelf, underneath the pile of clothes on the floor. I am losing defiance, spontaneity, fire, personality. I miss the constant attention, demanding routine. Where is the energy pulling me every which way?

I'll find the cat curled in a corner. When I stroke its fur, its tail barely flickers to recognize me there. My cat is lethargic, or maybe it's indifferent to me.

I've stopped bringing a leash on our walks. The cat showed a consistent disdain at being tethered down, and walks slow and reluctantly alongside me.

Then one day it wanders away, and there is nothing left to string us both together.

It takes me a while to even process its departure. I was noting the leaves that crisped and turned brown. I walk home alone, wondering where the cat will go.

I leave a bowl of food at the front door—an invitation, and a bribe. The next week, on another walk, I watch my cat dart across the road. But the dish stays untouched, unapproached, and my cat refuses to return. Somehow it looked well-fed anyways. Eventually I bring the bowl back inside, and I don't put it back out. *Well, I hope you are taking care of yourself, cat. Thank you for taking care of me.*

When we were together, we settled into a sympathetic pact. Some days the cat demanded my attention; others, I sought its steady company to fight a quiet melancholy. Each day was unremarkable—but each night, I slept with a new nick or scratch. My cat, I will say, had claws.

Now, unassuming as it was, I'm left with only a few scratches, and a used litterbox of sh\*t to hold my memory.



## Coping Mechanisms

Ashley Jin  
acrylic  
2019

# Mud and Gold

*After C Pam Zhang*  
*By Jonathan Yu*

I am angry for you, Ma.  
The dreams of your youth — dashed.  
So you swerved, you swerved for a distant land  
You swerved for a freedom that would never liberate you.

Waiting. Waiting... waiting.  
A husband — a father — that never came.  
Just like you, I wonder:  
How much of these hills is gold?

I am angry, Abba Father.  
I recognize that justice without forgiveness isn't justice.  
Letting the anger in my heart bury what is  
True, noble, pure, lovely, and admirable.

You establish your throne in justice.  
You are a stronghold for the oppressed,  
A stronghold in times of trouble.  
Near to the brokenhearted and contrite in spirit.

Help me to forgive, to hold a righteous anger  
Mud, gold, mud, mud, gold.  
To seek justice rightly.

Amen. 阿门。



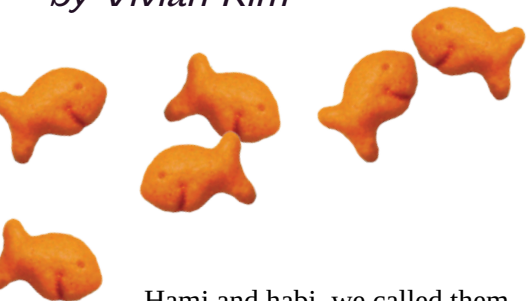


# My Ancestors Remind Me I Cannot Lose

*By Ameya Marie Okamoto  
Digital Painting  
2020*

# To my hami & habi

by Vivian Kim



Hami and habi, we called them, short for halmeoni and halahbuhji in Korean. I wonder if they had felt shortchanged by my sisters and I butchering the words all those years, but they never said anything, and of course we never asked. My white classmates referred to their grandparents with nicknames as well, but this was different. Referring to my own grandparents in a way that was more comfortable for the American tongue, without having to entertain the extra syllables of a language I barely understood, was my way of setting boundaries on my own ethnicity.

Growing up, being “cool” and being “white” were invariably linked. I knew on my first day of elementary school that my Taiwanese neighbor would be worse for my social clout than the blonde girls who played basketball, shopped at Justice, and had crushes on boys. Soon enough, I was almost one of them, with my own turkey sandwich-

es and gymnastics practices. But when I got home and saw the ddeok or sliced Asian pear that my grandmother had prepared for snack, I remembered that it was all temporary. I could never escape the characterization that came with the color of my skin. And who better to take my anger out on than my gentle but unabashedly Korean grandparents who had only been happy to see me come home?

My sisters and I would complain about how we wanted to have “normal” snacks – goldfish and Lunchables instead of seaweed and Asian crackers. We relentlessly bashed having to go to Korean school, and doing the homework always left us in tears. Every morning, we would remind our grandfather to stay inside his gray Toyota when he came to pick us up from school; he had a habit of standing outside the car when he thought he was parked somewhere hard to find. I hated that his behavior made him visible to our classmates. I somehow believed that if they didn’t see him, they wouldn’t see the part of him that also lived in me.

When I wasn’t being horrible to them, my grandparents and I had a lot of fun together. My grandfather always had peanut M&Ms in the trunk of his car, and we would pop them in our mouths as our little secret. My grandmother was the most soothing presence whenever one of us was fighting with our mother, stressed about an exam, or just

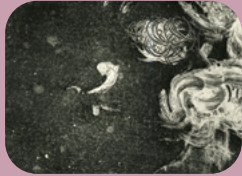
having a bad day. The way she took care of us never deserved the responses we gave her.

As I realized all of this, the guilt would overwhelm me. At home over break, I would peek at my grandmother boiling tea in the kitchen and just want to cry. I started finding little ways of spending time with my grandparents: Wednesday morning trips to the grocery store, impromptu errands, and casual conversations in the kitchen. I hoped I was beginning to undo past harm, and in doing so, accept myself for who I was. But I look around now and am confronted with the terrorizing worry I feel for them every day. How silly was I to think that the same racist thoughts forced into my childhood mind didn’t manifest in their lived experience as well. Miles away now, I have to wonder if they’ve made it to the grocery store safely or enjoyed fajitas from the diner for lunch without anyone making a snide comment about their English. I know that in many ways the world has failed them, and in possibly even more ways, so have I. To hami and habi: You will never know how sorry I am. I love you (사랑해요) with my whole heart.



# Georgia on my mind

by *Anonymous*



*CW: sexual assault, violence*

There's a certain kind of horror in knowing that despite all the measures you can take to protect yourself, sometimes there's absolutely nothing you can do. I can try, and try, and hope my community is there to protect me. But when they're not, it's just me. And I'm not invincible.

I have flinched when men have raised their voices. Because when they raise their voices, they're only a step away from raising their fists. Maybe they didn't mean to, maybe they will say sorry, maybe I'll even walk away without a bruise.

But maybe I won't. As we all know, the scars left are not always visible. It's the dampness between my legs, coldness piercing through a pair of day-old jeans as I hug myself on the way home in Boston winter—numb to the pain of having been violated.

The sheer shame at having let someone I cared about take advantage of me. I should have known better. I flinch the next time a man, regardless of race, touches me. I want to believe that he is kind, that he cares for me. Maybe he won't hurt me. But maybe he will.

There's a particular anger reserved in me for Asian men—those that say that they'll stand up for women and the elderly, that they'll fight for us if they see someone harassing us. Really, I ask skeptically. They make rape jokes, tell me to loosen up. When you step in for us, is it just for yourself? Because you could have listened before this. When Asian women are aggressed upon by men, particularly by white men, you are not the victim. When your friends say again and again that they want an Asian girlfriend, you could have stopped them then. But you didn't. And when you do intervene, we don't owe you anything.

Remember that it's not just white men that hold their fists inches from us, their hands a second away from squeezing the life out of us. Remember that too often, Asian men hold their hatred and resentment for the standard of white masculinity and release it onto the backs of women in their community, then spin us around and ask why we don't love them. You are not the victim.

Know that as Asian men—you are not absolved. I have no expectation that you will protect your sisters, your friends. But I hope you will, so that I—someone who has been sexualized by Asian and white men alike, been violated by both, has received abuse from both—don't have to be the next person to tell this story. I refuse to beg for acknowledgement. But I demand recognition, if not for me, for every other woman who has died and been violated at the hands of men.



*Swirls, etching by Amy Chu*





Year of the ???

*Yoon Sung / Digital Drawing / 2021*

# 7/4/18

Amanda Yuan

on July 4th, 2018, it was the first time my dad's side of the family was all together in years. my 爷爷, 姑父, 姑妈, and 哥哥/cousin David were visiting for the summer from Shanghai and we went all out for the holiday - we had to show them a good time, the life we've built here in America. we bought fancy lobster to make homemade lobster rolls. i sat with my dad to my left and my grandpa to my right, welling with the happiness of gathering around for a meal together, the ease of conversation, the mutual passing of bites of food between all our plates. i miss them dearly, i miss gathering like that.

we piled into my mom's SUV, filling all 8 seats on our way to watch the fireworks at night. meandering as we found parking, used the bathroom, & bought some ice cream, eyes scanning for a place to sit. relief when we found one quickly, with enough space for

8 people to sit comfortably, because 爷爷 can't stand for too long in the heat. we sat side by side on the wooden edge of the pier, tasting each flavor of the sweet, cool ice cream, passing time until the fireworks began.

not realizing our warm family moment was being observed by a man on the ground, in a tent with his friends. who noticed us and decided to shout with hate in his voice, piercing through our bubble. accusing us of taking up space that did not belong to us, daring to sit in his line of vision. this person chose to let their anger harden into hate and used it to threaten to call the cops.

my 爷爷 stood up first, wordless but clearly uncomfortable, feigning unfazed while turning and walking away. my dad told the man to stop and calm down, recognizing it's wrong and standing up for his family. one by one, my family members migrated to another spot on the pier until it was just me and my brother left. i felt a spark light in my chest, my own anger igniting and pushing me to speak. i walked over to the man in the tent with my little brother trailing behind, like when we were kids, watching.

staying firmly in his line of sight, i empathized with his pain and longing in the face of his continued anger. while also

asserting that we have Every Right to sit and watch fireworks and be treated like human beings when doing so – sobbing and burning at the same time. trying to be brave.

my mother rushed back over with words sharp and forceful, telling me to walk away. “he could hurt you, he could have a gun. you can't engage with people like that.” anger directed at me with fear and love in subtitles, telling me to sit down and be quiet. i pushed back - if not me, then who? who was going to stick up for us? he is Not allowed to talk to me, you, Us like That. so Why shouldn't i speak? the fire still burning in my chest while my family enjoyed the fireworks and shouted at the spectacle.

i took a walk, and when i got back i externally moved on too. business as usual, i took videos of the fireworks that live in my Google photos and linked arms with my 爷爷 as we walked back to the car. i carried that silent fire for the rest of that summer and when enough time passed, when i told the story enough times to my friends, it calmed into a candle flame. but i don't forget.



# Spectral Reflection

*by Nuha Shaikh*

the sun is rising  
how does it look from where you stand?

when this country takes a breath  
in the little moments tucked away  
i want to rage and rage  
and know that it does something

there is more at stake than I could ever claim  
and faith has always been burning away

it's never enough for me when you keep your face  
turned away from any mirror that i hold up to you  
or maybe you can meet your own eyes  
and call it what it is and not what you want to

i am still striving to be something  
to the people who will have me

there is no golden door  
no lamp to lift besides  
and we are all  
yearning to breathe free

how does it look from where you stand?  
the sun is rising

## If I showed you my face, could you name me?

*by Nuha Shaikh*

You are asking too much of me  
When you have given almost nothing

My anger cannot be more than it is  
A snake still breathing in the dust  
Whom you don't like to look at  
Until I force your hand

It is not enough to call on me  
Only when it serves you  
And refuse me the rest

The glimpse of me haunts your hands  
My shadow sticking like tamarind paste  
Unless you decide that rebirth is possible  
Until you reckon with the half of me

I come from you just as you do from me  
Forgetting it will not make it any less true



## I feel it in my hands

by Maria Fong / colored pencil on paper / 2021

# You Look

by Sarah Goldstein

Steaming potatoes, crisp coleslaw, and freshly barbecued hamburgers sat on pristine white plates on a spotless white tablecloth.

“Dig in!” Rob exclaimed.

The room swelled with the chatter of summer vacation: the heat, their new dog, my preparation for college, their trip to Crater Lake, our trip to Japan.

“Do people know you’re half there?” Denise asked, glancing at me and my brother.

“Yeah,” I shrugged. “People look at us weird.”

“Really?” She scrutinized my face. “But you look super Japanese.”

“Most Americans think they look Asian,” my dad remarked.

“In Japan, people know immediately that they’re not fully Japanese,” my mom added. I nodded slowly and stared down at the table.

“Huh,” Denise resumed eating.

After a moment, the conversation turned to the coming school year: the classes, the craziness, the concerns, the challenges. My eyes fixed on one of their family portraits hanging on the wall across from me, my fork paused midway to my plate.

“Hey, Sarah,” Denise said suddenly. Her words hung in the air the way skydivers hang suspended for a moment before their parachutes malfunction and they crunch into the ground.

“Yeah?”

“Sorry.”

I froze. “For what?”

“For what I said earlier—for saying you look really Asian.” She gazed at me earnestly.

“Why?” I asked with difficulty; my throat was clogged by something that wouldn’t go away when I swallowed. I swallowed anyway.

“I dunno, I just feel like I need to apologize.”

“It’s—” I swallowed again. “It’s fine.”

“You sure?”

I did my best to smile but I didn’t realize how tightly I was gritting my teeth so as I tried to lift the corners of my mouth it probably looked like I was struggling to keep myself from retching all over their immaculate impeccable perfect table.

“Yeah.”





Red envelopes hold more than just money. If you're lucky, the envelope you grip with both hands also bears the fingerprints of siblings, cousins, elders, generations of people before you. You can tell an envelope changed hands many times if the glue on its inner flap turns brown. Mom avoids using those old ones, but I like them the most. They've carried small bills before. They know what it means to carry things.

An old red envelope is a historical document. Rough around the edges, it can feature the year's zodiac from its last appearance, twelve or twenty-four years ago. A relic of time. Each fingerprint marks a miraculous connection between elder and

child. The child locks eyes with the person she avoids eye contact with every other day of the year, and delivers four messages of good health and fortune. Recited phrases hold the heaviness of all the words she wishes she knew how to say, the words that are trapped in her throat, and the ones that didn't even make it that far.

The elder responds: "gwaai lui, laek lui!" A message of pride. Good girl, you held on to our language, one more year. The child smiles, hopes she uses the correct thank-you, and accepts the little red token with both hands.

Then, the moment passes. The envelope is emptied and tucked into a dusty drawer, waiting, hoping, yearning to emerge and prompt the mother tongue from her daughter's lips once again.

By the time an envelope's golden ink smudges completely, and the brown glue rubs off, will that generation's children still have the words to receive it?

I cannot express anger in my mother tongue, like my mother can. Through these new year's greetings, I can express joy. Would anger return if these phrases were our last? The child, once joyful in a previous generation, becomes angry. This is all she

should be able to say, but she can't. She's angry when her elders try to teach her, angry that they stopped trying. Angrily, she blames herself.

But she was only a child. It was English that killed her Cantonese.

Once a loud people, now silenced. Why is this child so shy? She's panicking. This moment could expose her lost connections, lost conversations, lost stories. Language... it's meant to advance, right? Each generation is supposed to grow in vocabulary, in creativity and expression, communicating through poems and songs. Then why have I only known its ability to die?

Just as red envelopes are marked with fingerprints over time, we carry the marks of our ancestors. As their descendants, we receive their ability to rebuild what was lost. Maybe, then, language can survive anything. Once anger returns to our vocabulary, bringing our voices to a fever pitch, maybe language can become our greatest protection — so that next Lunar New Year, our elders are here and they are fearless. We can reach out once again with both hands, holding on tightly to the time we have together and the words we share.



# It's Nothing

by Deena Bhanarai  
illustrated zine (excerpt)  
2021

I was always frustrated and curious about why people were so willing to let things go.



## ... a historical aside:

In 1909, the Kingdom of Siam signed the Anglo-Siamese Treaty.

Growing up, I was taught\* to be proud of Thailand as a land of 'compromise,' because it is what has led to our freedom (or at least, an illusion of it). In 1909, the Kingdom of Siam signed the Anglo-Siamese Treaty, which was one of the most notable events to set this historical precedent of compromise, of letting the smaller issues slide to avoid the bigger ones (that is, conceding land and rights to avoid Western colonialism). I was taught that this precedent from our country's leaders, paired with our good Buddhist values of peace, were why we could afford to say *ไม้อ่อนไม่หัก*. Unlike our neighbors, who fell to the hands of the greedy imperialists, we avoided it through being 'calm.'

\*As part of a propagandistic curriculum

But few look past the propaganda and think about all we have lost through submission (rebranded as 'compromise'). The 'West' colonized over a third of the globe as we know it. Do you really think Siam, a land chock-full of resources that the colonizers were literally drooling over, easily trumped these greedy imperialists by just giving up 'some land and some rights?' When, in history, have the British ever been satiated by 'some' rather than 'all?' Where our tensions with Cambodia, Malaysia and our other neighbors really come from? Why is our 'democratic' government still so corrupt? If we're so proud of our culture and confident in our country, then why are we so obsessed with risking it all for Westernization? What really happened in 1976 - was that compromise too? Why are suicide rates rising? Is the *ไม้อ่อนไม่หัก* attitude really indicative of a love for peace, or is it actually just a cover-up for injustice, lies, and unprocessed generational trauma?



But sure, we're the only country in Southeast Asia to have never been colonized by a Western power! We are free! We have been free! Everything's fine! We aren't weak, we're just ~chill~

Anyway.

Why did I just give you a seemingly irrelevant history lesson?

History means a lot to me. I've always been mocked for my love for it, and for majoring in it - "History is 'the past,' focus on the future. History is boring. History doesn't mean anything to me." None of that is true - and if you want it to be less boring and more meaningful to you, you need to start acknowledging how it impacts your life. For example, in my case, that cultural attitudes to things don't just come from nowhere. Yes, maybe the Thai 'luiduls' attitude came from Buddhist values. But Buddhist values also preaches ideas of 'right intention,' and of 'karma.'

No matter how long ago in history things happened,

energy gets passed down

through generations.

It's overwhelming, yes.

But in understanding who I am today -

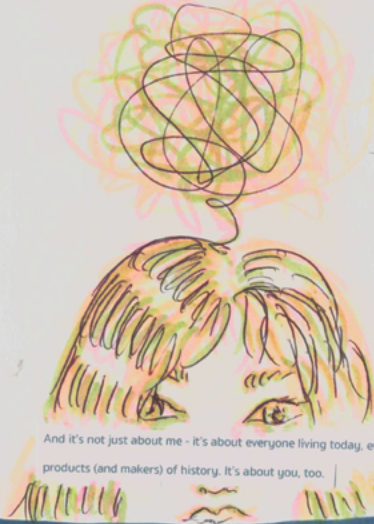
the depression, privilege, pain, illness,

oppression, and resilience,

- I cannot help but

look to where this energy came from.

This is the only way I can make sense of the things driving me insane.

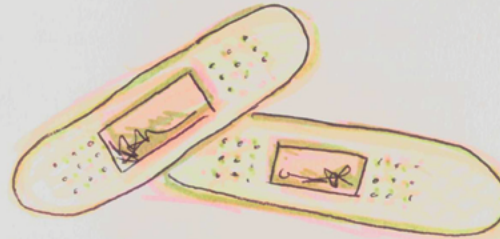


And it's not just about me - it's about everyone living today, everyone living as products (and makers) of history. It's about you, too.

Understanding is the only way I can drive myself to heal.

If I don't heal now, then when?

When the energy passes down to my descendants, and then some?



My predecessors - our predecessors - tried to hold in the pain and

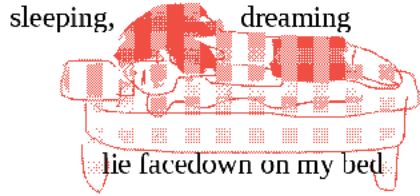
say 'luiduls,' that it's all ok.

Sure, they survived.

But just because it was OK for them, does not mean it is OK overall.

# What activity do you do to process anger?

sleep



screaming into my pillow



Running exercising

journal



run away :(



Sharing frustrations with others who understand.

ranting to friends over a meal  
Ranting to my mom,  
rant to my POC friends.



I play tennis with ~passion~

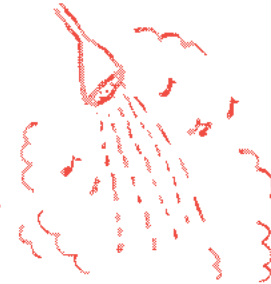


play basketball!

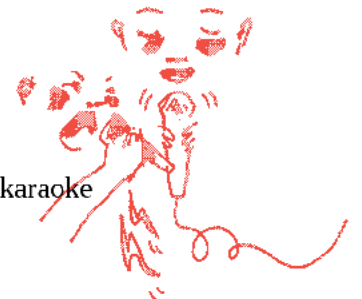
writing angry emails



long hot showers



drunk karaoke



I meditate on the people and the things that I am grateful for.  
And I remember why I'm doing this and who I'm doing it for.  
Then I get up and do something about it.



drink tea

eye rolling





lament for

BREONNA TAYLOR  
AHMAUD ARBERY  
GEORGE FLOYD

> too many more.

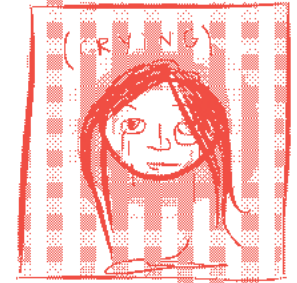


박순정	PARK SOON CHUNG
김현경	KIM HYEON KYEONG
김은자	KIM EUNJA
유명애	YU MYUNG AE
홍수진	HONG SUJIN
김도희	KIM DOHEE
PAUL ANDRE MICHELIS	
DELNINA ASHLEY FAUN	

no sinner of this nation

walking, not think about anything

i kind of just lie down and think about it, about why it made me upset, what state i'm in, and then i either distract myself with busywork or cook.



lament, grieve, pray

I usually cry (I wish I didn't)

I DRAW TO REMIND MYSELF



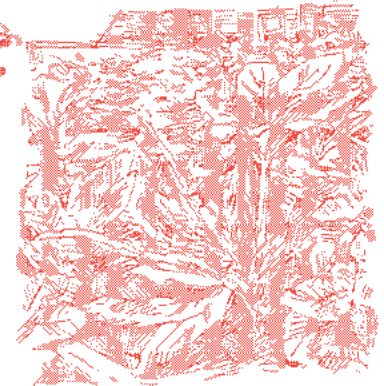
I draw to remind myself I'm enough



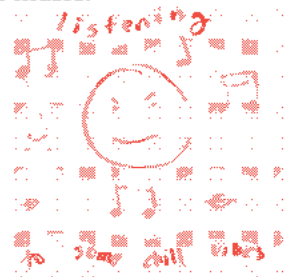
Climb a tree



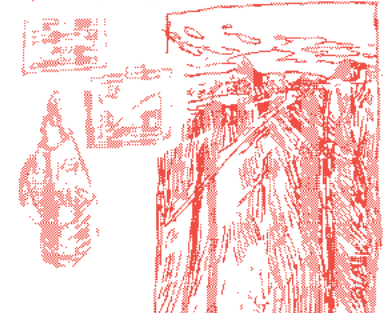
Verbally processing it with friends or in my journal.



a stream of consciousness and then some music.



an entire concert happens in my earphones (i blast music 2 loud)







# Thirty Years Since Boston Chinatown's First Restaurant Boycott

An Oral History  
with Cyndi Mark '86

by *Issay Matsumoto*

In 1991, laid-off Dynasty restaurant workers Lon Lui and Steve Hue Tan galvanized local supporters to lead the first labor picket in Boston Chinatown's history, turning anger at their mistreatment in a precedent-setting case against wage theft in the state. With the support of the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) Workers Center, Lui and Tan won a total \$14,000 in stolen wages and tips. Although the workers only received a fraction of what they were legally owed, the legacy of their victory can be seen over the past three decades through the establishment of local worker centers like the Brazilian Worker Center, Chelsea Collaborative, and the Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative.

Cynthia Mark, a Tufts graduate who now serves as the Chief of Attorney General

Maura Healey's Public Protection and Advocacy Bureau shared her experiences organizing the Dynasty pickets and negotiations as a member of the Chinese Progressive Association Workers Center.

**Issay Matsumoto: Could you tell me about your background before Dynasty, and how you got involved with this case?**

Cynthia Mark: Dynasty was just before I went to law school. I was working for CPA at the time. CPA did not have a lot of staff so I did a little bit of everything! I taught classes, helped with fundraising. We were just starting the Worker's Center. Because CPA had just finished a pretty substantial organizing advocacy campaign for garment workers—working with dislocated garment workers—people started to think about CPA when it came to workers rights issues.

**IM: This was pretty different from the case of the P&L garment workers. Can you tell me a little bit about what made this an exceptionally egregious wage theft case?**

CM: In the early 90s what was exceptional about the Dynasty case was that the workers came forward. I think that wage theft was common and that workers for the most part were not going to complain if they were paid what they were promised.

When we talk about wage theft now, we talk about people not being paid what they're legally entitled to be paid. Things have changed a lot, but back then especially, if you were paid what you were promised nobody would complain. These two workers only earned tips. They got no wages. I think that a lot of their coworkers didn't feel safe to complain because, in their minds, they were making good money. They were taking home more money [in tips] than minimum wage.

**IM: For the two workers who did come forward, what was the tipping point for them to come to CPA for support, and demand what they thought they were owed?**

CM: Not only were they not getting paid, the employer was requiring them to pay for restaurant expenses like cleaning fees. Basically the employer was paying them no wages and was demanding a kickback of their tips. They might have thought Dynasty was over the top, compared to other restaurants. Other restaurants might not pay wages but they wouldn't require you to pay for cleaning.

**IM: These were the only two workers to come forward and work with CPA on this issue. But the other workers did not. They were sort of pitted against them. How did the workers who stayed at Dynasty, and**

**people in the broader community, react to what was happening—during and after the campaign?**

CM: The garment workers' struggles were against non-Chinese targets. They were organizing campaigns to get the government to provide retraining benefits so they could get better jobs. Nobody had ever organized against Chinese owners.

So this was the first picketing of a Chinatown restaurant [in Boston]. It was the first complaint, that I know of, to the state for wage theft by Chinese workers. And it was a really big deal.

In subsequent campaigns, the former garment workers were very supportive of other worker protests, like those of electronic assembly, home health aides, university cafeteria workers, and Chinatown restaurant workers, and they have been viewed as role models for what workers can achieve through organizing. The garment workers already were so courageous for protesting against the government; but when it came to protesting against Dynasty they were like, "We can't do it."

The garment workers [who founded the CPA Workers Center], at least initially, did not join the picket because many of their husbands worked in the restaurants. They were afraid of getting their husbands in trouble. If so-and-so is on the picket line and the boss saw them, maybe their husband would lose their job.

They were also afraid of physical violence. In the mid-80s the Chinese gangs were very active. People thought that the Dynasty owner had connections with the mob. He liked to pretend that he did, to scare people. When we did pickets he thought he would try to intimidate us by videotaping us. This is before cell phones.

Workers were afraid. They were very afraid. One of our workers was murdered during the course of their struggle for the stolen wages. It was unrelated to their protests against wage theft, but it was a very scary time for people because of the violence. People were getting shot and killed in Chinatown. So people were legitimately afraid.

At that time, I was maybe 5 years out of college. Really, it was young people, students, Asian Americans, and supporters of Chinatown who stood with these workers, to

boycott Dynasty and put pressure on the owners of Dynasty. That made the workers have courage that they weren't alone, and that people were standing with them.

**IM: Having been a part of this campaign, what are the things that you learned?**

CM: It was a very important campaign for me personally. I found and developed relationships with lawyers at Greater Boston Legal Services. I have older siblings, but we're all the first generation in our family to go to college. I'm the first to be a lawyer. To meet public interest lawyers who prioritize community was really important. It wasn't just me discovering them but workers learning that they could have free legal representation [to recover unpaid wages].

The laws have changed a lot since then. It was discouraging that workers came forward, took such a risk to protest, the community supported them and organized boycotts and pickets—and they still got less than 100% of what they were owed. But we learned that we could count on a lot of people who were against wage theft and for worker justice. I don't know if they would have recovered any wages if there hadn't been a boycott and picketing.

by Mandy Wang  
35-mm Photography  
2019

## Yeye's Erhu



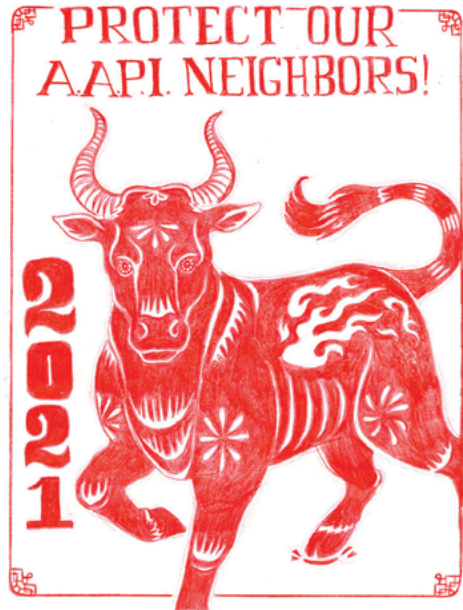
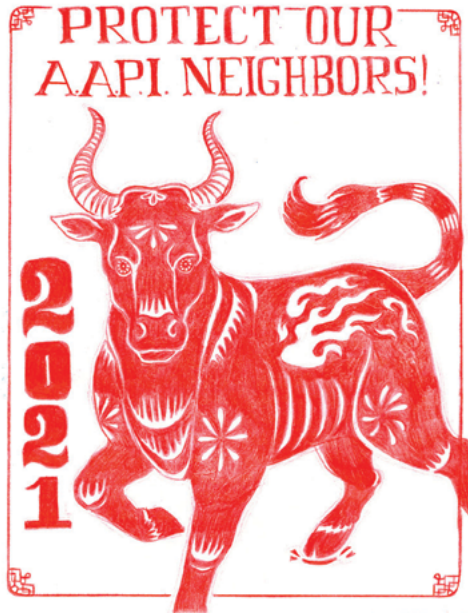
## Last Hidden Treasures



Year  
of the  
Rallying

OX

by Martina Tan  
colored pencil  
2021



A Growing Resource  
List in Support of the  
AAPI Community:





# Anger and Avocados

by Maya Ng-Yu

My grandma is only angered by three things: disrespect, disloyalty, dishonesty, and the man who stole her avocados. Below is an edited version of the conversation and hopefully, my grandma's honesty, vigor, tenacity, and astuteness will translate.

**Maya:** An aspect of Asian culture I'm angry at is the deep-rooted prioritization of men.

**Grandma:** That is tradition, you aren't going to change it because it goes down 4,000 years. In Chinese tradition there are rules you have to follow and be respectful of. People expect honesty because if you lie they will remember you forever.

**M:** Isn't that intense? Isn't that like holding an eternal grudge?

**G:** No. For example, if someone isn't loyal or cheats, then you would just not believe them after. I will remember to never trust that person.

**M:** Hmm, that sounds like holding a grudge... So, are you angry at anything?

**G:** I can't remember. Oh, I know! After 42 years, this is the first year I have avocados on my tree. The avocados are good. And today I went out and saw an old man with a large pole and basket cutting my avocados. He's my neighbor! He was stealing! I just looked at him despising and then, because I was educated to respect old people, I just turned away.

**M:** Ah! I would've yelled at him.

**G:** Yes, but then I caught myself because I'm as old as he is! Why should I be respectful to him? I said, "Don't ever pick my avocados!"

**M:** Yes Grandma! Were you ever going to call the police?

**G:** No. he's been picking it for weeks! So I told all his next door neighbors; that's worse than calling the police.

**M:** Hmm, in this situation I agree. Well, are you angry at the pandemic and the increased racism towards Asians?

**G:** There's no point, I don't like it, but I don't have to be angry. I'm not angry. Anger costs you your happiness and your peace of mind. Anger doesn't have to be all consuming. As a system and as a whole, for example, I don't like Trump, but there's nothing you can do about it. If it doesn't concern you then it's none of your business.

**M:** But grandma, it is my business because I'm angry at Trump for all he's done to fuel the current hate crimes. I want to take action against him because I'm angry.

**G:** You don't have to be angry. Do what I do, I just despise him.

**M:** Wait, isn't being angry at someone and despising them the same?



# taking root

by Elizabeth Hom

My dad and his siblings take turns staying with my grandma while my grandpa is in the hospital. We visit often, keeping her distracted by bringing her favorite foods, showing pictures, and helping her garden. Nights are especially hard for her, lying alone in their shared bed, the darkness only fueling her anxieties.

It has been a long time since she's smiled; she doesn't even have tears left, her hollow wails twisting at my insides. Who would have thought it would be Hawaiian mac salad -- her favorite -- that would bring out her familiar wide smile? I hadn't felt so relieved in a long time.

\*\*\*

I helped write my grandpa's obituary today. It was surreal -- writing about him in past tense. Obituaries are cold and unfeeling; there is something hallowing about attempting to condense his life and his extraordinary accomplishments down to a couple hundred words on a page.

It still doesn't feel real. My heart continues to tell me that if I just drove over to their house in Glendale, I'd walk in and still see him sitting on the couch, enthralled by yesterday's Sun's basketball game.

The era of COVID-19 has been lonely for many of us, but my heart hurts at the profound loneliness my grandma has and continues to feel, and the loneliness my grandpa must have felt in his final weeks. I mourn for the lost time and what could have been. He always cherished the warmth of a big, happy family in one place, even if it was sometimes just an illusion: the big birthdays, family Christmas, mingling over his famous prime rib. Instead, separated by necessary safety protocols, we communicated with him through sparse phone calls and nurse updates. Even then, it was my dad and his siblings who got to talk to him directly -- I never even got to say goodbye. We couldn't be with him in his final moments. Instead, a nurse accompanied him in our place, and I don't even have words to describe how intensely angry and sad that makes me. He deserved to have us by his side, holding his hand and telling him happy stories in the hospital until the very end.



\*\*\*

My grandpa led an extraordinary life; I am so proud to tell his stories and celebrate the person he was. Coming to America by himself, having just lost his parents by the age of nineteen, his incredible legacy is evident in the roots of our large family and all that he's accomplished.

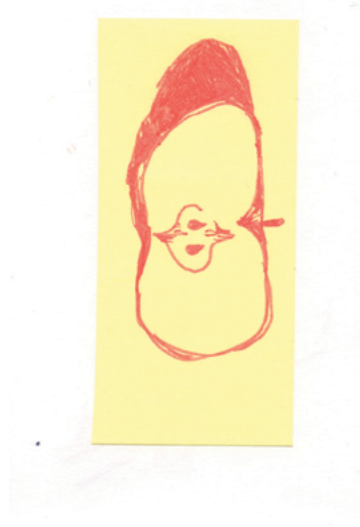
*I wish we had more time, so that I could have thanked you for taking care of me growing up, taking me to feed the ducks at the park, and bringing me to the game room (even though I was so terrible I never managed to win enough tickets to trade them for anything impressive). Thank you. I love you, 爷爷.*



# how to split an apple with your hands

by Kelly Tan

*before you read, know that  
we are not flat faces to push into pavement.  
you don't know anything about me.  
and my grandmother is stronger  
than every single weak bitch  
who spits on our humanity*



who can count the losses we're grieving  
or the translated moments that bind us  
who can hold these threads when  
unburdened hands are hard to come by,  
brittled and worn to the second to last layer of skin

the distances between us stretch hour by hour,  
crawling on weekdays and marching on Saturdays.

Sundays split in the practiced halves of an apple,  
right through the core  
they look at each other and take stock,  
remembering: we come from something severed.  
until Monday, when the apple forgets its wholeness,  
beached on the counter, curve to  
the surface like a turtle on its shell.

sticky fingers search, but  
hope is hard to find between having and not having.

restless rage and rattling rib cages  
remember, we have so much in each other  
and we deserve even more still

1. locate the meaty muscle at the base of your thumbs,
2. wedge them into the top of the apple, fingers tight to the bottom
3. press with all your might.
4. *optional*: a primal yell (for your benefit, not the apple's)
5. with a groan and a crack, it'll give.  
pull the apple apart, like opening a book





## Raw

*by Sarah Goldstein*

*acrylic on canvas  
2019*

# In Memory of Peter Zhao

by Alexandra Soo

Someone has placed a bowl of oranges under the solemn portrait of my dead father. I laugh because if they had truly known him, they would have known that he hated oranges. Even in the middle of winter, my mother would eat oranges in the garage so that my father would not have to endure the scent of citrus and sugar as her trembling fingers broke its leathery skin. Sometimes, she would hurry inside with a slice protected between her hands to feed to me: risking falling victim to my father's chiding words so that I too may taste its forbidden sweetness.

An old woman, spying the crocheted white flower on the lapel of my black dress, knows I am my father's daughter. She rushes towards me with a bowed head and hurried feet. I bow back.

“*Qǐng jié'āi shùnbàn,*” she whispers to me. “My condolences.”

“*Xièxiè āyí,*” I reply. Thank you. The Chinese vowels feel foreign to my lips and heavy on my tongue.

My mother stands beside me, dressed in all white. She has not sat down since the wake started two hours ago, insisting to stand during the never-ending stream of hushed pity and quick bows. Her tears have formed tracks down her cheeks to the corners of her small lips, yet she doesn't make a sound.

I look at my father's hardened face, printed on a flimsy piece of Styrofoam with the words “In memory of Peter Zhao,” hung above the casket. We have the same chin, strong and square, and the same arched brow, which I realize has been pulled into a tight knot in the center of my forehead. I catch my reflection in a mirror. I look just like him. I am suddenly flooded with the desire to leave this place: a place where my face is that of my father's, and not my own.

I feel a tap on my shoulder. I turn around to see a middle-aged woman with big blonde curls. Tears have smudged the clumps of mascara surrounding her blue eyes. She's carrying a cardboard box with my father's name on it.

“Hi, my name is Rebecca. I worked with your dad at the bank,” she says, extend-

ing one hand towards me, while the other balances the box. I extend my hand to meet hers, noticing the veins running down the back of her palm, visible through her paper skin. She shakes my hand, squeezing so her nails dig into my wrist. I don't remember my father ever mentioning a Rebecca. He didn't tell me much about anything. I notice she's wearing bright red lipstick.

“Thank you for coming. Are those his things?” I ask.

“Oh yes,” she says, as if suddenly remembering. She places the box into my arms, mutters her condolences, and disappears back into the crowd. My mother, who had been talking to someone else, now turns to me. She places a hand on my shoulder.

“Annie, who was that woman?” she asks. Her voice is as gentle as her hands, carrying words like ribbons gliding between my fingers and around my ankles, never a match to my father's deafening criticisms.

“Nobody,” I respond, “Just some lady from the bank with Bà ba's things.” The box feels heavy in my arms and grows heavier by the second.

\*\*\*

After dinner, I tell my mother that I booked my flight back to San Diego and that I'm leaving in three days. She smiles and nods, and I'm relieved. But a part of me wishes she would scream. I wish she would scream at me for abandoning her to live in this house alone with a TV with no signal and mold under the kitchen sink and the fucking beige couch with the broken springs that she slept on every single night because he said he slept better alone. But she doesn't say any of that.

"Before you go, Annie, sort through your father's things. Bring what you want back to school," she says. I tell her that I will. She nods again and tells me she is going to father's room, which now I suppose is hers. She makes her way up the stairs, her hand skimming the handrail, her feet making soft thumps on the carpet. I go to the living room where the box of his belongings rests on top of the coffee table. I place the box on the floor, and pull out the first item: a picture frame carefully enveloped in brown paper. I then pull out handfuls of pens, a stack of Fortune magazines, and his framed diploma: Michigan State University, Major in Finance, Cum Laude. I reach the bottom of the box without finding anything particularly worth keeping. I put the items back, and lift the box back onto the table. The picture frame, which I had rested precariously on

top of the stack of magazines, slides out of the box as I get up. I hear a crack as it hits the corner of the table and lands on the floor.

With a groan, I bend down to pick it up. I pierce the paper with my fingernail and peel back the wrapping to reveal a picture of my family in front of our house. My mother and father stand slightly apart to allow seven-year-old me to squeeze between them, my face buried in my mother's skirt, just one eye looking into the camera. My mother's hand rests on my head, my father's hand rests on her shoulder. Neither of them are smiling, unable to fake it even for the camera.

I unwrap the photo completely to see that the two wooden pieces that joined at the corner of the frame had split along the seam. Behind the picture I can see a piece of paper, covered in large confident letters. I pull the paper out from behind the photo, and unfold it.

*Dear Peter,*

*You weren't there when I woke up this morning, but the bed was still warm. I find myself daydreaming and suddenly you're here and we're dancing in the living room, with Merlot and a Billy Joel record. I'll see you after work on Thursday, as always.*

*I love you!  
Rebecca*

I read the letter again and again until the words become thunderous in my ear. The sentences seem to lift off the page, running up my arm and around my neck: taunting me, tattooing themselves onto my skin. My father would never dance in the living rooms, hand on a woman's waist and with eyes of affection. My father would never be one to sleep with a woman in his arms, her nose nestled in his neck, their breaths rising and falling as a pair.



Rebecca, who wore red lipstick to a funeral. Who squeezed my hand until it hurt. What about my mother could not compete with the American woman in his eyes? Was it because she did not laugh like them, brave and self-assured? Or was it because she did not scream while they made love as American women do in the movies? Or was it because he knew he could? Was it my mother with her hands of smoke and voice of ribbon, with unguarded eyes and endless forgiveness, who allowed him to love someone else?

I run upstairs to my father's bedroom, clenching the letter so tight it feels as if the paper itself is beating in my hand. I imagine grabbing her fragile shoulders and shaking her, showing her the husband that was never reserved for her. Show her that he never deserved the way she cried for him, loved him. I swing open the door to see my mother sitting on the bed, cross legged, watching the TV.

"Annie, come here. Come see how handsome your *Bà ba* was," she says, patting the space beside her, her eyes glued to the television. On the screen I see my mother in a red *qípáo*, with golden lotuses blooming across her chest and down her hip. She is standing next to a man with jet black hair and a smart tuxedo. His boyish smile compliments his square jaw, and his eyes crinkle up at the sides. For the first time, I recognize the man from the letter, who, years ago, looked at my mother like he was promising a lifetime of happiness. I turn my attention back to my mother. Her wide eyes flickered back and forth. She smiles when he laughs. She pulls her hands to her chest when he pulls her close. With held breath, she drinks every pixel of my father. Finally, she looks at me.

"What's wrong, Annie?" she asks. I taste the salt in the corner of my mouth from the tears

that had silently made tracks down cheeks. The letter stops beating in my hand, as my mother's slice of sweetness dances across the television. I speak in his memory, and for hers. "Nothing, Mom," I say, as I curl up next to her on the bed. With the letter folded in my pocket, I rest my head on her chest and watch my mother and my father raise their glasses to the future.

\*\*\*

I extend my stay for two days. Together, my mother and I clean the mold off the pipes under the kitchen sink, and buy a new couch. The night before I am about to leave, my mother kisses me on the forehead and wishes me safe travels. She beckons me to come to bed, but I tell her that I'm going to stay up a little bit longer.

I go to the garage where a bowl of oranges sit on the shelf next to bottles of fertilizer and bags of road salt. I take one of them into my hands, firm and heavy. The tiny dimples reflect the moonlight streaming through the window. The orange glows: its color spilling onto my hand and down my wrist. I take the bowl inside and place it on the kitchen table, imagining my mother breaking the fruit's stubborn skin, allowing the smell of citrus and sugar to fill her nostrils and swirl around the house like incense.



# Eejin texts

by Baljaa Borgil  
Digital Screenshot  
2021

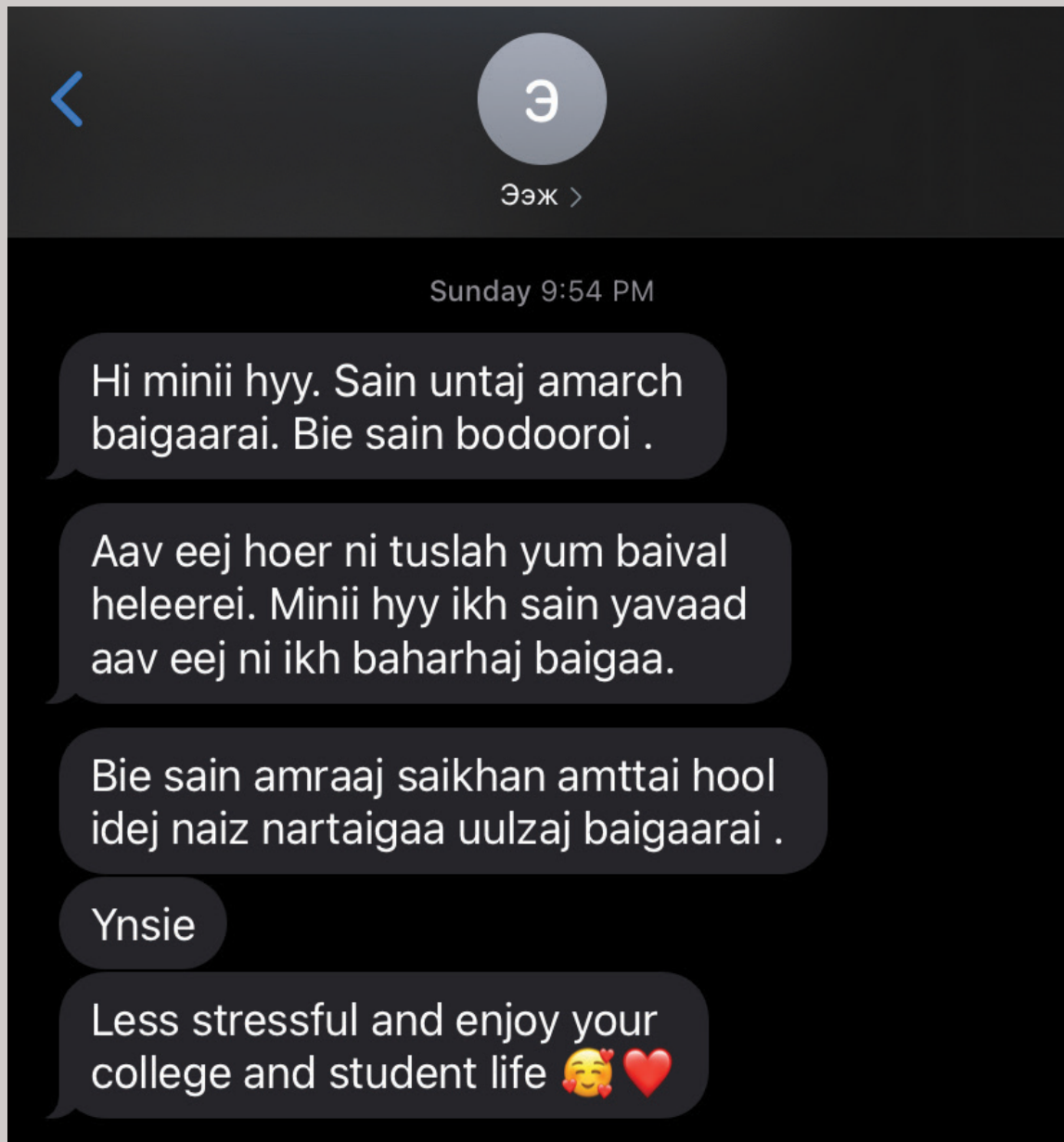
Translation:

Hi my son. I hope you are sleeping and resting enough. Please take care of yourself.

If you need your parents' help, say anything. You are working so hard and we are so proud of you.

Please rest and eat some tasty food and don't forget to spend quality time with friends.

Kisses



# finding water

黄葉



burying your grief  
they grew harshly into weeds  
rooting all your pain

coming here was not your dream  
every night we heard you scream

fear was all i knew  
it left me thirsty for peace  
searching for water

shattered bowls became the norm  
learning to temper your storms

swallowing sorrows  
i was still left out to dry  
the hot sun beating

apathy became a trend  
waiting for something to bend

i let the tears fall  
the River of Life found me  
flooding and quenching

all the things you could not feel  
tirelessly searching to heal

i dig and i dig  
hands scarred from loss spread so deep  
roots ripped out exposed

tracing stories unspoken  
hostile cycles now broken

spring is coming now  
sun warm and sugar so sweet  
flowers returning

forgiving you set me free  
sacrifice allowed this to be

# The Concept of Causality

by Caitlin Chung  
digital photography  
2019





# Not for Comfort

*by K.W.  
drawing  
2021*





# Two Doors

by 晓琳

*From George Ella Lyon's  
"Where I'm From"*

I am from half a home  
from hostility and silence  
from the spilled rice and a split Swiffer  
That painted the red, purple and blues  
on my mother's skin.

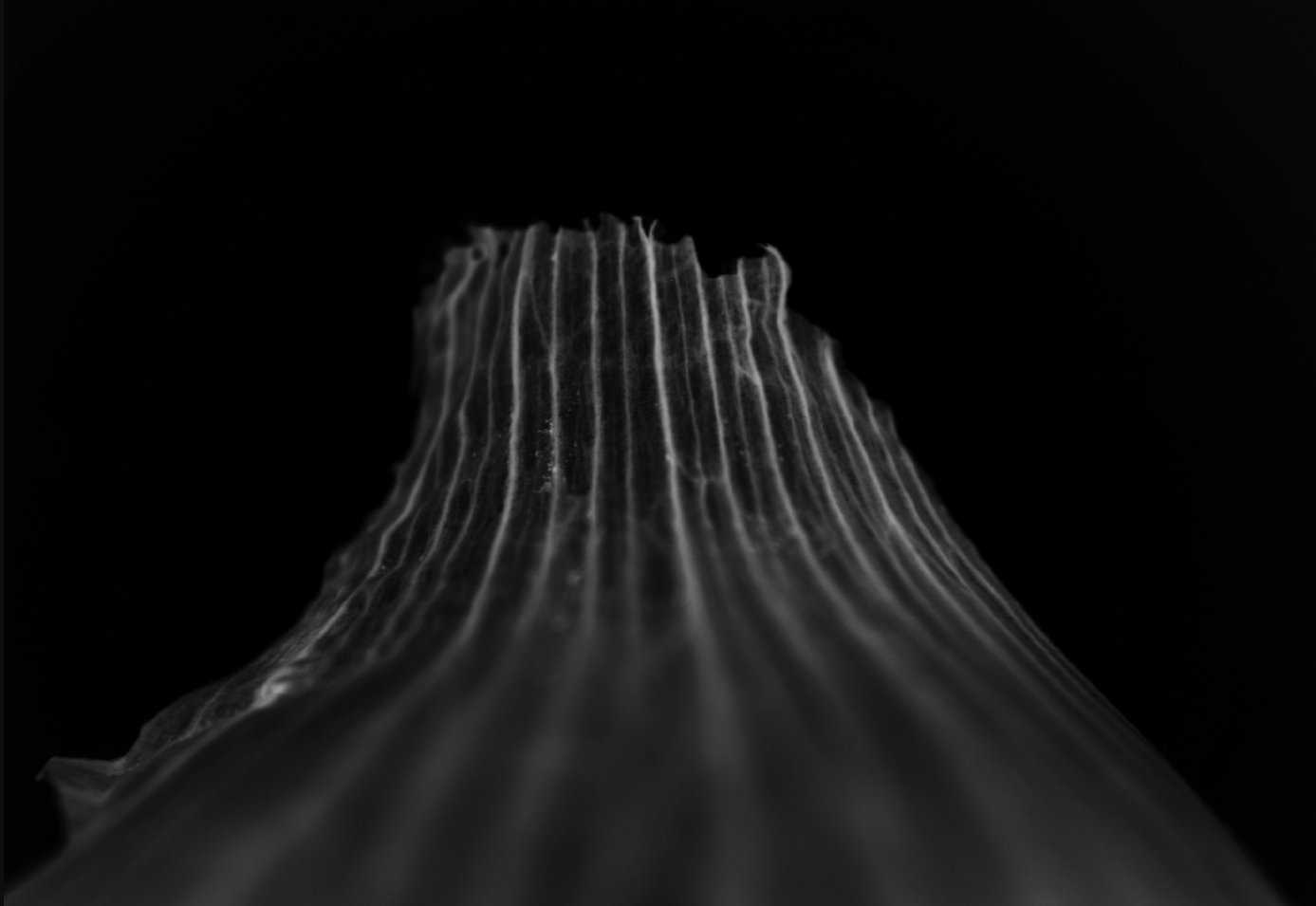
I am from the false harmony of a family  
from Thanksgiving 911s and panic sobs, trembling arms, and swallowed defeat.  
I am from this tanned beige skin that I call Asian-American  
From filial piety and saving face.  
I am from the killing system that is capitalism.  
From trauma porn and a fake American dream...

Leaving one home and searching for another,  
Stepping foot through open doors, heart growing with wonder...

I am from a chosen home.  
From the warmth of May's Cake House, \$1 nai wong baos and \$3 yuen yeungs  
that fed my resilience for years to come.  
So I say, I am from a village that opened their arms,  
from Sandra to Jeena, Phi to Huong.  
I heard their words slice through the noise  
"you are doing great," they said, "you are a strong trailblazer"  
Indeed, I am my mother's proud daughter.  
No restraints.  
From Dragon Boat rowing, scholarship winning, party jumping, and compassion seeking.  
I am from Toisan and Boston, immigrants and ABCs,  
I am what you may call, a girl full of dreams.

# remembering

*by Annie Huang  
digital photography  
2017*



# Hangry Things

by Amy Chu

*“Hangry Things” is inspired by “Hateful Things” from Sei Shonagon’s Pillow Book. A court lady from the Heian Period, Sei Shonagon is what we all aspire to be-- humorously spiteful, witty, and a prolific diarist turned writer.*

Most hateful is a leftover that has made its age and residency in the fridge well-known by its odor, discovered in the throes of craven impatience and with too little time to cook fresh lunch before class. A particularly maddening situation.

When one must turn in a research paper by dawn and scrawl it in the twilight, far past the acceptable hours post-dinner. The empty echo in the head and the tummy-- terribly hateful!

An occupied right-side, front burner that’s been stewing my housemate’s soup since 4 p.m.; garlic diced instead of minced; microwave radiation; raw meat touching wooden utensils; all inconsequential little things that have offended my mother’s particular kitchen quirks and now, in turn, my own.

A briny and vinegary packed lunch. I regret not the lunch’s scent itself, which is deliciously sour, but my squeamish lunchmate’s distaste and my inexplicable embarrassment rattling alongside my hunger.

The last slice, on the first date, of an oddly-sliced pizza, which one must graciously offer to their date for want of appearing a “lady”-- how hateful!

Similarly irritating is the disapproving stare of relatives as one helps themselves to a heaving third helping on the autumnal holiday. Surveillance of another’s body is simply superfluous, especially during festivities that demand one eats until they are as full as the moon itself!

Lost deliveries, late lunch-dates, long lectures, little portions, and insufficient loose change for the vending machine.

Purportedly, a lady has no appetite for anger... no anger for hunger. But peek underneath her pillow and you will see that she does not dream frivolously of her cravings and desires, not while a fire burns in her belly.





digital print by Amy Chu // 2021



# like, yeah, thanks?

by Maxine Bell  
digital drawing  
2021



i miss my friends >:( i miss the aac >:(



*by Nora Li  
photography  
2020*

# Dreams

by Sonya Bhatia

I didn't dream in color for most of my life. Underneath my eyelids, I would visualize fair skin when I gazed in the mirror. I felt my arms tenderly stroked and my body being peered upon by lustful gazes. I ate them up because I was ravenous to be desired.

I shook myself awake and held my body in, wrapping my arms and pulling my legs, minimizing the space I took up as I have been conditioned to do (shoulders back, my mom's voice echoes, like a lady). Shudders pattered down my chest. White womanhood has always been an elusive fantasy for a brown girl like me; an institutional model transmuted into personal agony, imposing sprawling messages of inferiority. I feel helpless, silently resentful, and still untouched.

\*\*\*

Now that I dream in color, I have unearthed my Pandora's box. Surrounded by white, ignorant faces, the key turns the lock and spirits rise up, bubbling into my blood until they coarse to the rhythm of my beating heart. This time when I awake, I am angry. But everytime I scream until my voice goes dry, I repress the urge to whisper "I am sorry."



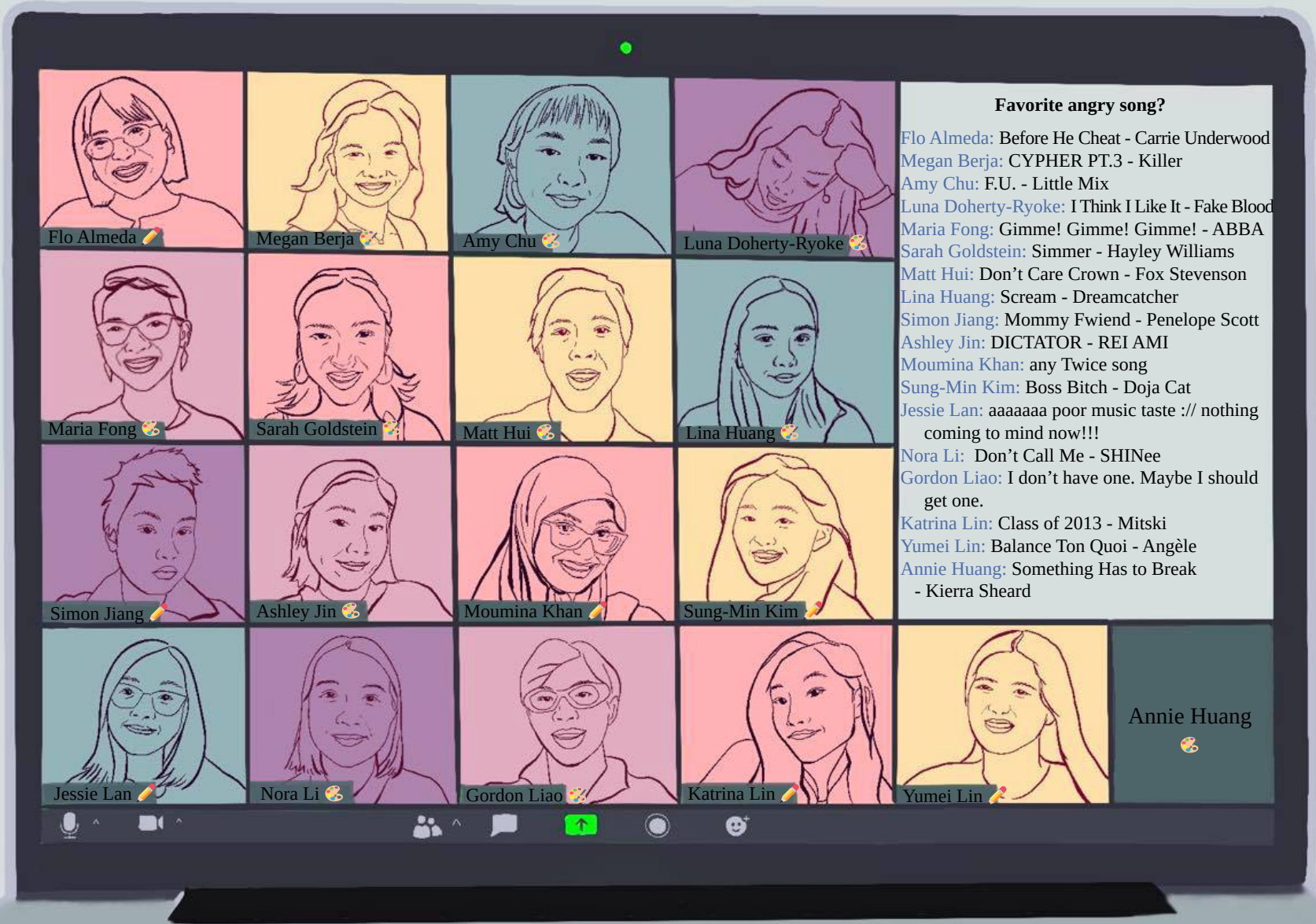
# can't you see me seething quietly

by Angela Wei  
collage  
2021





# The Zoomers





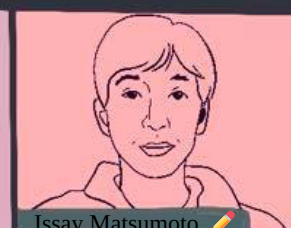
Ansel Link 🎨



Nacie Loh 🎨



Erica Luo 🎨



Issay Matsumoto 🎨



Reina Matsumoto 🎨



Richie Nakatsuka 🎨



Maya Ng-Yu 🎨



Maddie Oh 🎨



Michelle Pu 🎨



Gabe Reyes 🎨



Nuha Shaikh 🎨



Kelly Tan 🎨



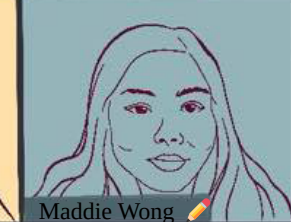
Martina Tan 🎨



Eileen Wang 🎨



Katherine Wang 🎨



Maddie Wong 🎨



Jonathan Yu 🎨



Qing Qing Pan 🎨

Ansel Link: Playback Part 2 (プレイバック・パート2) - Momoe Yamaguchi

Nacie Loh: Age of Adz - Sufjan Stevens

Erica Luo: Smack a Bitch - Rico Nasty

Issay Matsumoto: Gurenge - LiSA

Reina Matsumoto: Life Itself - Glass Animals

Richie Nakatsuka: STFU! - Rina Sawayama

Maya Ng-Yu: Changes - David Bowie

Maddie Oh: Everything in its right place - Radiohead --- but honestly i don't really listen to things that keep me in my anger

Michelle Pu: Sorry not Sorry, Sexy Bitch - ft. Akon

Gabe Reyes: Shut Up Kiss Me - Angel Olsen

Nuha Shaikh: Heal Me - Grace Carter

Kelly Tan: Potential Breakup Song - Aly and AJ

Martina Tan: Howl - Charlene Kaye

Eileen Wang: These Are The Lies - The Cab

Katherine Wang: Basically - Tei Shi

Maddie Wong: 7 Things - Miley Cyrus

Jonathan Yu: Praise You in This Storm - Casting Crowns

Qing Qing Pan: (can't decide!)

🎨 writing editor 🎨 layout designer



*“Invisibility is not a natural state for anyone.”*  
*- Mitsuye Yamada*