



**FEMINISTS ON GUARD**

**ANGEL INVADED**

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read the small print

honey      sugar you  
can suspect

to

be separated

**NINE MONTHS** / Sandra L. Faulkner / 4

**YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY!** / Elaine Woo / cover



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ROSE / Gail Grycel

In this exact moment,  
 a feathery whisper emerges.  
 Many have theories of why—or—  
 why not. But, in this moment,  
 there is no going back.

Like a flag marking the spot  
 where it all happened,  
 a corolla opens up its soul,  
 its petals all new flesh,  
 the rose blushing at the thought  
 of what just might come to be.

In another exact moment,  
 the flower is no longer the bud,  
 but starts its journey

into the fold of the self.

I remember wisps of whispers,  
 and the slick cuts  
 of paper thin petal edges.

And in that exact moment,  
*my* remembered one,  
 I felt the tickling hairs,  
 the soft petal of history,  
 my history,  
 every woman's history,  
 HER history.

Now, the bloom is vulnerable,  
 and I know there is no turning away,

so I hold her stem gently,  
 inhale the scent of down—

listen to the scratchy syllables  
 slipping into sentences  
 that summon the sun out of the cloud,  
 or the moon,  
 or the star's points played like a harp  
 cutting through the blue-black night.

Many have theories of  
 why—or—why not.  
 But, in this exact moment,  
 we will *never* go back.

■

**RESURGAM** / Adah Isaacs Menken

## INFELICIA.

## RESURGAM.

## I.

YES, yes, dear love! I am dead!  
 Dead to you!  
 Dead to the world!  
 Dead for ever!

It was one young night in May.

The stars were strangled, and the moon was blind with the  
 flying clouds of a black despair.

Years and years the songless soul waited to drift out  
 beyond the sea of pain where the shapeless life was  
 wrecked.

The red mouth closed down the breath that was hard  
 and fierce.

The mad pulse beat back the baffled life with a low  
 sob.

And so the stark and naked soul unfolded its wings to  
 the dimness of Death!

A lonely, unknown Death.

A Death that left this dumb, living body as his endless  
 mark.

“Resurgam,”  
 appearing here in *Infelicia* (1902),  
 Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott  
 is in the Public Domain.

And left these golden billows of hair to drown the  
whiteness of my bosom.

Left these crimson roses gleaming on my forehead to  
hide the dust of the grave.

And Death left an old light in my eyes, and old music  
for my tongue, to deceive the crawling worms that would  
seek my warm flesh.

But the purple wine that I quaff sends no thrill of Love  
and Song through my empty veins.

Yet my red lips are not pallid and horrified.

Thy kisses are doubtless sweet that throb out an eternal  
passion for me !

But I feel neither pleasure, passion nor pain.

So I am certainly dead.

Dead in this beauty !

Dead in this velvet and lace !

Dead in these jewels of light !

Dead in the music !

Dead in the dance !

II.

Why did I die ?

O love ! I waited—I waited years and years ago.

Once the blaze of a far-off edge of living Love crept up  
my horizon and promised a new moon of Poesy.

A soul's full life !

A soul's full love !

And promised that my voice should ring trancing  
shivers of rapt melody down the grooves of this dumb  
earth.

And promised that echoes should vibrate along the pur-



ple spheres of unfathomable seas, to the soundless folds  
of the clouds.

And promised that I should know the sweet sisterhood  
of the stars.

Promised that I should live with the crooked moon in  
her eternal beauty.

But a Midnight swooped down to bridegroom the Day.

The blazing Sphynx of that far off, echoless promise,  
shrank into a drowsy shroud that mocked the crying stars  
of my soul's unuttered song.

And so I died.

Died this uncoffined and unburied Death.

Died alone in the young May night.

Died with my fingers grasping the white throat of many  
a prayer.

III.

Yes, dear love, I died !

You smile because you see no cold, damp cerements of  
a lonely grave hiding the youth of my fair face.

No head-stone marks the gold of my poor unburied  
head.

But the flaunting poppy covered her red heart in the  
sand.

Who can hear the slow drip of blood from a dead soul ?  
No Christ of the Past writes on my laughing brow His

"Resurgam."

Resurgam.

What is that when I have been dead these long weary  
years !



## IV.

Silver walls of Sea !

Gold and spice laden barges !

White-sailed ships from Indian seas, with costly pearls  
and tropic wines go by unheeding !

None pause to lay one token at my feet.

No mariner lifts his silken banner for my answering hail.

No messages from the living to the dead.

Must all lips fall out of sound as the soul dies to be  
heard ?

Shall Love send back no revelation through this inter-  
minable distance of Death ?

Can He who promised the ripe Harvest forget the weep-  
ing Sower ?

How can I stand here so calm ?

I hear the clods closing down my coffin, and yet shriek  
not out like the pitiless wind, nor reach my wild arms after  
my dead soul !

Will no sun of fire again rise over the solemn East ?

I am tired of the foolish moon showing only her haggard  
face above the rocks and chasms of my grave.

O Rocks ! O Chasms ! sink back to your black cradles  
in the West !

Leave me dead in the depths !

Leave me dead in the wine !

Leave me dead in the dance !

## V.

How did I die ?

The man I loved—he—he—ah, well !

There is no voice from the grave.



The ship that went down at sea, with seven times  
thousand souls for Death, sent back no answer.

The breeze is voiceless that saw the sails shattered in  
the mad tempest, and heard the cry for mercy as one frail  
arm clung to the last spar of the sinking wreck.

Fainting souls rung out their unuttered messages to the  
silent clouds.

Alas ! I died not so !

I died not so !

## VI.

How did I die ?

No man has wrenched his shroud from his stiffened  
corpse to say :

*"Ye murdered me !"*

No woman has died with enough of Christ in her soul  
to tear the bandage from her glassy eyes and say :

*"Ye crucified me !"*

Resurgam ! Resurgam !





**RED LEARNS HER TRADE** / Kate Falvey

The grandmother is the wolf.  
She eats her young and blames it on the beast  
with obvious fangs while she purrs vacantly,  
sloshing her dentures with weedy atonal tea.

She reels her tales in mawkish dribbles,  
intoning anguish like a pro, piercing  
sparrow hearts with toothpick grimaces, forking  
up huddles of weakling warbles, pin feathers quavering.

And she is sharp, despite her milky glare,  
her serpent's tooth beaded with fat and secrets,  
plots glinting in splintering ladderbacks,  
her bowed back braced in the rungs.

She knits you a cape and weaves you a basket  
for you to fill with narrow escapes and hair's breath.  
She will smack her lips over the leavings, urge more escapades,  
warming her tongue over the paltry flames of your disasters

until you stare her into gleeful spasms,  
and hack your way through graveyards, unafraid.

**CROW WIFE** / Jo Lambert

I can't make tea any more  
Even if I wanted to.

I have better things to do.

Once the house is empty,  
I push over the bin,  
Root through the rubbish,

For fun  
and to upset the dog.

His eyes are bewildered,  
Asking for things I can't give now.  
Things have changed.  
I have changed.

My lousy feathers are coarse  
My beak is clumsy and  
I have no interest in  
His soft white belly  
And sadly wagging tail.  
I have other things to do.

I free my head from a crisp packet.  
That was a mistake.

Then I perch on the sofa,  
Swoop down the stairs,  
Splatter shit on the clean washing.

I sing my ugly truth  
From the bannister to the world.

Throw myself at the window  
Again and again  
Just to feel the pain.

I can do that now.

And because I am not washing up  
I shall settle on the window sill  
Study  
The public sphere.  
The garden and the bird table.  
The ivy, rustling on the barn roof,

A flock of strange, enchanting  
crows, squabbling over something  
dead (why are my people so noisy?)  
The rusty catch on the dirty window.

And above everything,  
The blue sky.



**LIGHTS THAT GROW DIM** / Kristin LaFollette

**MY BODY IS MY OWN BUT FACEBOOK DOESN'T KNOW THAT** / Naomi Borkent

Did I not speak clearly?  
(Did you not receive my instant message?)

Did I not use all my strength to push you away?  
(Did I not block you?)

I said no. (Pressed send)  
I said stop. (Pressed send)  
I said please. (Pressed send)

I say: Fuck you. Fuck you for not stopping. Fuck you for your hands. Fuck you and fuck your cock,  
I never wanted either. (Never hit the “like” button.)

A couple years later and Facebook says: “People you may know!”

(Looks like we know people in common.  
How sorry am I for them.  
Did you assault any of them, too?  
Do any of them know what you have done?)

I want to DM your Mother.

Why the fuck would  
I want to be friends  
with my rapist?  
Fuck your algorithm, Facebook.

Maybe send a notification to all  
the people of his friends list.  
“This man is a rapist.”

He sends me a message: “Long time no talk! Although we didn’t do much talking...”

Fuck. You.  
I spoke, you didn’t listen.

ADAPTATION / brit griffin

I didn't ask him to lick my ear,  
it was unexpected and unwelcomed,  
though he left traces of his saliva  
along the edges of my imagination.  
There have been other things  
I have picked up on my travels,  
not all of them were wanted,  
but I have made good use of them.

Along the forest trail  
there were traces of bear scat,  
a snag of fur from a passing wolf,  
feathers from a Northern Flicker.  
I took these.

Then on a cold city street,  
a man with a predator's leer  
gave me a new way of seeing;  
another, gathered with his pack,  
shouted "hey, want to get fucked?"  
and his boldness slipped along my neck,  
taking root as another young man  
pushed himself against my body,  
bits of him clinging to me like moss.

So now, I go where I want.  
My tread is soft and stealthy  
and they never hear me coming.  
I drum lightly along the chain fences  
and windowpanes of my territory,  
but they are unable to tell that I am close,  
even though I can smell them  
long before I see them.



**RESPONSE TO SNAKEBITE IN THE WILDERNESS** / Gail Grycel

Between rounded mounds of granite  
your trekking pole snaps,  
tension strung tight  
across your shrouded sham  
while a dream snake  
dangles from your grasp.

Faltering stride  
along crumbling crag,  
the rattles shake—the fangs strike,  
and you lunge for the branch's crook.

Venom surges in your swelling vein  
as your lips outline the curve of my cheek,  
tension strung taut across the brushed kiss,  
across your lingering fraud,  
across my licit desire,  
your fisted lust.

Lies froth from your censored skin,  
and the snake slips  
from your grip,  
coils on the cliff's rim,  
blood dripping from its chin.



**A WARRIOR'S INITIATION** / Simone Liggins

“Aradia, come on,” Elek says, annoyance creeping into his voice while flexing his hands. “You’ve got to throw a better right hook, babe, just like I showed you.”

Aradia lets out an exasperated breath into the Tennessee heat and stomps her foot. The end of August is practically hours away and the shade from the magnolia trees in the front lawn does little to spare them from the afternoon sun’s wrath. The only breeze comes from the cars whizzing by on the street in front of Elek’s parents’ house. The Adlers live in one of those small towns on the outskirts of Nashville, though their house is on one of the busier boulevards.

Gazing out towards the street, Aradia wonders if she could watch the entire town drive by in one sitting and is very glad she and Elek are only visiting. Sweat beads at the wispy edges of her thick raven hair, a picked-out pillow of curls that loop to the sky in every direction. Sweat clings to Elek as well: his shaggy, chestnut brown tresses are plastered to his glistening forehead.

“I am doing it like you showed me,” she replies, now cradling her right wrist in her left hand.

Elek snorts. “Obviously not. If you were, you wouldn’t have to rub your wrist so much.”

Aradia sticks her tongue out at him and stretches her arms above her head, leaning her body back into a long arc. A group of cars suddenly rolls by them. She catches the glint of a cerulean Mercedes, the same model as her grandmother’s. A gargantuan white van follows it. A silver Yaris, the same as her own car, rolls by as Fiona Apple’s voice rides the wind through its open windows.

“Why can’t I just cut a bastard?” Aradia laments. “If I’m attacked, I prefer the meatsack to meet justice by blood-drenched steel. Besides, I’ve never been into fisticuffs. I hardly keep my eyes open.”

Elek rolls his eyes. “There’s that affectionate term for humanity. Now how do you expect to cut someone if you can’t open your eyes long enough to throw a punch?”

Aradia grins. “Trust me, I’ll be completely aware for the killing blow. I want to relish every second.” She whips out both arms high and crouches low, an imaginary katana poised above her head.

Elek shakes his own head. “Woe to those who help feed your bloodlust, Miss Anthropic.” His smirk is so sure of the cleverness of that nickname, and it’s Aradia who rolls her eyes this time. “And anyone who loves Kill Bill as much as you should know better about the eyes. How about I throw a few punches, just close enough? Your blocking needs help, anyway.” Aradia only stares at him. “What? I promise not to hit you.”

She scoffs with a flick of her wrist. “Says the man who usually finds a way to injure me whenever we’re playing.”

“And you know I never really mean to,” he replies, trying to withhold a laugh as she serves him an accusatory glare.

Aradia swings her arms from side to side then rolls her neck. “Alright then, lover,” she smirks, framing her body into a blocking position. “Let’s disco.”

The two continue to spar, looking like kids practicing Mortal Kombat moves. Colorful blurs of cars continue to drive by them. Something white zooms past Aradia’s periphery. Hardly noticing, she smacks Elek’s hand and starts a full-on Three Stooges slap fight. After a few minutes Aradia, now wheezing from laughter, waves Elek away from her. “Okay,” she says, inhaling deeply. “Less slapping, more drinking.”

Elek laughs and walks to the front door. “More Long Islands, coming up!” He disappears into the house. Aradia walks back to the front of the yard and begins striking yoga poses. Eyes closed, she lifts a leg into Half Moon, her fingers wiggling straight above her in the air.

The sharp sound of sliding metallic doors rings out from somewhere. Aradia barely stands before rough hands grab her, dragging her to the dark void of the same chalk white van that had passed the house earlier. Screaming, she kicks out at the tangle of arms and legs surrounding her. Yards away, Elek appears at the front door again, now with two tall glasses of blended spirits in each hand. Aradia claws at the captor on her right, waving the free hand in the air and screams Elek’s name. The glasses smash to the ground as Elek bolts toward the van, shouting for her. Just as he’s about to close the distance, the strangers victoriously lock Aradia into the van and peel off down the street. At the edge of the yard, Elek continues bellowing her name.

Blazing electric fear crackles throughout Aradia’s body. She fights to see in the blistering hot dimness, nearly choking on the rank stench of sweat and onions. A tiny window stands as a gateway to the front. The driver makes hard, seemingly random turns, and she can just see a sub sandwich being strangled in a thick, pale hand. Aradia’s body jerks with the van’s momentum. She struggles to steady herself as the strangers, disguised in pig masks, approach her. Swine #1 flanks Aradia’s left.



His mask looks grey in the dark van, has angry brows, a wide snout, and a cruel, upturned crater for a mouth. His massive, meaty body looms like a boulder propped and hair-triggered to strike. Swine #2, the shorter and skinnier one on the right, sports a mask with a surprised, almost giddy expression. His lips twitch into a sneer just behind the mouth hole.

She screams and ducks as both lunge forward—Swine #2 reaches just in time to snag her shirt collar. She turns and scratches at his hand and face. Swine #2's grip loosens, but Swine #1 yanks her by the neck and tries to pin her to the floor, losing both balance and grip as the van hastily swerves into another lane. Aradia tries to pull herself up and go for the back doors. Swine #2 bolts out and latches onto her arms, locking them over her head. Swine #1 creeps closer towards Aradia with a twisted snarl plastered just under the mask, then sucker punches her in the stomach. He fumbles with the leather belt on her shorts after she breathlessly collapses to the horrendously soiled mat on the van floor.

Swine #1 is wearing shorts as well. He barricades Aradia's body between both legs. His knees are planted just below Aradia's while Swine #2 holds her arms. He shoves his left hand up her shirt, under her bra and greedily pinches a nipple as his right battles the button on her shorts. As Swine #1 breathes heavily in her face, his sour stench seeping from under his mask, reality turns hollow. Otherworldly coolness tingles across Aradia's skin as her mind's eye snaps a still shot of the crimson underground tunnel in *Irreversible*, flashes to the silver Yaris's warning of Fiona's mournful melody. *See it!* The sudden voice in her mind booms so loudly it freezes her. *These fucks are just incarnations of the hordes of men who've drenched their souls in this foulness for cons! It's the most delicious vengeance—they are yours to mark! Paint your Truth with meatsack blood!* Her eyes are gleaming wells of fury as her war cry ricochets throughout the van. Swine #2 tries to cover her mouth. She wrenches open her lips and bites down on one of his slipped fingers. He yelps and shakes the bloody hand free, now showing his bare leg. Just as Swine #1 pulls the tight panties over her hips, exposing her ass to the grimy mat, she bares teeth and strikes.

Swine #2 belts out something close to a prepubescent shriek as Aradia yanks a chunk of flesh and sinew free from his calf. He flings himself away, clutching his leg and dragging himself off to a corner of the van. Swine #1 rises a little, his hands now shaking as one lifts the mask away and sweeps sweat and brunet hair from his face. Aradia turns ignited mahogany eyes upon him as he hovers over her, now paralyzed by the sight of human flesh delicately, almost seductively caught between her blood-stained teeth and full dark lips. She holds his gaze within hers, her sight focusing on his left eye. She spits out the flesh. Seconds consume everything, muting all sound. She feels a chuckle bubble at the back of her throat, imagines Pai Mei's snow-white beard gliding on the wind with such smug justice. She shoots a thumb forward into the air.

Howls beat against the van's walls as Swine #1 flails across the floor, covering the bloody hole in his face. The driver, once silent by mouthfuls of sandwich, shouts "What's happening?!" Swine #2 still hangs onto his leg, attempting to stem the blood flow while repeatedly wailing, "Holy fuck!"

Aradia rises slowly, bracing herself against the side of the van. She looks down at the one-eyed swine, the won eyeball now clutched in her hand. A serene daze settles over her as she pulls up her underwear and shorts, stumbles to Swine #1 and hovers over him. He shudders, now on the brink of hyperventilation.

"Look, I'm sorry! Sorr—" He sputters between convulsions. "We didn't mean it—wasn't gonna hurt you bad, I SWEAR IT! We—just playing! P-please!" He stretches out a twitching hand for mercy.

Aradia stares blankly through the inner white noise. She knocks his hand away and drops to her knees to pin him. She digs out his last eye. The squeals of both swine pierce Aradia's ears as she works. Swine #1's legs kick the air, trying to knock her off of him. She screams with them, reaching a blood-lustful crescendo as she feels the right eye rip free from his skull. She stands, dangling both orbs by their tattered occipital nerves. The maimed creature is silent, unconscious from the agony. The driver is still shouting from the front seat. She turns to face Swine #2. He's dumbstruck, still cowering in the corner. Her eyes never break the hold they have on him as she slowly pulls the front of her shorts away from her body. Both eyes disappear into the opening and she re-buckles her belt.

While terror rides Swine #2's face, a sinister smile blooms on Aradia's. Swine #2's mouth quivers over the words "HEY! S-STOP THE VAN! STOP THE FUCKING VAN!" The vehicle skids to a halt and they all brace for the whiplash. He whimpers as he tries to stand. He fumbles with the back doors then flings them open. Countless cars whip by the van, trailing the Doppler Effect and a heavy asphalt breeze behind them. At some point they'd gotten onto the expressway.

"Go. Just go. PLEASE!" Swine #2 fights back sobs. For a second Aradia stands there, eyes fixed on the speeding cars. She starts forward then pauses, turning to look at Swine #2 once more. Their eyes meet for just a breath before she plants a fierce right hook on his chin. He crumples and lies still. She jumps over him and out the van and runs along the road's shoulder. Tires screech as the van takes off in the opposite direction. The hot wind lashes at Aradia's face as she tries to run close to the expressway wall without smacking her pumping left arm on it.

Cars zoom by like bullets. Aradia figures she must be somewhere in the Nashville city limits. *How the hell can I get help?* she thinks. *What am I supposed to do, jump and wave in the middle of a fucking lane?* Ahead of her, she notices a break in the expressway's sound wall and a bold patch of sunlight shining through it. She approaches the opening and peers over the side.

The shrubbery along the wall is waist-high and borders flat green land. Aradia decides on this path and jumps over the broken concrete ridge. Walking through the shrubbery, a tiny twig snags her back pocket. As she yanks herself free, her fingers brush the top of her phone.

"Goddess bless deep pockets!" she gasps in incredulous relief. The blood on her hands is still slick. She gingerly holds the phone around its edges. She scans the land. A few yards away, she spots a playground, a few benches, and a park sign. There's no one around. She heads for the sign on the mound. "Welcome to Butler Park" is etched in bright orange letters. She sits on a bench and dials Elek's number. He answers the first ring.

"It's me, honey." Aradia can't fight the grizzly smirk. "No ransom's needed."

"Praise fuck, you're alive! Are you hurt?! Where are you?!"

"Butler Park, apparently. I'm...alright. Can you get here quickly?"

"I don't know where that is, but I'll find out. I'm leaving right now. I love you, Aradia."

"I love you too, Elek." She hangs up.

All nerves are still on fire as Aradia paces. Her vision is lost in a place where she watches herself snatch out that foul excuse for a human's eye like a GIF from an overseas snuff film. The memory of her merciless defense strikes a loose chord. Was it too extreme of an instant karmic punishment? Who...what...the hell was that voice? The whimsical and sometimes unnerving noise in her head has always streamed at light-speed—has she finally tapped into divinity, insanity...both? A car rolls by and gently brakes at a stop sign. She eyes it warily. A news report floats out from its open windows. A monotone male voice drones through the doors' speakers announcing that the protests for women's rights in Dubai are continuously growing, sparked by an attack on a young woman who was gang-raped on a bus earlier in the month. The car drives away. Aradia's smile is firm, that twinge of madness returns. Her fingers graze the two dark, lumpy stains on her shorts. "Divine justice it is, then."

Nearly thirty minutes tick by before Aradia spots Elek's car approaching her. He hits the brakes and leaps out. Elek throws his arms around her, trails kisses on her bloodstained face and squeezes her breathless. She returns the hug but keeps her hands light on his clothes. He steps back and cups her face. "I thought I'd never see you again! Damn, those pieces of shit got far!" Tears of relief rim his eyes, rapidly washing away the panic. "Just tell me what you need."

She inhales, releases it. "Your father's whiskey. Three fingers." She holds up the number of fingers, the blood now flaky crimson scales on her skin. Elek's eyes widen. "I'll reveal all at home."

He hesitates a moment, then nods and opens the car door for her. They climb in and drive off into the rising dusk.



"Now, am I pronouncing this right? A-rah-dee-ah? Hilliard?" Cop #1, a well-toned, crew-cut brunet man who looks to be in his late forties speaks first. Cop #2 is a younger woman, possibly early thirties with red hair pulled into a high chignon is flipping for a fresh page in a small notepad, her pencil ready. Aradia simply nods. "Now I know you've been through a true ordeal," he says, "but we really need you to recall all that you remember as accurately as possible."

Twilight has set in. Aradia is silent for a moment. She hasn't put much thought in what to say to the cops, but they'd arrived at the house just as she and Elek had. She takes a slow swig of her neat Gentleman Jack. "I demonstrated a glimpse of the true power of woman, ancient and everlasting," she finally answers, setting her glass on the table surface. "I'm...satisfied the lesson was well taught."

Confusion is plastered on every face in the room. Cop #2's stare turns hard. "What do you mean by that?" Her voice is slow and cautious. Her eyes flash to Aradia's blood-encrusted hands, to the dried flakes on her chin. "How exactly did you defend yourself, miss?"

Aradia scans the room, eyeing the frightened expression of Mrs. Adler, the anxious face of her husband, the worry lines around Elek's eyes. "May I have an evidence bag?" She asks Cop #1. She looks to Mrs. Adler. "And a black Sharpie, please?"

Both hesitate at first then move to make her requests. Cop #1 hands her a quart-sized, clear plastic bag labeled "EVIDENCE" while Elek's mother passes her the marker. She thanks them and takes the items. She speaks as she writes.

“Let this be known...to all of the men out there who have no respect for women...those who have thrilled in destroying the lives of someone’s mother, sister, niece, grandmother for centuries on end. To those who blame us like we somehow deserve this torture. Let the vengeance be felt. Let the justice be...” she lets out a bitter chuckle, “seen.”

She holds up the bag. “THE EXTENT OF WOMEN’S MERCY” is written in bold obsidian letters. The people look at each other, shaking their heads in wondrous suspense. Aradia stands, holds the bag open with one hand while reaching down her shorts with the other. Swine #1’s eyes, now slightly mashed and slimy with coagulated blood and vitreous fluid, emerge from her shorts. With the occipital nerves gently wrapped around her fingers, she dangles the eyes in the air. She drops them into the bag and seals it. Mr. Adler’s face loses all color as Mrs. Adler shrieks. Elek shrinks back in his seat and the cops are simply frozen. “This,” that maniacal smile creeps across her face for a third time that day, “is the logical evolution of rape-culture. You should take a picture, show it to the next rape suspect you book. Remind him, all of them, that there are, in fact, memories and fates worse than death. Trust me,” she offers the bag to the officers, “we women are all well aware.” Cop #1 actually takes a minute step back. Cop #2 flinches, but reaches out to take the evidence.

“Well,” Cop #1 clears his throat loudly, trying to regain control. “I think that this is enough for tonight. Your...boyfriend said that you’re both on vacation and will leave soon, but we’d...appreciate you coming by the prescient tomorrow for a more detailed statement. You clearly need your rest. Thank you, Aradia. We’ll be in touch.” He motions hard to Cop #2 for the front door.

“Of course, officers. Oh, one more thing?” Aradia sits, clasps her drink again. They turn to face her. “If you hear of anyone checking into a hospital with a chunk of flesh bitten from his right leg, go see about him. He can tell you where the blind little piggy is.” She tips her glass to them. Cop #2 nearly snorts before catching herself. Cop #1 stares for a second, shakes his head again and picks up his pace to the door. Cop #2 says goodnight to the room. Slowly, everyone stares at Aradia.

A wild breeze blows through the open window next to Aradia, rustling the leaves of the willow tree in the backyard. The glow of the waxing gibbous moon is just gaining its strength as the sun handles a new day in the Eastern Hemisphere. Aradia extends a hand towards Elek. For a moment, he doesn’t move. Her smile is calm, gentle love now. Finally, he reaches out, sliding his hand in hers.

“Guess what?” she whispers. He lifts his eyebrows in response, seemingly unsure of using his voice. “I finally landed that damn right hook.”

He stares a moment, then lets out a satisfied yet unnerved cackle. She winks at him and downs the rest of her drink. From somewhere deep inside, she hears a roaring ovation of women worldwide, reverberating across the ages. *Oh yes*, the awakened warrior thinks. *Divine justice, indeed.*



**MAN'S BIG DOG** / brit griffin

Don't walk your big dog in front of my house,  
not when the sky is yellow  
and the lights have been turned down low.

Don't walk your big dog past my house,  
his thick, slow swagger  
and heavy choke chain don't scare me.

Don't walk your big dog in front of my house  
when the morning air is warm  
and the sky has a sweet, deep redness to it.

Don't walk your big dog past my house.

**I AM JUST SO FUCKING SICK OF THIS SHIT (A PARENTHETICAL POEM OF BULLETS)** / Victoria Bailey

I am just so fucking sick of:

- being inappropriately touched by men from my preschool years 'til now four decades later (if it means, as they say when I complain, 'It means you've still got it,' I'd rather not)
- being told when and where to go literally and figuratively by male drivers (when I've driven round the world for decades and never caused an accident)
- marketization, commodification, expectation, and exploitation (like, you know, of women)
- paying more for less (and being paid less for more)
- being overlooked, dismissed, and blanked by men (while I have to overlook, dismiss and blank men just to keep going)
- any and all cleaning (although bonus, you do tend to get left alone when you do it)
- tricking women into idealised motherhood (aka 'the great haemorrhoid conspiracy')
- wo-menstruating stigma (that's the real period pain)
- struggling to find art and literature for my daughter by females about females (why does the personal I choose for her have to be so very political)
- any woman seeing only shame and not herself in mirrors (fuck you, cheap, bad-for-the-environment, mass-produced looking glass)
- patronizing patriarchal patterns worn into every path I walk (I can find my own way)
- fearing for my daughter (she can't tell, can she?)
- policing my sons (they can't tell, can they?)
- no one believing me when I say there is no such thing as women's flaws (no one believing me because I'm a woman, period)
- being sniggered, sighed and eye-rolled at, and confronted only by male students (and seeing the same response suppressed by male colleagues)

- waking up to read the news that another woman has been murdered by her partner in my home town (the paper said it was an epidemic, surely they mean gender-demic?)
- being medically hormonally homogenized (it can't all be ovarian)
- the male gaze (there's nothing casual about it)
- being told I am altogether too much and not enough (I don't want to be palatable for your tastes)
- lamenting all the art and songs and words that died with her (once they're gone, they're gone)
- playing my accomplishments down (secretly I cherish you choking on my succulent success)
- crying (I'm fine really, it's just dust, allergies, tiredness, a bit of fragile masculinity in my eye)
- having to hammer my resistance into hashtags (sweet cyborg dreams, where are you now?)
- being shamed for liking getting older (I love how my silver hair makes you grimace)
- being told 'after you' (there's a difference between an order and a gesture and I can tell the difference)
- male spitting (I have swallowed a life time of bitterness, can't you let your privilege run down your throat?)
- squabbling sisters (I'll never be too radical for you, hold my hand while you swim in the fluidity)
- being examined under a gender lens you then put away (mine's unshakable)
- having so many points like those above to put into bullets (I could go on, but I choose to try to stop it instead).





**LIFESTYLE** / Sandra L. Faulkner

Wild

cocaine

skip your

thrill hitting high

risk

illicit

placental abruption

spend hours

obsessed

pose

your

trouble

bump

silent that fetus

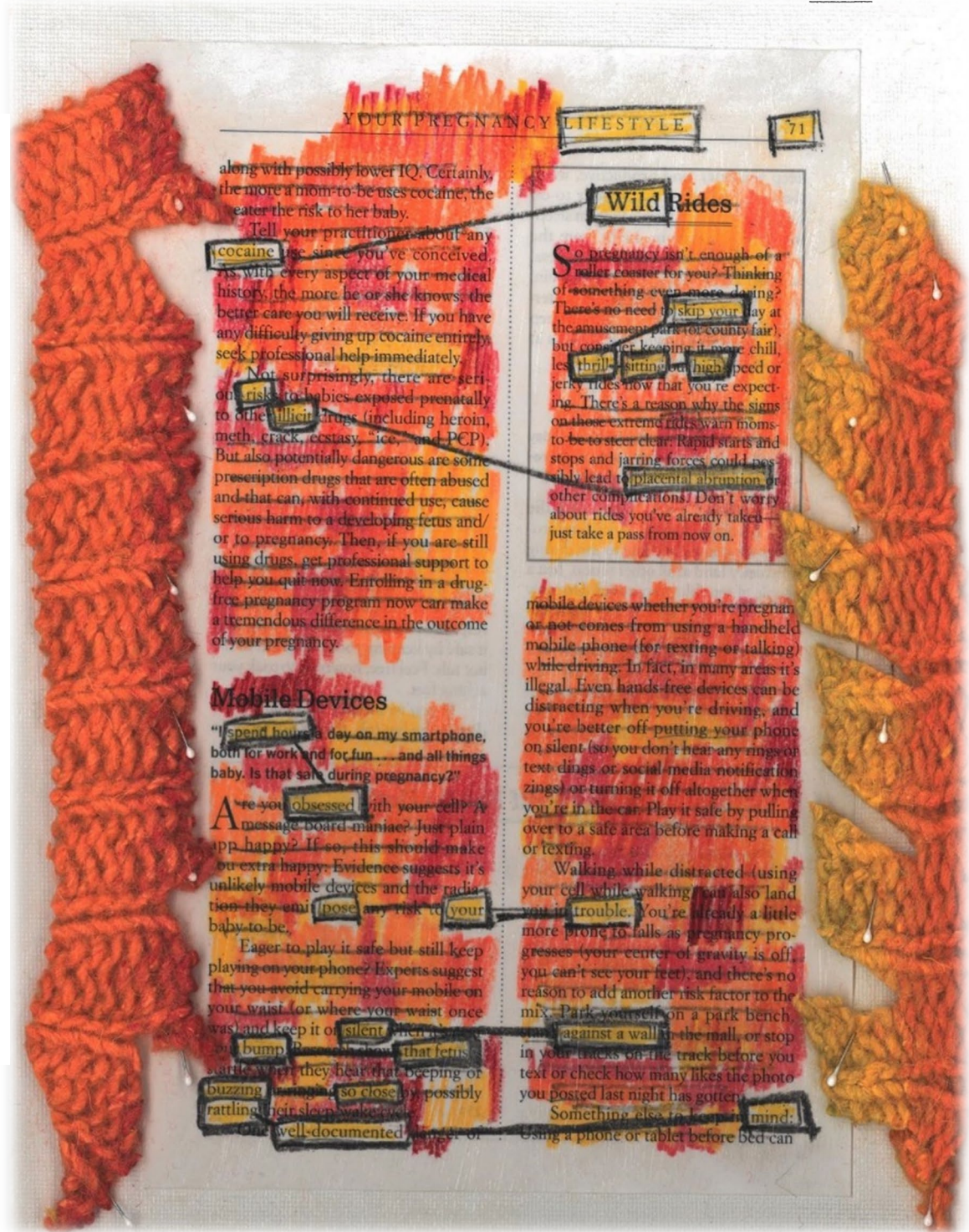
against a wall

buzzing rattling

so close

well-documented

mind



**Wild Rides**

So pregnancy isn't enough of a smaller coaster for you? Thinking of something even more daring? There's no need to skip your day at the amusement park (or county fair), but consider keeping it more chill, less thrill-sitting out high-speed or jerky rides now that you're expecting. There's a reason why the signs on those extreme rides warn moms-to-be to steer clear: Rapid starts and stops and jarring forces could possibly lead to placental abruption or other complications. Don't worry about rides you've already taken—just take a pass from now on.

along with possibly lower IQ. Certainly, the more a mom-to-be uses cocaine, the greater the risk to her baby.

Tell your practitioner about any cocaine use since you've conceived. As with every aspect of your medical history, the more he or she knows, the better care you will receive. If you have any difficulty giving up cocaine entirely, seek professional help immediately.

Not surprisingly, there are serious risks to babies exposed prenatally to other illicit drugs (including heroin, meth, crack, ecstasy, "ice," and PCP). But also potentially dangerous are some prescription drugs that are often abused and that can, with continued use, cause serious harm to a developing fetus and/or to pregnancy. Then, if you are still using drugs, get professional support to help you quit now. Enrolling in a drug-free pregnancy program now can make a tremendous difference in the outcome of your pregnancy.

**Mobile Devices**

"I spend hours a day on my smartphone, both for work and for fun... and all things baby. Is that safe during pregnancy?"

Are you obsessed with your cell? A message-board maniac? Just plain app happy? If so, this should make you extra happy. Evidence suggests it's unlikely mobile devices and the radiation they emit pose any risk to your baby-to-be.

Eager to play it safe but still keep playing on your phone? Experts suggest that you avoid carrying your mobile on your waist (or where your waist once was) and keep it on silent when you're on a bump. Research shows that fetuses joltle when they hear that beeping or buzzing (or rattling) so close by, possibly rattling their sleep-wake cycle.

Something else to keep in mind: Using a phone or tablet before bed can

mobile devices whether you're pregnant or not comes from using a handheld mobile phone (for texting or talking) while driving. In fact, in many areas it's illegal. Even hands-free devices can be distracting when you're driving, and you're better off putting your phone on silent (so you don't hear any rings or text dings or social-media-notification zings) or turning it off altogether when you're in the car. Play it safe by pulling over to a safe area before making a call or texting.

Walking while distracted (using your cell while walking) can also land you in trouble. You're already a little more prone to falls as pregnancy progresses (your center of gravity is off, you can't see your feet), and there's no reason to add another risk factor to the mix. Park yourself on a park bench or against a wall in the mall, or stop in your tracks on the track before you text or check how many likes the photo you posted last night has gotten.

Something else to keep in mind: Using a phone or tablet before bed can

Source Text: Heidi Murkoff and Sharon Mazel. (2016). What To Expect When You're Expecting (5th ed), p. 71. New York: Workman Publishing.

Excerpt from **THE YELLOW WALLPAPER** / Charlotte Perkins Gilman

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wallpaper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw—not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper—the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here.

It creeps all over the house.

I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs.

It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it—there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like.

It is not bad—at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful. I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house—to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the *color* of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even *smooch*, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round—round and round and round—it makes me dizzy!



“The Yellow Wallpaper,”  
appearing here from  
Project Gutenberg (2008)  
is in the Public Domain.

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern *does* move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside-down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.



I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her on that long shaded lane, creeping up and down. I see her in those dark grape arbors, creeping all around the garden.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.

And though I always see her she *may* be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.





Are you a mother?

as if there's some shame in it

as if there's something wrong with my body

I feel no sense of loss or longing, my anatomy is numb

my life to give life

Capable child, daughter, wife,

adult,

girl

I often feel outside myself

**ARE YOU A MOTHER?**  
/ Kristin LaFollette

**MAMMIFERI** / Zanne Aaglio

Hung over a cane  
one leg kinked (I could tell  
though his trousers fell wide  
and were belted under the arm pits)  
he stood at the war memorial.

*Buon giorno* I said  
He mumbled ...  
*Come?*  
*Mi piacciono le donne* I heard

My eyeballs twirled  
brows rose for the jab  
*gimme a fucking break* I sighed

and said  
*anch'io*  
smiling burnt  
pop-tart sweet  
walking away  
leaving him yoked  
to the empty milk jugs  
Mary thought I would fill.

**UNFAMILIARS** / M. Eileen

“Marguerite!”

The voice boomed, box-like, from across the pharmacy. Our protagonist, the woman shouted at, stood, unphased, in the first aid aisle. She wore a tea-length brown dress with small, lavender petals designed on it. She did not reveal any recognition of the hollers for a certain person named Marguerite, so it is only fair that we squarely concede we cannot and will not acknowledge the identity of the true Marguerite in this tale. It was certain, however, that the young woman in the tea dress was Marguerite in someone’s mind, right or wrong as it may be. This someone, a young man likely of the same age as the woman in the tea dress, but with a face distinctly more worn and weathered, had full intentions of speaking to her.

The moment when he spotted her must have first been when Marguerite/Not-Marguerite traversed the main pathway of the pharmacy, a mad dash from paper supplies to first aid across white tiles peppered with red, blue, green globs. She knew, as did anyone familiar with the pharmacy, that the one path, spare of aisles, was the location of many uncomfortable rendezvous.

The name was called again, again, and surprisingly, again.

Marguerite/Not-Marguerite continued not to move or even twitch when the name was called, reflecting little likelihood that Marguerite/Not-Marguerite was indeed Marguerite. Instead, the woman in the tea dress continued to pick up boxes of bandages or gauze, turn them to the side, read the back matter, and return them to the shelf.

“Marguerite!” The young man shouted, though he had reached the end of pathway, the crossroads of paper goods and first aid where Marguerite/Not-Marguerite had disappeared. He could have whispered her name at this point. Which he, in fact, did.

“Marguerite!” He hissed. “Marguerite! Are you pretending you don’t remember me?”

Marguerite/Not-Marguerite continued to run her eyes, apple-round, and an odd shade of lavender-grey, up and down the panels affixed to two bottles of peroxide—one brand name, one generic.

The man uncoiled his arm in a manner that any observer could have noted he was questioning himself as he did it, and may even have been regretting the motion as the arm unfolded at the elbow, the wrist and fingers flexing far. Once he contacted Marguerite’s skin, his expression changed to one of extreme enjoyment: wide eyes, wide nostrils, wide smile. What exactly it was that he was enjoying is notably unclear.

“Marguerite,” he said again. “I’m sorry, am I in your way?” she asked, her voice the embodiment of tissues, hushed and sheer, but somehow, still something needed when sick.

“Marguerite,” the young man sneered.

“I’m sorry,” Marguerite/Not-Marguerite said, “you’ve mistaken me for someone else. I’m not Marguerite.”

“You are. Don’t lie. Don’t be too good for us.”

“Did you lose Marguerite in the pharmacy? Maybe if you tell me what she looks like I can help you look for her?  
Or notify a cashier that she is missing?”

“Marguerite!”

“Okay, I am very sorry, sir, but at this point I have to tell you that you are making me uncomfortable in a public place. I’m going to excuse myself and if you continue to follow me, I will alert the authorities. I wish you good luck finding who you are looking for.”

Marguerite/Not-Marguerite plucked the young man’s knuckles, finger by finger, from her arm where they had interlocked and stained, leaving a red impression she knew would turn black and blue, like ones from years before. She left the pharmacy, and once out the doors, promptly vomited into the garbage can adjacent to the entrance.





**EXIT PAPERS** / Tiffany Washington

We found you once  
inside a frame  
charcoaled and neatly hung  
thin pencil lines, beneath.

You awakened to the world -  
despite the pills

between fists, you  
clutched broken halves  
of a life dreamed  
on misinterpreted kind words  
and store-bought birthday tokens

I could not fix you  
and you, still shattered,  
tore the frame to shreds.

Off her meds, she calls  
breathing frantic, deep, between sobs,  
telling me I'm the only one she can talk to -  
(her roommate home for the weekend)  
telling me that this time, she really *needs* to die.  
And I, half awake, weigh the idea of  
calling her bluff - and telling her just to do it -  
but I never could, never will - because what if...  
And this thought looms above every conversation -  
In every e-mail and the months in between.  
Could it be a repeat performance of Lithium pills  
(the summer before we met) or the razor hidden  
beneath the mattress, stashed after evening showers,  
before bed checks?  
And when will this time be the last time?



**PALM READING** / Tiffany Washington

My mother told me my hands were clammy,  
too sweaty to hold.

But then, at Robbie's funeral  
the unexpected coffin,  
the drunk priest – blaming us each  
for the rope, the closet, the goodbye note  
she squeezed my hand –  
whispered,

“He's crazy. No one's too blame.”

Afterwards, she did not let go of  
my hand

even when his father told us  
the priest's words were what  
“some” needed to hear.

Even when she packed her plate  
with egg salad and pasta  
in the parish hall basement.

Years later, it was not my

mother but another woman  
who held my hand.

*(tu fais un beau couple)*

The complement, unexpected,  
unreturned.

The promise months later engraved  
on a silver ring –  
promises exchanged before friends –  
salt air and wind.

Now my clumsy hands braid  
a daughter's hair, so unlike my own.

My oldest son's hands  
behind him – silver tightly wrapped  
out of reach,  
out of control

hands that once were so tiny  
poking beneath the

closet door – reaching for me  
 to help him –  
 the glass doorknob broken on  
 the outside (brother’s rambunctious playing).  
 My words of comfort  
 too small to rescue him  
 from this mess he’s made.  
 My hands up early mornings  
 to scribble some words  
 once full of “potential” as  
 teachers promised –  
 now dried and cracked.  
 My hands too small to fix  
 the broken things –  
 too large to mend them,  
 my hands wrung in lost nights  
 of broken sleep  
 and worry.  
 My hands sore and tired,  
 old, and waiting.



**RAIN** / Kristin LaFollette

GOD'S WILL / Naomi Borkent

A tiny flicker of life. I didn't even know  
you were there. Snugly nestled into the warmth  
of my womb.

*This was God's will.*

Moon blood didn't come, my hopes began  
to soar. It couldn't be true.  
Could it?

*This was God's will.*

Two pink lines appeared and I felt more  
love than I even knew possible.  
Shared joy with your Father as we realized  
you had joined us and were already  
growing.

*This was God's will.*

Months went by and my belly swelled.

You kicked and turned and danced to your Father's voice  
and my touch.

*This was God's will.*

We were anticipating your arrival

when suddenly you stopped. No kicks and turns no happy dancing. Eerily and frighteningly still. The midwife's face tightened when she heard. "Go to the hospital, now."

Silent NST. Silent doppler. A nurse whispers softly to the other, the one with tears in her eyes, "I will page high risk."

A howling scream of grief when the doctor told me your heartbeat had stopped.

Through blood, sweat, tears and agony your body entered this world. Ripped away from mine too soon. Tiny and blue. Your cord, the cord that sustained your life and connected you to me, wrapped thrice around your neck.

So when well-meaning people said to me:

*This was God's will,*

Forgive me when I spit and scream:

"If there is a God, who wishes a child dead in his Mother's womb, it is not a God I worship."

*This was never God's will!*

**THE SORROW OF MALLOMARS** / Ann Cefola

Once the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, now two letters, bankrupt.  
Local store like a museum: Produce man, aka The Bald Guy, now manager.  
Gray-haired lady who exited the role, won't look at me, stares at a woman  
going through her wallet a few feet away.

A quarter century hiking aisles, list in my mother's left-right script.  
And she, carved ivory at 89, arms skeletal as a ghost from Christmas past.  
Do they remember me, with my coupons of despair, during college?  
Today, five slices of deluxe ham, please. *No cheese?* The deli man asks.

The Mallomars only available during winter, s'mores of summer camp  
compressed and packaged and up to six dollars at the height of the season.  
Their short visit to be consumed. My mother, in her dream, saying *I don't have much time.*  
*I didn't know Mallomars melted so easily. I just had the window open.*

And I waking understanding shopping. I want to grab that girl from long ago and say  
*You should be in college.* But I know she would wheel her cart away.  
She doesn't want to be here anymore than I do  
like pimento cheese in a glass jar that gets knifed out.

**RAGING AT ANCESTORS** / Ann Cefola

You could see me on Fenimore Road,  
slapping the steering wheel and shouting,  
*Why did you do this to me?*

I mean my grandparents, my mother's father,  
judge who once released a chain gang  
Christmas 1911; his wife, hometown news praised  
for seeking owner of a terrier who'd jumped  
into her roadster and refused to leave.

*This is your daughter*, I spit out,  
only child in a household  
a first cousin calls *Disneyland*.

Oh, growing up, I heard about her seamstress,  
maid, and, first thing in the morning, berry pie.  
Now I drive her to podiatrist, hematologist,  
dermatologist, hair dresser; pick up her tailored suit,  
search three markets for Entemann's cherry cheesecake  
the only breakfast. *You*, I breathe, *you*.  
*You created this hydra. Take her back.*

**ARE YOU PREGNANT?** / Sandra L. Faulkner

be negative                      call  
   the pregnancy  
program a hormonal imbalance

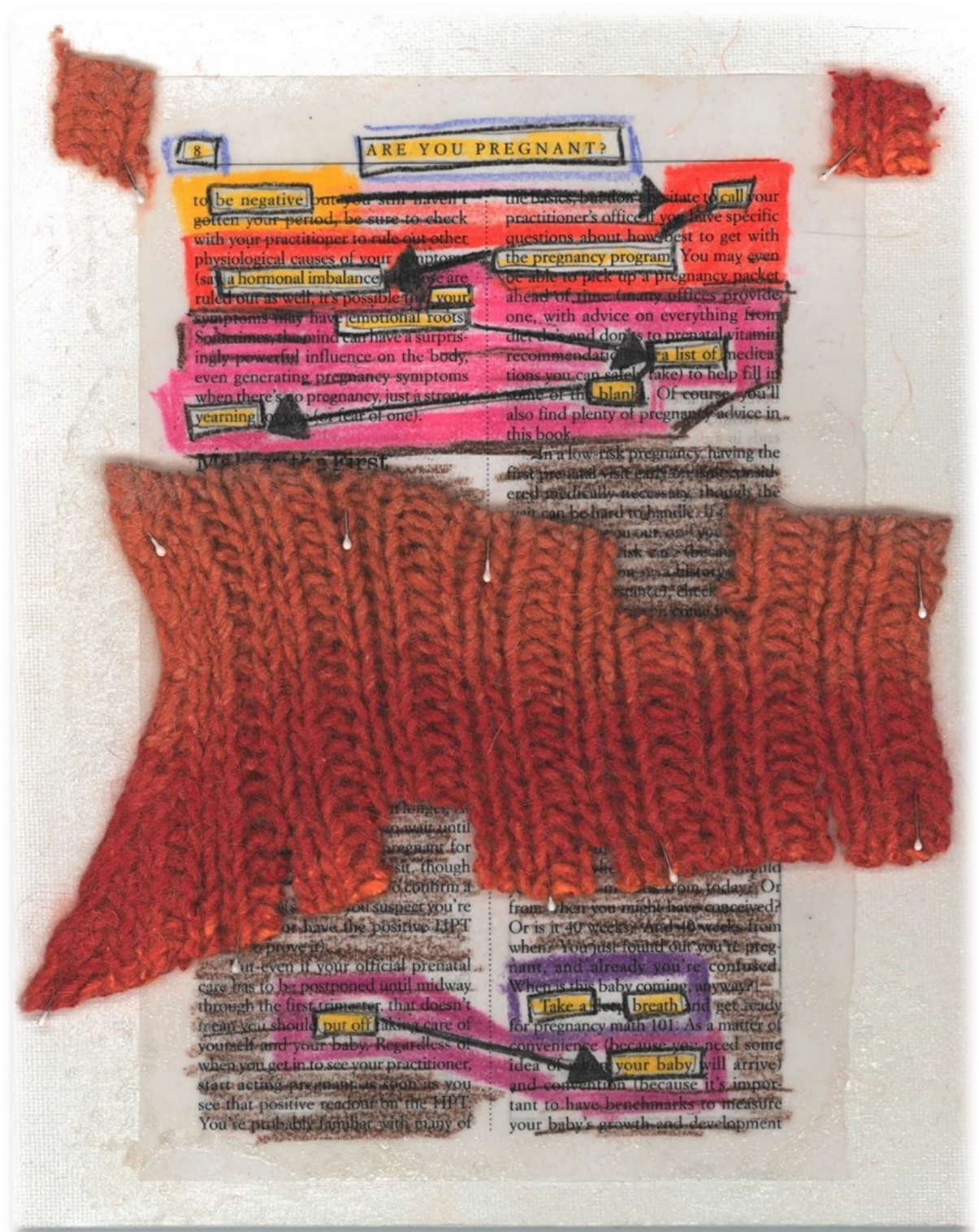
   your  
emotional  
tools

   blank    a list of  
yearning

   Take a breath

put off

   your baby

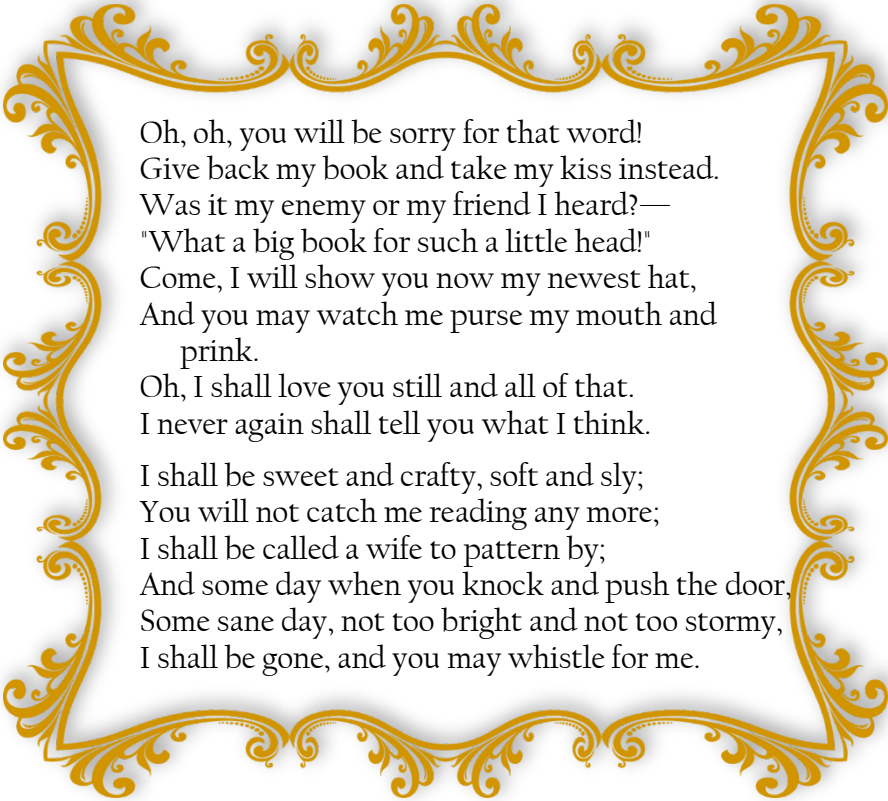




**THREE SONNETS** / Edna St. Vincent Millay

A wagon stopped before the house; she heard  
 The heavy oilskins of the grocer's man  
 Slapping against his legs. Of a sudden whirred  
 Her heart like a frightened partridge, and she ran  
 And slid the bolt, leaving his entrance free;  
 Then in the cellar way till he was gone  
 Hid, breathless, praying that he might not see  
 The chair sway she had laid her hand upon  
 In passing. Sour and damp from that dark vault  
 Arose to her the well-remembered chill;  
 She saw the narrow wooden stairway still  
 Plunging into the earth, and the thin salt  
 Crusting the crocks; until she knew him far,  
 So stood, with listening eyes upon the empty  
     doughnut jar.

I, being born a woman and distressed  
 By all the needs and notions of my kind,  
 Am urged by your propinquity to find  
 Your person fair, and feel a certain zest  
 To bear your body's weight upon my breast:  
 So subtly is the fume of life designed,  
 To clarify the pulse and cloud the mind,  
 And leave me once again undone, possessed.  
 Think not for this, however, the poor treason  
 Of my stout blood against my staggering brain,  
 I shall remember you with love, or season  
 My scorn with pity,—let me make it plain:  
 I find this frenzy insufficient reason  
 For conversation when we meet again.



Oh, oh, you will be sorry for that word!  
 Give back my book and take my kiss instead.  
 Was it my enemy or my friend I heard?—  
 "What a big book for such a little head!"  
 Come, I will show you now my newest hat,  
 And you may watch me purse my mouth and  
     prink.  
 Oh, I shall love you still and all of that.  
 I never again shall tell you what I think.  
 I shall be sweet and crafty, soft and sly;  
 You will not catch me reading any more;  
 I shall be called a wife to pattern by;  
 And some day when you knock and push the door,  
 Some sane day, not too bright and not too stormy,  
 I shall be gone, and you may whistle for me.

These poems, appearing here from  
*The Harp-weaver and Other Poems*,  
 Project Gutenberg (2019),  
 are in the Public Domain.

Women and Anger / Lisa Levy

Have women always been angry? Haven't we had enough to be angry about? We were angry, for example, about suffrage. We were angry about laws preventing us from owning or inheriting property. We were angry that we were beaten and sexually assaulted and even raped by our suitors and husbands and the men in our families (along with men who should have intervened, like doctors and cops) who protected each other. Lately, we've been angry about an epidemic of harassment and persecution in the workplace, and the old-boy favoritism shown to males when it comes to raises and promotions even though women are just as if not more qualified.

Thus the mini-trend in the last year of books focusing on women's anger: *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger* by Soraya Chemaly (2018); *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger* by Rebecca Traister (2018), Leslie Jamison's recent essay collection, *Make It Scream, Make it Burn*; the anthology called *Burn It Down: Women Writing About Anger*, edited by Lilly Dancyger; and from earlier in 2019, *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower*, by Brittany Cooper. Three of these books, it's worth noting, have subtitles that invoke power, and Cooper's book depends on a trust she develops with her audience remarkably quickly. It's not a long mental leap from thinking about power to recognizing the conjoining of power and anger. So, if we ask again, why are women angry? They answer is we don't have enough power in the institutions which form our society: local government, the court system, the medical professions, the police, and the smoldering trash fire which is now the executive branch of the American government, watched over by an unrepentant degrader and harasser of women who is a little too distant from his chilly wife and a little too close

to his grown daughter.

These books posit that women's anger is a source of power, but I question that assumption. It's relatively easy to get people to agree with you when you are angry and a sliver of the angry population (trolls, incels, jihadists) is your target. It's quite another to interrogate your own society to find the pressure points: that's how you pinpoint power. For Virginia Woolf, whom I still think is the most provocative writer we have about women and power, it was "no more arts and wiles, no more fun and games. Today women writers are involved in a fierce encounter with the physical and sexual and social facts of their lives, and given women's experience the encounter is bound to be bloody." Woolf's words lead up to a "fierce encounter" between the sexes. Or maybe it's Edwardian foreplay.

We are more comfortable than we used to be seeing an angry woman, and I daresay we now have a larger spectrum of who an angry woman is. If we take the baseline angry woman as a victim of sexual assault, we saw a parade of them in the Bill Cosby trial; we've seen them up against the media, like Susan Fowler; we've seen them as clean-cut college students turned activists, trying to raise awareness about the prevalence of sexual assault on their campuses and to urge the administration to do something about it. We've seen them in a variety of roles: attorneys, decorators, businesswomen, housewives. We've even seen them as senators and congresswomen. There is something that normalizes the anger when you see it up and down the social spectrum, makes it seem part of the fabric of the community. Makes it seem human.

Once I started thinking about women and anger, I quickly jumped back to Woolf's famous essay about women and fiction, *A Room of One's Own*, which is, in fact, very angry.

Books, I decided, were very trigger-y: I should know, I'm a book critic who reads a lot of rough stuff. I know I can find a lot of angry women at the library, like the great scene in *Room of One's Own* where Virginia Woolf decides to look up "women" in the index of books about civilization:

Whatever the reason, all these books, I thought, surveying the pile on the desk, are worthless for my purposes. They were worthless scientifically, that is to say, though humanly they were full of instruction, interest, boredom, and very queer facts about the habits of the Fiji Islanders. They had been written in the red light of emotion and not in the white light of truth. Therefore they must be returned to the central desk and restored each to his own cell in the enormous honeycomb. All that I had retrieved from that morning's work had been the one fact of anger. The professors--I lumped them together thus--were angry. But why, I asked myself, having returned the books, why, I repeated, standing under the colonnade among the pigeons and the prehistoric canoes, why are they angry?

What she discovers are lots of books by/about angry women, even if they are not framed that way. "What happened in the second decade of the twenty-first century is that women began to rage publicly in ways that made them audible to one another; we began to hear one another and understand that we were not as isolated in our rage as we had been led to believe," Rebecca Traister writes in her book, and her echoing the connection between women and anger in the present day is a power move.

After pulling stack after stack of what I could deem angry woman books in my own classification system—Hilary Mantel, *Giving Up the Ghost*; Alice Sebold, *Lucky*; Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert, *The Madwoman in the Attic*; Rebecca Solnit, *Men Explain Things to Me*; Susanna Kaysen, *Girl, Interrupted*; Andrea Dworkin; Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*; Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying*—I thought again of whether or not there's been true progress between Woolf's time and ours.

Nobody still likes an angry woman. An angry man probably has a reason, he's righteous. An angry woman is likely to be labeled

as crazy, or vindictive, or irrational. But sometimes when I think about what women put up with, I do get ticked off. What do you do when there is legitimate outrage, but no good way to express it? Women have to be very careful so as not to turn themselves into man repellent—too strident, too enervated, too loud—and risk not being listened to at all.



While I was doing the research for this piece, I sometimes felt a slight repulsion. I write a lot about crime, about the dark side of the psyche. I consider anger to be one of the healthier topics I've taken on. So why do I find myself dragging on this piece? My own relationship to anger is messy, and my life circumstances right now—I just moved to Canada from NYC—have made me angry at times. It's like kicking a puppy to get really mad at a Canadian: as you seethe, they are all politeness and calm. Then again, the Canadian standards for customer service are quite different. I got so furious at a customer service supervisor at my bank that I ended the call with, "I wouldn't wish your service on my worst enemy." At least I think that was the bank. I've had some provocative customer service experiences lately, but that was one of the few where I yelled into the phone.

In thinking about anger in my life, I turn to where I find much succor: the *Real Housewives* franchise. I think all of the Real Housewives franchises are fueled by anger. They thrive on constant conflict and confrontation, hostility, backstabbing, and general cruelty. It's a great pressure valve. I love it: the Housewives get unapologetically angry at outside people and each other, and just the fantasy of just telling someone off is undoubtedly a powerful one. They do it for real—well, as real as reality TV gets—all the time.

Anger is the root of so many feelings we don't want: to envy, to injure, to avenge, to destroy. They are feelings at the heart of every argument, every crime. To be angry, then, is to be in danger of transforming yourself into someone who would do one of those

things. There is a general assumption that women are mad at men, but that's just part of the story. We women are mad at each other too: for making bad choices, for letting a man control or abuse us, for not being down with the cause. I still think Woolf's is the purest and most moving account of women and anger, in large part because she both indicts men and genuinely wonders what their motives could be for treating women thusly.



Finally, since I was tired with being with my own ideas about anger for so long, I decided to put it to the executive committee: I asked four of my female friends to write about their attitudes toward and experiences of anger. I was surprised by what I learned.

My friend D is a married lawyer with two kids. I've never seen her lose her temper. She writes: "Not an angry person. I don't care enough, and I'm very, very lucky so what's to be angry about? What triggers me is when I perceive inconsideration, thinking I'm stupid (condescension), and being taken for granted or taken advantage of. Specifically: at work I used to feel bad about getting angry but then pretty much every time I did, that person would later be revealed to be a dick and get fired. So now I know (and appreciate) that my anger is actually a leading indicator of someone's poor performance (or career opportunities). It's not perfect but I'd say about 85% of the time, if you tend to really piss me off, you'll be gone in 18 months."

E works in publishing, has two kids, and is going through a divorce: "I don't think of myself as angry—not even stealth angry. If something hurts me, I usually turn inward and blame myself. I seldom feel entitled to anger. When I *\*am\** angry, and not for some dumb thing with the kids, it's for someone doing something to me that's universally obvious as a crappy thing."

C is also a lawyer and a single mom: "I get really mad—like blood pressure rising, tone of voice changing—at unjust things

around me like people cutting in line. Like at a hotel (this really happened) when I complained once about no maid service that day, the guy said some long thing about the woman who usually cleans and how she had a thing across town, concluding with 'so you gotta understand where I'm coming from.' ??? I do?? I asked for a discount - that was it. That's why he said it. And my overwhelming diagnosis is WHY does that mean I have to understand anything? Why are we negotiating this? I complained and now I'm asked to be involved in your personal issue. Makes me INSANE. It's all the same I guess—same as not being believed.”

E is screenwriter, not married, no kids: “I used to be a MUCH angrier person. I used to have berserker rage fantasies in my head of taking a baseball bat and smashing people’s heads open. For real. I think my anger all came from feeling disregarded. Not seen or respected.”

Me: “That’s similar to me. Mine usually derives from feeling like I’m being manipulated/gaslighted or from condescension”.

E: “When I do get super angry now, it’s usually triggered by opaque bureaucracy. I’m always the person digging in and arguing with a customer service person on the phone, “Oh, so when you said that’s something you couldn’t do, that wasn’t true then, was it?”



If my four friends and I are frustrated about not being believed about the little things, it stands to reason that the victims of the Crosby and Weinstein and Batali and whomever trials are terrified about talking about the big things. At the same time that I was reading these books about women using anger to shift social power I was reading Chanel Miller’s extraordinary account of her rape and its aftermath, *Know My Name*. As a quick reminder, Miller was raped at Stanford University coming home from a party. She was saved by two Swedish exchange students who happened to be walking by while Miller’s rapist was attacking her and pulled him off

Miller.

Miller's book is as valuable—if not more valuable, depending on what weight you put on personal experience—as any of these grand unifying theories of female rage. Where these anger books do sometimes touch upon what it means to be a victim, in Miller's book it's the primary theme: as if in some kind of reverse fairytale, she finds herself transformed into a victim overnight. She's lost her agency, her social status, her voice. She can't seem to settle anywhere because she's so nervous about the trial, yet she also needs her family and friends more than ever. Reading Chanel Miller's extraordinary book made me extraordinarily angry. Let's hope it's read and believed—along with these other books—far and wide.



**MANSPLAIN SPIRALING** / Zanne Aglio

The man explained I  
flushed the toilet

Man explains I flush  
toilet

Men explain flush  
toilet



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**ARTISTS' STATEMENTS**


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[Ann Cefola](#) is the author of *Free Ferry* (Upper Hand Press, 2017), *Face Painting in the Dark* (Dos Madres Press, 2014), *St. Agnes, Pink-Slipped* (Kattywompus Press, 2011), and *Sugaring* (Dancing Girl Press, 2007); and translator of *The Hero* (Chax Press, 2018) and *Hence This Cradle* (Seismicity Editions, 2007). Ann's work, much of it inspired by her gender experience, has been published in journals such as *Cliterature*, *Feminist Studies*, and *Women's Studies Quarterly*. A Witter Bynner Poetry Translation Residency recipient, she also received the Robert Penn Warren Award judged by John Ashbery. For more information, see [www.anncefol.com](http://www.anncefol.com) and [www.annogram.blogspot.com](http://www.annogram.blogspot.com).

[brit griffin](#) is a writer living in Northern Ontario. She works as a researcher for Timiskaming First Nation, an Algonquin community, and is currently thinking about myth, animal tracks as art and the possibilities and limits of ecological empathy. Her new novel, *The Wintermen III: At the End of the World*, is the third novel in her cli-fi trilogy and will be released this fall (2020) by Latitude 46.

**Elaine Woo's** feminism comes from social and family relationships, work, and the larger world. In her family history, her paternal grandmother was given no name. Being at the brunt of derision, judgment and rage from other women; falling prey to sexual innuendo at work; being strangled by racial and gender hatred led Elaine to share feminist stories and art. Her painting depicts ongoing furor from anti-woman experiences. Elaine's feminist narratives are found in poetry collections *Put Your Hand in Mine* (Signature Editions, 2019) and *Cycling with the Dragon* (Nightwood Editions, 2014) and the anthology *Veils, Halos & Shackles: International Poetry on the Oppression and Empowerment of Women* (Kavsa Press, 2016).

[Gail Grycel](#) travels solo and her writing responds to the details of place—both inner and outer landscape, and have been included in Vermont's *PoemCity*, *Anthology of Women's Voices* by These Fragile Lilacs Press, *Writers Café Magazine*, and *Burning House Press*. When not on the road, she challenges gender stereotypes working as a custom cabinetmaker and teacher of women. While traveling, she met Rose, a young woman struggling to break free from the cultural constraints women still carry today, and Rose reminded her of herself at that age, starting to find the courage to say “no.”

**Jo Lambert** lives with her lovely wife, kids and chickens in Mid-Wales. She is studying Creative Writing at UWTSO, fuelled by coffee, fury at the UK's social injustice and gratitude for the good people in the world. She co-facilitates Cardiff Queer Writers. Her YA novel, *All Summer*, was long-listed for the Mslexia Children's Novel Award, and she is currently re-writing it. “The Crow Wife” is no reflection on her current wife, who never makes her want to dash herself against windows, but was written after thinking about the roles which women can find themselves trapped in.

**Kate Falvey's** work appears in an eclectic array of journals and anthologies; a full-length collection, *The Language of Little Girls* (David Robert Books); and two chapbooks. She edits *2 Bridges Review* and *Bellevue Literary Review*. Her work has always centered on the lives of girls and women—the pathos, suffering, surprises, renegade bits of wisdom, awkward attempts to find solace and distinction in humdrum or violence-savaged lives. She recalls walking next to Betty Friedan in the 1970 Women's March for Equality in NYC when a young girl and swears she's found a news photo of her and Betty together in the crowd. Her daughter, a 2020 college grad and splendidly out lesbian, is skeptical.

[Dr. Kristin LaFollette](#) is a writer, artist, and photographer and is the author of the chapbook, *Body Parts* (GFT Press, 2018). She teaches writing and gender studies at the University of Southern Indiana and serves as the Art Editor at *Mud Season Review*. She has an avid interest in medicine and once

pursued a pre-med degree to become a (medical) doctor. Now, much of her work is at the intersection of medicine and the humanities. As a result, her work often focuses on bodies and bodily autonomy, identity, and life as a woman in the current political climate.

[Lisa Levy](#) has been a freelance writer and editor for almost 20 years, focusing on essays, criticism, feminism, and self-fashioning. She has written for many publications, including *The New Republic*, *The LARB*, *The Believer*, *The Millions*, *The Rumpus*, *TLS*, and *Lit Hub*, where she is a contributing editor. She is also a contributing editor and columnist at Crime Reads and is working toward a nonfiction MFA at Goucher College. A longtime New Yorker now based in Toronto, she has work forthcoming in *Boulevard*, *the Harvard Review*, *Hazlitt*, *Jezebel*, *the Missouri Review*, and *Brevity*.

[M. Eileen](#) writes near water. Her poetry and prose have been featured in *Hanging Loose*, *Monkeybicycle*, *Chronogram*, and others. She is driven to write about and bring into conversation the injustices and dangers of gender inequality. @m\_e\_g\_writes

[Naomi Borkent](#) is based out of Edmonton, Alberta. She likes to write about the human experience—love, sex, loneliness, loss, happiness—to find a way to heal the parts of her that have most needed healing. Feminism and life experiences as a woman, in a world that has historically reduced and diminished women and girls, have inspired the themes and ideas behind many of her poems. Together, we rise. Together, we heal. @the.butterfly.songs

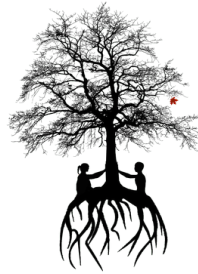
[Sandra L. Faulkner](#) researches, teaches, and writes about personal relationships in NW Ohio where she lives with her partner, their warrior girl, and three rescue mutts. Her poetry has appeared in venues like *Literary Mama*, *Ithaca Lit*, *Gulf Stream*, and *Writers Resist*. Her latest books are *Poetic Inquiry: Craft, Method, & Practice* (Routledge); *Poetic Inquiry as Social Justice and Political Response* (Vernon, co-editor Abigail Cloud); *Scientists and Poets #Resist* (Brill, co-editor Andrea England). She uses poetic inquiry as feminist praxis to collapse the false divide between private and public, as a form of embodied inquiry, and as political response.

**Tiffany Washington** is an 8th grade English teacher, mother of four, and sometimes poet. In her book club, a question her friends often ask, “Ok, what did you hate about the women in this book?” because she cannot filter her distaste of the portrayal of weak women in literature. Her Netflix cue has created a category called “Strong Female Leads” because of her obsession with shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Jessica Jones*, and *Orange is the New Black*. Her works have appeared in a number of print and on-line publications including *Caduceus*, *Chantarelle’s Notebook*, *Artis* and *Long River Run*.

**Victoria Bailey** has an MA in Women’s Studies and is currently working on a PhD in creative writing with a feminist focus. She cannot remember a time that she did not identify as a feminist which she currently (and for a significant while now) attributes to a relentless lifelong dedication to the question, “But why?”

[Simone Liggins](#) earned her MFA in Writing at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics of Naropa University. The foundation for her love of writing and literature was paved early and blossomed during her teenage years through the kind of tortured freedom that only the ostracism & funk-weirdness of being an African-American Gemini mystic can grant a woman. Her various influences include but aren’t limited to: Sylvia Plath, Audre Lorde, Lenore Kandel, Laurell K. Hamilton, Octavia Butler, Lady Gaga, Fiona Apple, and Tracy Chapman. Other featured publications include *Raven Chronicles*, *Boulder Weekly*, *Outsider Poetry*, and *Queen Mob’s Teahouse*. @thatwordywitch

Where to begin. How about nineteen eighty four. That's when [Zanne Aaglio](#) came out as a lesbian. Before that she was a feminist without knowing it. Her politics and art are rooted in an ever spiraling sense of justice, the need to name, and the desire to articulate lived experiences. Zanne's a poet, video artist, singer-songwriter and composer. She's lived and worked in Italy and Germany and thinks: *Kunst ist absolute Freiheit und Selbstbestimmung*. Art is total freedom and self-determination.



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