



# OUR VOICES

*Gonzaga's Journal of  
Culture and Diversity*

*Volume V - 2018*

Cover photos taken by Julia Bellia featuring Brahiam Villanueva and Kayla Kim.

Cover design by Mary Jenkins.

Diversity Monologues complementary section photo: Kathryn Benson, 2017, Chile.

Cover font: AWPCAvantGuardBold regular, AWPCAvantGuardOblique

Interior font: Minion Pro— Types: regular, bold, italic

Our Voices is a publication of the Gonzaga University Media Board. All questions and comments regarding Our Voices should be directed to [ourvoices@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ourvoices@gonzaga.edu).

All work in Our Vocies is created and designed by current students, alumni, staff, and faculty of Gonzaga University.

The views expressed in the publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Our Voices staff, the Media Board, or the University.

All content © 2018

# **Our Voices**

*in collaboration with*

The 8th Annual Diversity Monologues

# Editor's Note

---

Dear Readers,

Gonzaga's mission statement states that our experience here is meant to foster "a mature commitment to dignity of the human person, social justice, diversity, intercultural competence, global engagement, solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, and care for the planet." Our Voices' goal this year was to create a journal that embodies all of those qualities, which I believe you will find to be successful when you read this journal.

A common discussion at Gonzaga is how to create a more diverse student body, as our demographics are not necessarily viewed as a "melting pot." However, diversity is so much more than the color of our skin and where we come from. Diversity is about the different values and beliefs that we hold close to us. It's about the faith that we practice, our sexuality and gender identities, our political views and the cultural traditions that we carry on through generations.

Diversity, while something to strive for due to its valuable contributions to our knowledge of the world, is something that is so easy to find if we take the time to look hard enough and listen long enough. To do so, we must create a space in which we make others feel welcome in sharing their stories. Our Voices has strived to be a place where we can celebrate diversity in all of its forms, while allowing experiences to be shared that may not have come to the surface otherwise. Reading this will take you through stories of racism and oppression, gentrification, sexual assault, environmentalism, learning disabilities, and in some cases, recognition of our own privileges. While the topics can be challenging, social change is never easy, and it takes the courage of our authors to evoke the passion to work towards change.

So I leave you with a reminder that we came to this institution to open our eyes to other people's struggles. Editing this journal has been an incredible opportunity for me. I have been able to reflect on who I am, establish what my role is in creating change in our community, and educate others on the realities of the world we live in. Thanks to the strong voices present in this publication, I was able to recognize the value of each of our personal experiences, and the value that we all bring to our campus.

Thank you for supporting our contributors, and I hope you enjoy opening your mind to new beliefs, faiths, values and experiences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Villanueva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.

Sabrina Villanueva Avalos  
Editor-in-Chief

# Our Voices Staff

Sabrina Villanueva Avalos, *Editor-in-Chief*

Elizabeth Terry, *Assistant Editor*

Kathryn Benson, *Assistant Editor*

Celeste Klug, *Assistant Editor*

Rose Kingma, *Assistant Editor*

Mary Jenkins, *Graphic Designer*

Monica Kastilani, *Editing Intern*

Alessandra Barros Barreto, *Editing Intern*

Julia Bellia, *Photo Intern*

*Special thanks to our advisors,  
Michele Pajer and Ricardo Ortega*

# Table of Contents

2 **i will not be reduced**  
*Kayla Kim*

**Nowelo** 3  
*Harley Gonsalves*

4 **oxygen**  
*Ashley Sanchez-Garcia*

**eternal** 6  
*Ashley Sanchez-Garcia*

7 **In Solidarity**  
*Julia Bellia*

**The Problem of White Feminism** 8  
*Giulianna Pendleton*

10 **Roses Bloom With No 'Why'**  
*Brahiam Villanueva*

**Local Guaraní Village** 10  
*Kathryn Benson*

11 **Maybe Today**  
*Alessandra Barros Barreto*

**Kekahi Inoa Poina 'Ole** 12  
*Kau`i Ho`opi`i*

14 **We're Here, We're Queer**  
*Abby Beck*

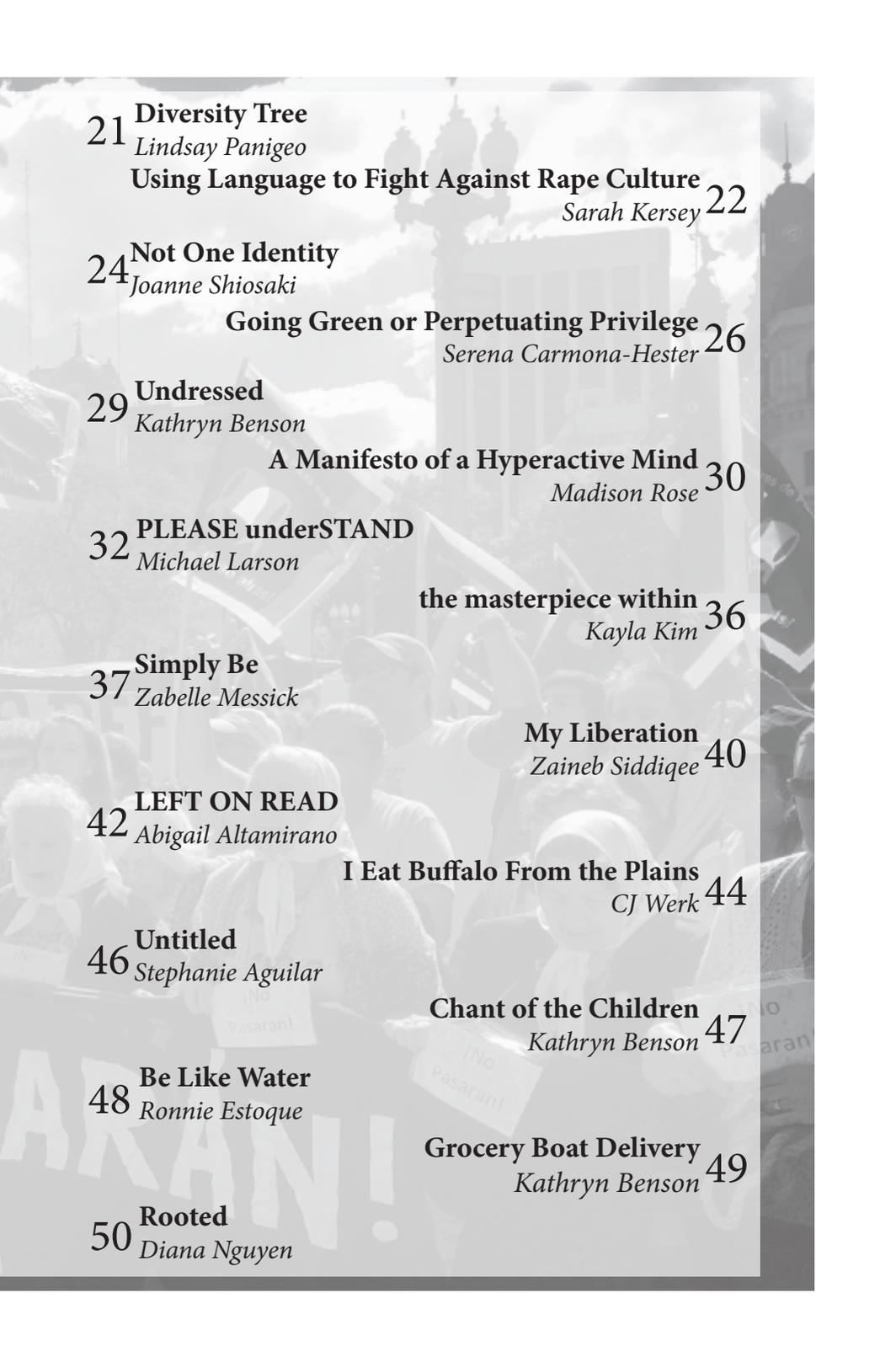
**His Gendered Soul** 15  
*Brahiam Villanueva*

16 **Dear white people**  
*Andrew Mercer*

**Land of the Free** 17  
*Maya Coseo*

18 **Blessed City**  
*Deqa Mumin*

**Dumplings** 20  
*Andrew Mercer*

- 
- 21 **Diversity Tree**  
*Lindsay Panigeo*  
**Using Language to Fight Against Rape Culture**  
*Sarah Kersey* 22
- 24 **Not One Identity**  
*Joanne Shiosaki*  
**Going Green or Perpetuating Privilege**  
*Serena Carmona-Hester* 26
- 29 **Undressed**  
*Kathryn Benson*  
**A Manifesto of a Hyperactive Mind**  
*Madison Rose* 30
- 32 **PLEASE underSTAND**  
*Michael Larson*  
**the masterpiece within**  
*Kayla Kim* 36
- 37 **Simply Be**  
*Zabelle Messick*  
**My Liberation**  
*Zaineb Siddique* 40
- 42 **LEFT ON READ**  
*Abigail Altamirano*  
**I Eat Buffalo From the Plains**  
*CJ Werk* 44
- 46 **Untitled**  
*Stephanie Aguilar*  
**Chant of the Children**  
*Kathryn Benson* 47
- 48 **Be Like Water**  
*Ronnie Estoque*  
**Grocery Boat Delivery**  
*Kathryn Benson* 49
- 50 **Rooted**  
*Diana Nguyen*

# i will not be reduced

By Kayla Kim

---

i am but one  
from the many that came  
before me living  
a beautiful life that i cannot  
call mine it is  
years of sweat blood and tears  
the kind of sacrifice  
that brings me to my knees  
and makes me weep  
tell me why  
my whole life has been  
the lowering of the people i love  
so that i can be lifted  
the pouring of the people i love  
so that i can be filled  
tell me how  
i begin to say thank you  
so many poems started  
but left unfinished  
trying to find words but  
knowing there are none  
for what you have done  
leaving everything  
you have ever known for  
everything i could ever be  
i wake up everyday with  
my hands clasped together  
hoping it was not all in vain  
tell me it was not all in vain  
tell me how i begin to love  
like the many  
before me

i will not be reduced  
to a bad driver  
math nerd or  
foreigner

when my ancestors have  
conquered mountains  
and tamed seas  
they think i am  
submissive well i will  
not submit to this  
and i have become comfortable  
too comfortable  
in this beautiful life that i cannot  
call mine it is  
years of sweat blood and  
tears  
the kind of sacrifice  
that brings me to my knees  
and makes me weep  
for them to leave everything  
they had ever known for  
everything i could ever be  
i will not be reduced  
when so much has  
been taken my  
grandmother places  
flowers on her brother's tomb  
he wanted to cross the sea  
so that i may write  
of love and loss  
i will not be reduced  
to what you know about  
the color of my skin before  
you seek to know where  
i came from  
i come from a  
history of struggle  
but have been born into  
the most colorful of lives and i  
am so much more  
than you will ever know

*-i will not be reduced*

# Nowelo

By Harley Gonsalves

---

Nowelo

(vi) To delve, seek as knowledge; to collect together what is tangible

Listen—

there is a story to be told,

but no one is listening.

They said we needed the light

and that the sun would shine brighter,

but as soon as the waves washed ashore

it was hard to hear the screams of those ripped away by the tides.

We would ask you to remember,

but you never knew.

The betrayal of the light.

Our queen imprisoned by the red white and blue.

Her people left looking to the stars

only for the stripes to choke them in the aftermath.

We would ask you to remember,

but you never knew.

We still look at the stars for guidance,

trying to navigate our way back home.

All we have left is the memories

as we try to put the pieces back together.

We would ask you to remember,

but you never knew.

A people heartbroken for years.

All we ask is for you to listen to our pleas,

but no one is listening. There is a story to be told,

listen.

# oxygen

By Ashley Sanchez-Garcia

it is an early morning  
and we are seated in a circle.

I am scared to meet my classmates' eyes.  
it is in this room  
that I am the most aware  
of my brownness.

we are discussing reverse discrimination  
and something about minority kids  
getting more scholarships.

the subject changes to bilingualism  
and my heart is racing,  
I feel sick to my stomach.

that they are discussing me and my  
people  
is a burden that I can't bear.

I look down  
and say nothing.

my body language says it all-  
I am biting a nail  
and shifting in my seat,  
inhaling sharply.

suddenly hyper-aware of my existence.

my mouth stays closed  
shut.

lately, it's been harder  
to take up space.

and I am devastated  
that I have a seat at the table  
but not enough room for words.

I sit,  
desperately trying  
to put out the roaring flames in my  
chest.

my eyes say everything  
that I can't, won't say.  
everything I wish I could say:  
stop  
be quiet  
listen to us!

for thirty-five minutes,  
this is everything I know:  
sitting awkwardly in  
my seat at the circle.  
making eye contact with  
the two other girls of color in the room  
when someone says  
"I don't know about other cultures,  
but..."  
praying for the conversation  
to wind down  
so I can hand in my paper  
outlining everything I wanted to say  
and breathe.

I see it now-  
a reunion-  
I am the last to hand in my paper  
and as I exit the classroom

we meet each other.  
we lean on each other  
get all those words  
off our aching chests.  
catharsis.

but this time  
my teacher says  
“let’s go around the room  
and share what we wrote down.”  
he senses the hurt and sadness rising off  
my skin,  
and forces the table to widen.

my heart drops.  
a countdown of faces and mouths  
begins-  
three,  
two,  
one,  
until it is  
my turn to speak.

all eyes shift to me-  
my teacher’s eyes,  
gentle now,  
supporting me.

I gather my thoughts  
and for the first time this week  
I let my words touch air.  
fire escapes from my tongue.

“I think

the biggest issue is how people  
who don’t speak English  
are scared to speak their own languages,”  
and in that moment  
I see Mama-  
her brown eyes and her loud laugh,  
her accent that she tenaciously holds  
onto.  
I almost cry but I keep speaking.

“I mean,  
there are places that I wouldn’t feel  
comfortable  
speaking Spanish.  
and that is why my family taught me  
English first.  
so, we need to create a society  
where people feel safe  
speaking their own languages.”

it is the most I’ve spoken  
so far all semester.  
my teacher smiles.  
inhale,  
exhale.

this is how it feels  
to take up space  
to be heard  
then met with silence,  
this is how it feels  
to leave faces speechless,  
this is how it feels  
to be relieved.

# eternal

By Ashley Sanchez-Garcia

---

my women  
are powerful.

my women  
learned to hold their tongues  
brown bodies,  
golden.

she holds  
the key to the universe.  
she told me when I was younger  
“see what women have to live through?”

my women,  
eternal girls-

young budding roses caught in the rain,  
speaking to themselves.  
comforting.

a light too bright to behold  
she said  
“preciosa, don’t forget where you came  
from.”  
“nunca.”

my women are loud  
when they are alone-  
dancing in the kitchen,  
almost starting fires.

my women  
make the best food I have ever tasted.

one lazy afternoon, Mama tells me,  
“play the music from El Salvador”  
I know exactly what to play.

my women fled.

my women-  
they do not see themselves  
in the maid,  
in the comic relief,  
in the thugs,  
in the blue skin white hair pale iris  
on television.

mama-she noticed that she  
got less popcorn  
than the two white men behind her.

my women breathe in blue and  
exhale red,  
fingers yellow with rice flour  
feet walking purple  
arms dusted with orange  
like the spices my grandmother packs.

my women  
pink when they reach out to each other  
and green when they speak.

my women  
they apply eyeliner and lipstick  
with precision  
arming themselves with maquillaje  
“quiero ver presentable.”

nobody told my women  
they were children of the sun too  
these celestial beings-  
nobody told them  
their noses were royal things,  
or their hair was beautiful,

dark and glamorous.

pale mouth struggling to form broken  
words from  
that native tongue of ours  
“sorry, pero mi español no es muy bien”  
she responded “I can speak English”  
exuding that deep purple I love.

I want to be purple too.  
clothed in woven rainbows  
like my women were  
once.

my women  
are royal things.

precious.

I carry their stories  
in my veins.  
I am a collection  
of livelihoods,  
scattered across the globe,  
reaching to the stars and back.

I am change.  
us women,  
workers of light-  
we bloom time and time again.  
sometimes we are obscured in darkness,  
but we will always find a way  
to radiate light.



Submitted by Julia Bellia

*At the Inauguration of DREAM Week on the front steps of Crosby,  
students stand in solidarity with the undocumented community.*

# The Problem of White Feminism

By Giulianna Pendleton

“Intersectionality is a conspiracy theory.” That was the perspective white feminist Christina Hoff Sommers offered last spring at Gonzaga University. Sommers stated there is a problem with modern feminism in her desperate attempt to honor and protect classical feminism. She has repudiated claims about the gender-wage gap, the extent to which girls are forced into the sexual slavery industry, the number of women hospitalized due to domestic violence, and the fact that one in five college women will experience sexual assault.<sup>1</sup>

Sommers is a devout defender of classical liberal feminism and works against gender feminism. She studied at New York University and Brandeis University, and has worked at Clark University, University of Pittsburgh, Semester at Sea, and University of Massachusetts Boston. Today she is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute where she focuses on gender politics, feminism, and free speech in universities.<sup>2</sup>

In her article “How to Make Feminism Great Again,” Sommers claims that the U.S. is not actually a patriarchy because women do hold power. In her opinion, American women, especially highly-educated women are the freest women in the world. Yes, if you only look at highly-educated American women, they do have a lot of privilege, but this completely overlooks other groups of women who do not even get the chance to receive a higher education. In the same article she claims that statistics undermining women are misleading and that women need a “sober analysis.” In calling these statistics a woman’s problem, Sommers disregards the fact that in order to change society and create a more just world, all genders and power systems need to become aware of systemic injustices. It is not just a woman’s problem. In one final statement in this article, Sommers reports that 61% of American mothers would rather stay at home and care for their children than earn another degree or go back to work full-time. She thinks that these women’s desires should be respected, instead of repudiated as being the wrong decision, which is completely valid. Mothers should not be criticized for making an independent, autonomous decision to stay at home with her children. However, her survey asked American mothers - women who already had children. In a society where it is really difficult to find accessible, affordable child care and where mothers are frowned upon for working full-time instead of caring for their children, of course they would rather stay at home. Not every family has the resources to find good child care and while both parents work full-time. Sommers’ reasoning with regard to this statistic is simplistic and does not analyze why mothers would rather stay home and care for their children than go back into the workforce.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>“National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC).” National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC). Accessed December 1, 2017. <https://www.nsvrc.org/>.

<sup>2</sup>“Christina Hoff Sommers.” American Enterprise Institute. Accessed Dec. 1, 2017. <https://www.aei.org/scholar/christina-hoff-sommers/>.

<sup>3</sup> Sommers, Christina Hoff. “How to Make Feminism Great Again.” The Washington Post. accessed Dec. 5, 2016.

All of these claims require research into multiple groups of women, not just white women. Women of color and in poverty are more likely to experience these forms of oppression than white or middle-class women. So, when Sommers is discounting these global experiences, and at the same time calling intersectionality a hoax, something is wrong.

Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, but it is an idea that has been circulating throughout women of color feminist theory long before this. It is the idea that intersecting identities create unique experiences of oppression and privilege that cannot be explained by the two identities by themselves. It is the idea, for instance, that black women do not face the same oppression as white women, nor as black men, but leaves black women to experience structural injustices that uniquely affect them. In other words, intersectionality is not a conspiracy theory.

Just to make things more clear, Christina Hoff Sommers herself experiences intersectionality. She is a white woman from an upper-middle class socioeconomic status. She is Jewish. She is temporarily able-bodied. She is heterosexual. These are all identities that intersect to create her own unique life experiences. Her statement that contemporary feminism is too radical and does not reflect the actuality of the typical American woman is naive.

White feminism does not allow progress. It leaves a lot of women at the doorstep, rather than letting them have a seat at the table. For too long, too many women have been left knocking on the door with no response. We need to recognize that there is no one experience for women – women experience oppression and privilege in many different ways across the country and the world. It is not anyone's place to decide what the typical woman's experience is.

I am a white woman from an upper-middle class socioeconomic household. I am of Catholic background, temporarily able-bodied, and heterosexual. My dad immigrated to America from Canada and my mom has lived in California her whole life. I value my own life experiences and recognize that my social positions have created both instances of privilege and oppression. I am privileged enough to attend a respected liberal arts university, but at the same time recognize there are people at this school, in this nation, and around the world who do not believe I should have inherent rights to my body. I count the number of times I have had male people think they have the right to violate my body, I have had male people verbally abuse me four inches away from my face, and I have been told women dress solely for the purpose of trying to "attract a mate." My privilege and oppression are not isolated occurrences, but they are validated and unique in my experience. I stand with all women who have experienced infinitely different forms of privilege and oppression. There needs to be an end to white, affluent women dominating the feminist stage. There needs to be a commitment to understanding intersectionality, ending systemic injustices and institutions that perpetuate them, and linking global struggles to work towards a more just world.

# Roses Bloom With No ‘Why’

By Brahiam Villanueva

---

Men, their impenetrable brotherhood, their rugged cheeks and spatula fingers  
They never believed I could.

Women, their indomitable will to protect their sons and daughters from  
someone’s son

They were afraid I would.

Men are a broken soul.

A women’s generic god is whole.

Polluted rivers flow across my face.

Mine, or yours, or of the settlers whose villages were set ablaze?

In all the blue of an ice mountain reaching from salt water to the clear sky, I  
continue to amaze.

You have been settlers to my body, trapped in my titillating gaze.

Perhaps what you would call ‘our father’ sleeps somewhere within the cosmos.

Perhaps we were formed out of the concept of a ‘mother’.

Something aligned, since we could have been born somewhere else.

A dimension unlike ours: where your soul to mine repels.



Submitted by Kathryn Benson

*Guaraní hut demonstrates native life in the Guaraní village  
in the misiones province in Argentina.*

# Maybe Today

By Alessandra Barros Barreto

---

Maybe today I won't laugh  
When you ask me if it's that time of the month.  
Just because you saw me crying for reasons I couldn't explain.

Maybe you just don't know  
That last night I saw a beautiful girl  
With her cheek kissing the bathroom floor  
Because what would a Saturday night be  
Without groping hands and wanting stares?  
Without knowing that the only fun you'll find  
Is at the bottom of a solo cup  
Because it's the only way that this might seem ok.

Maybe you just don't know  
How it feels to look in the mirror  
And pull and pinch at every edge of your skin  
Because IMPERFECT is secretly written  
On every tv screen, on every magazine page.  
Maybe you just don't know  
That I had to ask myself if I really deserved that A  
Or if it was given to me simply as an invitation  
To stay a little longer after class.

Maybe you just don't know  
That today I thought about changing my major  
Because this way I'll be home to take care of the kids.

Maybe today I won't laugh  
Maybe today I'll look you in the eyes  
And pray that you just don't know.

# Kekahi Inoa Poina ‘Ole<sup>1</sup>

By Kau`i Ho`opi`i

---

My name is not a joke.

My name isn't something to be laughed at.

My name isn't just some misspelt black letters of ink scribbled on a Starbucks cup by a barista who's been told multiple times how to spell my name letter by letter.

My name is not a joke.

My name should not feel the need to change itself,

to form into some contraction that's easier for them to understand.

My mouth shouldn't ache with shame,

shouldn't purse its lips with regret as my name makes its way out the front doors of my teeth,

but it does.

My behavior is shaped by their confusion,

my actions formed around their judgement,

and my words pronounced in a way I know will be easier for them to understand.

Why, when they ask me my name, do I automatically revert to these words that sting my eyes, that dishonor all my ancestors have worked so hard for?

I say, "It's like cow the animal and 'eee,'"

Or "Maui with a 'K,'"

But no.

My kūpuna<sup>2</sup> cry out their auwes<sup>3</sup>,

Hawai`i shakes its head in disapproval as I conform to their ways.

So let me show you what all my ancestors would say.

E ho`olohe mai `oukou<sup>4</sup>...

The eight letters of my last name bring the sun to his rightful place in the sky,

The eight letters of my last name wake my peaceful mind from its slumber,

Get my body out from the warm comfort of my bed,

Help me to start yet another new day.

The eight letters of my last name push you to scale the mountainside,

To ascend the seemingly impossible.

The eight letters of my last name, yes the eight letters, not six, are Ho`opi`i, not

Hopi, though I can see how of course they'd assume that the two native cultures, two colonized, two oppressed—are one in the same.

---

1 A Name Not Forgotten

2 ancestors

3 cries, laments, weeps

4 Listen close all of you

The `okina<sup>5</sup> between the “u” and the “i” of my first name,  
The two between the “o’s” and the “i’s” of my last,  
The glottal stop, the harsh break between the vowels,  
Leaves satisfaction on my tongue,  
Brings music to my ears upon hearing its correct pronunciation,  
And fosters warmth and burning pride in my na`au<sup>6</sup>.  
The `okinas, not apostrophes, yearn to be understood, to be used, to be appreciated.

Ho`opi`i, in my mother tongue meaning “to rise,” to transcend that bullshit, does just exactly that.

My family, my `ohana<sup>7</sup>, my home, my one hānau<sup>8</sup>,  
Rises above the occasion,  
Advances the fight for justice,  
Traces its lineage, dates my existence, follows my geneology, my mo`okū`auhau<sup>9</sup>,  
my backbone,

back to the first Hawaiians, nā kanaka mua o nā po`e Hawai`i<sup>10</sup>,  
all the way back to Papa, earth mother, and Wākea, sky father,  
back to Hāloa, the first Hawaiian, and his brother, Hāloanakalaukapalili, the kalo,  
the taro, our staple, that has sustained our people for centuries, that has breathed life into our being.

The five letters of my first name,  
are the warm, intermingling colors of the sunrise as God paints their strokes across the sky.

The five letters of my first name are the first sight of the snow, falling gently and peacefully from a forgotten sky,

The five letters of my first name are the Belle to the beast, a newborn baby’s beating heart, the budding of tulips in the spring after a long hibernation.

The five letters of my first name, yes the five, not four... are beauty.

Kau`i Ho`opi`i—the beauty to rise...

Makes me proud to say that I come from a place where the land is as much apart of my family as the ocean is, as my sisters are,

Makes me proud to say that my ancestors navigated across the globe, through the vast ocean, using nothing but the constellations in the sky as their guide and light, that though constantly knocked down, my kūpuna<sup>11</sup>, ku`u po`e Hawai`i<sup>12</sup>, continue to plant their feet in our `āina<sup>13</sup>, to remain unwavering in their beliefs,

Makes me proud to say that I, Kau`i Ho`opi`i....am Hawaiian.

---

5 Glottal stop between vowels in Hawaiian language (‘)

6 heart/gut

7 family

8 sands of birth

9 geneology

10 the first humans of the Hawaiian people

11 ancestors

12 my beloved Hawaiian people

13 land

# We're Here, We're Queer



Submitted by Abby Beck

*Taken at the Equality March for Unity and Pride in Washington D.C. Over 200,000 people gathered from all over the United States and the world to celebrate their identities and advocate for equality, justice and love.*

# His Gendered Soul

By Brahiam Villanueva

---

*This piece is an excerpt from a larger senior project.*

“I got into Gonzaga,” you tell Jose, who now goes by Kyle. He sits on one of the granular beams lining Cascade Park’s parking lot, a halo of setting sun envelops his deep brown face. His smile is so white, but he doesn’t think so. His eyebrows and hairline add a symmetry to him which you don’t see often. He looks better than you. Genetics are unfair.

“I knew you’d get in, not surprised,” he hits your knee with his open palm. He’s a sophomore at Gonzaga and of all the people you know, he’s the only person who could know such a thing.

You can smell the navy blue lake, see faint traces of your breath. Cold air rushes into your mouth. “I’d still need like three-thousand dollars. I can’t afford it.” Even though you could look at his face while you say this, you look towards one of the dark yellow lines of the parking spaces and exhale. “I’m not as smart as you.”

He grabs his smaller Subway and rolls his eyes.

“I don’t know if I could get a job, without DACA.” You grab your twelve-inch subway, as if to make your point, “You’re just more practical than me.” Kyle has his DACA. You were brought into the U.S. three years after he was. You didn’t qualify.

“Explain,” he arches his left eyebrow, it is the right amount of thick.

“Eating less. Sleeping less. Getting higher grades than me,” you say.

He laughs and shakes his head. His English is better than yours, his GPA and full-ride are better than anything you will ever have, and you wonder if his dedication means he is more feminine. His sexuality probably means he is more feminine, and you imagine femininity makes someone smarter. You’ve only known of undocumented girls who go to college, and you suspect you’d be the first straight undocumented guy in college, if you make it that far. You’ve pondered on the parts of Kyle which make him feminine, and you’ve imagined these pieces of him are what make him most unlike you.

# Dear white people

By Andrew Mercer

---

“If we do not know how to  
meaningfully talk about racism,  
our actions will move in misleading  
directions.”

—Angela Davis

black & brown bodies break beneath  
blue & beige boots between Brooklyn  
buildings  
while we whistle wistfully watching,  
waiting,  
pretentiously pretending,  
feigning,  
tweeting, that  
we  
care.

We  
put perfectly perfected  
cultures  
on our own  
backs because  
they  
are  
currently  
trendy  
and  
we  
believe  
that they  
are  
interchangeable.

We  
just jump  
between  
juxtapositions, justifying

our  
existence,  
discrediting direct  
truths  
purely  
because  
they  
don't directly  
affect  
us.

Dear white people,

It's  
time to take  
off  
our  
wire  
rimmed  
glasses  
&  
actually  
believe  
those  
who  
are  
dying  
beneath  
our  
feet

“...paradise is a world where  
everything  
is a sanctuary & nothing is a gun...”

—Danez Smith

# Land of the Free

By Maya Coseo

---

I feel intense anger—and then profound sadness.  
These times remind me of a ship lost in an immense storm;  
so much hope is followed by intense fear as the waves rise,  
crash,  
and fall in the pit of my stomach.

We are moving into a house that cannot stand  
as people turn on country-fellows,  
passing laws that help Scrooge screw over the poor,  
ignore women, minorities, and countless more.  
Banning those with a different skin-color or religion—  
I thought we fought against that?  
Can we still be called  
the land of the free,  
and the home of the brave,  
living in a house as divided as this?

And when the lighthouses go out from sea to shining sea,  
who will save this crashing ship  
that used to help the tired,  
and the poor,  
and the huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
and the wretched refuse of others' teeming shores,  
and all those who are adrift in this long-lasting storm?  
Not us—  
We are too busy making America great again.

# Blessed City

By Deqa Mumin

---

Rainier Ave  
MLK  
Beacon Hill  
Mount Baker  
Othello  
Holly Park  
Columbia City  
Rainier Beach

These are all the places in the city that haven't been able to defend themselves

That haven't been able to meet the standards of "good cities" but continue to serve their people endlessly with the strength of community that has never backed down

But that didn't seem to be enough for those who wanted "more" out of a city that's already exhausted,  
Already depleted of its sources,  
Already struggling to hold its people on its back,  
Already trying to fit everyone within its arms

But it's hard.

This place has welcomed the tongues and accents of so many different people offered homes, food, shelter, clothes, schools to make them belong

The construction of apartment complexes on every other street rings through my ears like a high pitch scream you can only hear when it's completely silent

"Where did that big building come from?"

"What happened to the corner store we used to go to on Friday nights?"

"Why is there a Planet Fitness in the middle of Rainier Beach?"

These questions seem to not have enough space either.

With homes being taken, we think this renovation will make this place better but these changes are not for us  
Are not for people like you and me

As someone who has experienced the raw beauty of South Seattle  
I can't help but feel sad for the future generations that will miss it all

That'll miss the 8 going down MLK to Mount Baker station all the way to the  
heart of Central District

That'll miss the open spaces of grass and sand that we used to play on that are  
being replaced with overly priced condos

That'll miss the small playground with that broken swing set on Graham Street

They call the city broken, call it ghetto, call it ugly, call it dangerous  
Too filled with colored people and taco trucks, Ethiopian restaurants and non-  
Starbucks coffee shops

They call this place poor, call it uneducated, call it lazy, call it welfare, call it  
anything but home 'cause it isn't yours

This city is not yours and the people will not disappear at the snap of your fingers  
Will not quiet down at the back of our busses  
Will not have our voices drowned out

This city, South Seattle, the south end, blessed city, culture town, does not need  
your new buildings, does not need your fitness centers, does not need your local  
co-ops 'cause it isn't for us

But this city, was here for us  
And we live here to stay and stay here to live our lives in a community that has  
never betrayed us

That has never left us behind for your increased revenue,

So you can stay if you want to

But we're not leaving. And unless you stand with us, with this city and all the  
people that make it beautiful

Then you ain't with us at all.

# Dumplings

By Andrew Mercer

---

Have you ever had a dumpling.

A real dumpling.

An jioazi.

One made by someone who truly understands.

Understands how the flavors combine together.

Someone who knows the history of where they come from.

Someone who knows why they were created.

And why sometimes people think they look like ears.

If you can't answer yes, then you haven't had one.

As the flavors combine, you will get lost in your mouth.

Lost in the histories bundled up inside.

When you come to you'll go find a master to make the dumplings.

They'll give you one of them, and they'll have the wax.

The armor they've prepared for their ribs, ready for service.

Protecting their precious treasures.

You eat the dumplings.

Now mixed with an açai bowl and espresso.

You take the recipe.

Then you fly back to your life.

Without wings.

And stolen dumplings.



Submitted by Lindsay Panigeo

---

*I originally painted this piece during Pride Week in support of the LGBTQ+ community. I chose to use a tree as my image because I wanted to remind everyone in our community that we are connected. The individual leaves of a tree represent the students of Gonzaga, who are all unique and different, but they are still a part of the tree itself. The tree as a whole represents the larger Gonzaga community. Even though we are a diverse community full of people that come from different backgrounds, we come together to create something functional and beautiful.*

# Using Language to Fight Against Rape Culture

By Sarah Kersey

---

*Trigger warning: the following piece deals with my own personal experiences with, and opinions on, rape culture and sexual assault.*

Rape cul-ture (noun): A society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse.<sup>1</sup>

•••

Amidst the recent sexual misconduct accusations against numerous popular men in Hollywood, the most frequent response I see littering my Twitter feed that receives backlash is: “well if this is true, then why didn’t she come forward earlier?” The answer is usually fairly simple. We live in a culture of silence and we are just now beginning to break the surface of the hold it has over us.

While the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have made an incredible step forward in bringing attention to the sheer number of people affected by sexual assault, it can be incredibly disheartening to see justice being served amongst celebrities but none being served to the rest of the world. One of the biggest challenges for myself and for others who advocate for sexual assault awareness has been taking those movements and spreading their message in our everyday lives and not just on our Twitter feeds. Unfortunately, because the rest of the world is not in Hollywood, we are still actively fighting against rape culture and feeling the harsh consequences of its effects in a way that is not portrayed on social media.

•••

Coming from a conservative town, my health class during my freshman year of high school was centered around the “abstinence only” mindset. While there are plenty of arguments for why this is a valid approach, we have to acknowledge that my peers and I were not taught about consent, rape culture, contraceptives or anything revolving around sexual misconduct. A year later, I would be walking to my best friend’s house, confused about what had just happened to me. I remember saying to her, “I said no, and that I wasn’t ready for this, but it happened anyway,” and I remembered her responding, “if you put up boundaries, he’ll just be more tempted to break them, so maybe just see where it goes.” I accepted that without question, neither of us understanding that she was helping me justify the continuation of violence. A year and a half after that, I’d be subjected to sexual assault again on a blind date. I have to wonder if I would be a two-time survivor if that conversation with my best friend would’ve gone differently, if she would’ve said, “that isn’t okay” instead of further perpetuating rape culture. I have to wonder if I’d be writing about this at all if my health class would’ve taught me about consent, rape, etc. Unfortunately I will never know, because I was only taught about rape culture after I had already been subjected to sexual violence.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Definition of rape culture in English by Oxford Dictionaries." Oxford Dictionaries | English. Accessed February 08, 2018. [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/rape\\_culture](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/rape_culture).

Once I did finally find the courage to talk publicly about what had happened to me and advocate for awareness, I was met with (and continue to be met with) resistance from all areas. Last summer, one of my perpetrators contacted me and scared me back into silence for a solid 4 months. I continuously doubt myself, worry that my trauma is too traumatizing, hear people ridiculing me and my experience, and a lot of the time I retreat into my silence because that is where it is safe. I rationalize this by inaccurately assuming that no one can invalidate my story if I just don't tell it. It is only when I think of everyone who doesn't understand rape culture getting hurt outside my bubble of safety that I am able to break my silence and speak again.

As an English major, I find it incredibly fascinating to examine how the language we use to talk about rape and sexual assault can further silence others - the irony in that continues to astonish me. It is so much easier to not talk about rape/sexual assault at all than it is to be vulnerable with our trauma. A lot of the time, for a lot of people, silence is easier. There's a reason for that. No one ever taught me in my health classes what the definition of rape was. No one ever taught me that sexual assault/rape was something that could be done to you by someone you were in a relationship with. Instead, the topic was met with silence. This allowed society to continue to perpetuate the narrative that rape could only be when a stranger jumps out of the bushes and has sex with you against your will. It took me until coming to Gonzaga to understand that we do not have the adequate language to define rape with just one sentence. How was I supposed to speak up when I didn't even have the language or background knowledge to articulate what had happened to me?

One of the reasons why these large waves of accusations against men in Hollywood are coming out one after the other is because we are finally finding sufficient language to talk about the trauma that has been inflicted upon us. The reason why #MeToo has been so powerful is because we can communicate in just two words that an incredible injustice has happened in our lives. We don't have to relay gruesome and unpleasant details about who, what, when, where, how and why this happened to us. We don't have to use medical terminology or bare our souls to the world. We don't have to justify ourselves, explain why we haven't said anything earlier, or rationalize why we didn't turn our perpetrators in. We don't have to match a clinical definition to feel like our experiences are valid. We just have to say two words and suddenly, we feel listened to. We feel less alone.

We are in unknown territory here, learning from each other about how to talk about sexual assault in a way that makes sense to others, yet still communicating our experience in a raw and honest way. The most important thing we can do to ensure that we start to see the justice being served in Hollywood become applicable in all scenarios is to continue to talk about these tough subjects. We have to continue to learn from each other, listen to each other and support each other in order to destroy rape culture. We have to be brave enough to call out instances of rape culture when we see it, as well as acknowledge the ways we might unknowingly contribute to it. We have to amplify voices of survivors instead of invalidating or silencing them. We have to start somewhere, even if it is just with a simple two words: #MeToo.

# Not One Identity

By Joanne Shiosaki

---

”Aww, not a girl.” My brother was on the phone with our mother, who was at the hospital giving birth to a baby sister. I remember clearly wondering, what is a girl and what is a sister? At age three, I didn’t know my gender or what gender was at that time. But, from that point in time, my understanding of gender grew exponentially.

I was a child of black and white television in the 1960’s. I watched hours of after-school television. The programs and commercials shaped the way I began to understand and define my gender. I saw commercials where girls played with “Barbie” dolls and boys played with “Tonka Trucks.” These images started creating a divide of what it meant to be female and male. This gender division also existed in other areas. The school dress code did not allow girls to wear pants, even under the most severe winter weather conditions. At home, I was reminded by my mother that, “Girls should not laugh out loud; girls should not ask too many questions; girls should not speak up; and girls should not sit cross-legged.” I was the oldest female child, and I was responsible for caring for younger siblings. I started understanding early in life that there were differences and inequalities involved with being female and male.

I grew up in a poor, working class neighborhood. The families had surnames like: Johnson, Coomer, McKenzie, Anzalone, Ellis, Wylie, Tirk, Proctor, Heinen, Tortorelli and Vercruysse. There were no families with surnames that sounded like mine, but I identified with these kids. We played games like hide-and-seek or kick-the-can in groups of five to ten. When I saw their faces, which were white, I saw myself. Not because I thought I was white, but because I did not know what being “white” meant. Skin color, race and ethnicity were not a part of our identities at that time.

I thought it was normal that we got boxes from a foreign country in the mail filled with dried fish, seaweed and children’s books with illegible writing. I thought it was normal that we ate rice at dinner. I thought it was normal that my parents ate with chopsticks and drank tea. I thought it was normal that grandma did not speak English. I thought it was normal to take family portraits at the cemetery. I thought it was normal when my mom added canned corn to spaghetti sauce. I thought it was normal that my mother burned incense and chanted to photographs of deceased family members.

Before I started grade school, my mother told me that I was Japanese. I could tell

that she was proud of this, but she never said what it was or defined it. My father never spoke about being Japanese either. My family and I were “Japanese,” but beyond that label, I had little idea as to what that meant.

I was about 6 or 7 years old when a classmate’s younger sister asked me, “What are you?” I could not understand why she would ask this question when it was obvious that I was a girl. After I informed her of this, she repeated the question, this time with a tone of frustration. “I’m a girl,” I said again. When the little girl repeated the question for the third time, I walked away feeling weird and uncomfortable. At the time, I did not understand why I was singled out from the other girls with me. I know now she was talking about my race.

I worked at a local department store during college. It was the Christmas season and the store was packed with customers. I heard a commotion and looked up to see a man and woman dragging an elderly white woman to the door. The elderly woman was distressed, and as they passed by me I could hear her mumble, “Those people killed him.” The man with his head down said, “Yes, we know.” I did not understand what was going on at the time, but I know now that the elderly woman was triggered by my ethnicity and had obviously lost a loved one during World War II.

I was picking my daughter up after school when she was seven years old. I asked how her day had been. From the back seat of the car, she retorted in an indignant tone, “I was called a brown today.” I probed as to what that meant, and after she explained, I realized she had been called a racial slur. I was not prepared to talk about race; I backpedaled and made excuses. I told her that she must have misunderstood the situation. But, in a small, yet very powerful and strong voice she said, “Mom, I know when I have been disrespected.” I was shaken by this incident and it left me feeling much more than uncomfortable; it left a painful wound. I was in pain because I tried to tell my daughter she was not different and someone pointing out her skin color was a misunderstanding. I was wrong to do this because she is different. She is different like me.

This is when I understood and accepted my gender, ethnicity and race. My identities were constantly colliding into my everyday life. I purposely tried to ignore them or say difference did not exist. It took the voice of a seven-year-old child to name it. My experiences as a woman of color were different from my friends, my spouse, my work colleagues and my neighbors. Living and working in a predominantly white environment all my life had lulled me into not seeing difference. I could no longer push down my true, authentic self. This was the turning point where I gave voice to my identities and started to actively embrace difference.

# Going Green or Perpetuating Privilege

By Serena Carmona-Hester

Saving the Earth. It's an interesting image. A fairytale story in which the prince saves the damsel in distress. Our savior, who is most certainly defined by his testosterone and unwavering masculinity, is supposed to fly in on his magical cape of capitalism rescuing our distressed and helpless Mother Earth. She is left to sink into the painful irony that her only "hope" for survival is that which destroyed her in the first place: the works of man. It is no surprise we think of the Earth as a "she," considering that we have exploited her, robbed her, subjugated her, and raped her, all too similar to how we treat our own women. We must ask ourselves, how have we come to accept the term "Mother Earth"? Is it for her impenetrable strength? The same strength, might I add, that our patriarchal society has deemed in fact very penetrable to showcase the power and domination of man. The environment has been manipulated and controlled by man as a system of power, oppressing groups of people all for the benefit and privilege of a select few. Mainstream environmentalism has largely reproduced these same structures that privilege white, middle-to-upper class men over others. I must emphasize that I am only talking about mainstream environmentalism and culture, which references what you often see highlighted in your history books and media outlets when you search the subject "environment." This kind of environmentalism receives the majority of attention because it easily fits within the capitalist, racist, patriarchal, individualistic narratives that dominate our society. However, like with all systems of oppression comes the incredible potential for liberation, and I believe the environment provides us with that platform for human freedom. This means that it is of crucial importance that any efforts to protect our environment and the people within it are collective efforts rejecting the underlying principles, hierarchies, and systems that got us in this position in the first place.

"Going Green." I struggle with this term, as oftentimes it feels like a colorful way of disguising whiteness. I pride myself on being an environmentalist, so naturally I find myself in various social circles that are defined by their dedication to the environment and sustainability. In these circles I can't help but notice that the more "green" we become, the deeper we fall into the hole of perpetuating the non-inclusivity and oppression of white culture. We need to dissect what "going green" really means, who it's suited for, and the implications that has on universal participation in sustainability. Mainstream environmentalism is an extension of white culture, so much so that it fails to wander outside the narrow scope of white privilege. If you find yourself asking what white culture is, or even doubting its existence, that's because whiteness has infiltrated every aspect of American culture to the point where it just becomes

the constant background noise that eventually gets lumped into the realm of “normal” and “standard.” Since the 1980s, the mainstream environmental movement has been criticized for “being too elite, and too white, and too focused on beautiful scenery and charismatic species.”<sup>1</sup> It’s not that I find any problem with protecting these pristine wilderness areas, but I struggle with why we aren’t asking who has access to these spaces. It’s a question that’s answered like many other questions of privilege in our society: middle-to-upper class white families. Outdoor recreation is idealized as an equal access activity for all, but realistically, it’s a privilege in our society.

Environmental history chooses to honor and glorify a select few white men, some by the names of Aldo Leopold and John Muir, for their philosophical and political contributions in the preservation of our natural landscapes and pristine wilderness areas. However, the idea of respecting and protecting the land has been preached and practiced in the cultures of many indigenous peoples for a long time before white settler colonialism dispossessed them of their home and attempted to rob them of their culture. Unfortunately, their skin color didn’t fit the story’s heroic lead character, so we like to brush past this part of history. Even until today, people of color are perceived to be less concerned about the environment than white people, when in fact a survey conducted by The New York Times, Stanford University, and Resources for the Future found that Latinx are more likely to support policies and regulations against greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>2</sup> It’s not that people of color don’t care, but you can’t expect to see their faces when “the mainstream environmentalist movement has failed them, largely because it has been designed by and for a white, upper-middle-class demographic.”<sup>3</sup>

Being eco-friendly feels like another consumerist trend, calling to those who have the financial means to purchase the stylish Patagonia and Hydro Flask and dare to dream of owning the new Tesla. We’re environmentally conscious when we buy recyclable plastic or greenwashed products, yet this behavior simultaneously reinforces the throw-away culture that allowed us to produce so much waste in the first place.<sup>4</sup> It’s as if being sustainable isn’t about changing the culture or the system that created the original problem, but rather just purchasing the right products. We have fooled ourselves into thinking

---

1 Purdy, Jedediah. “Environmentalism Was Once a Social-Justice Movement.” *The Atlantic*. December 07, 2016. Accessed February 28, 2018. <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/12/how-the-environmental-movement-can-recover-its-soul/509831/>

2 Davenport, Coral. “Climate Is Big Issue for Hispanics, and Personal.” *The New York Times*. January 10, 2018. Accessed February 27, 2018. <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/02/10/us/politics/climate-change-is-of-growing-personal-concern-to-us-hispanics-poll-finds.html?referer=&r=0>.

3 Damen, Nicole Smith, Troy Elias, Deborah Morrison, and Daniel Morrison. “The overwhelming whiteness of US environmentalism is hobbling the fight against climate change.” *Quartz*. January 04, 2017. Accessed February 28, 2018. <https://qz.com/877447/the-overwhelming-whiteness-of-the-us-environmentalist-movement-is-hobbling-the-fight-against-climate-change/>

4 Andersen, Robin. “Selling ‘Mother Earth’: Advertising and the Myth of the Natural.” Edited by Richard Hofrichter. In *Reclaiming the Environmental Debate: The Politics of Health in a Toxic Culture*, 201-10. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000.

that capitalism can still defy the natural laws of limited resources by achieving exponential growth, so long as we buy the items with the “eco-friendly” sticker. Green is fashionable, new and expensive; it is not frugal, second-hand and cheap. Green is the latest, most high tech sustainable gear; it is not the reused, average items purchased from a thrift store. This common consumerist approach to sustainability suggests the idea that possessing vast amounts of money is a necessary means to go green in our society, which is why mainstream environmentalism doesn’t highlight those who are sustainable in ways that don’t reinforce capitalism and its supporting ideologies. These are the people that are, in fact, very sustainable, not for the look or the trend, but because they cannot afford to be wasteful or because their culture does not value a life of excess. I look to my abuelita who always reused the butter tub as tupperware, developed a low-meat diet to save money, and spent her free time growing her own vegetables and flowers because it was a low-cost way to enjoy the outdoors and eat healthy. Sure, she may not be eco-friendly in the most trendy, flashy, Instagram-worthy ways, but that doesn’t negate her low ecological footprint. Yet, we fail to praise the sustainability of her actions, not just because she’s brown, but because her ways of living defy one of the fundamental aspects of capitalism—consumerism.

My critique is not an attempt to shame or condescend, but rather to highlight the neglected areas within the movement that possess so much potential for monumental progress. Our gendered language about the environment perpetuates narratives of violence against women. Our romanticized savior of the environment defined by heteronormative masculinity ignores the indispensable role that women play in protecting our environment and fighting for equity. Our primary identities as individual consumers deceive us into thinking that buying more stuff, the right stuff, is the only avenue to making real change when, in reality, it only perpetuates the original problem. Systems of oppression and privilege only separate us, creating the societal barriers that prevent solidarity and unity that are necessary for human liberation. We must, first and foremost, acknowledge that mainstream environmentalism is embedded within white culture in the United States, and Gonzaga University is no exception. Sustainability is grounded in racial, economic and social privilege. How do we expect all students to want to participate in environmental clubs and sustainability when they’re based in a culture that is exclusive and discriminatory by its very nature? Diversity and genuine inclusivity means creating a culture of sustainability that has a place of belonging for students of all racial, religious, and economic backgrounds. This doesn’t mean I am asking that we be perfect individuals in a broken system. It means I am asking that we collectively move towards breaking the confines of whiteness by acknowledging the histories that we’ve long ignored, and by actively providing a platform for them to be championed, not appropriated.

# Undressed

By Kathryn Benson

---

The ninety-three-degree heat screams for shorts and a tank-top, but the men's screams from the trucks racing down the street drown everything else out. They insist on jeans and a cardigan to make sure that the skin above my knees and the sexiness of my collarbones don't create problems, yet again.

It's 10:36 p.m., and they said they would get here by 10:00 p.m. Frustrated, I walk through the restaurant one more time, looking for a familiar face and a familiar language in the midst of this foreign country. He steps in front of me.

"Sweetheart, where's that smile of yours?"

I stop for a second to translate, recognize the question, and push forward, flustered. Even in another language, I know the intention.

My gaze accidentally meets his as he traces my figure... down, up, and down again. His look grabs the edge of my shirt pulling it upward. His eyebrow rises knowingly and a curled smile stretches across his face. My pace quickens and a shiver runs down my spine as I realize what it feels like to have a stranger undress me with his eyes.

•••

My breath catches as I scroll through the never-ending stream of posts, and another "Me Too" surfaces among the cat videos and BuzzFeed quizzes. One more in the sea of women to suggest that I am not alone. One more that reminds me that my experiences are valid, regardless of how minor they may seem. One more that urges me to post the controversial hashtag.

A high school memory throws me back to an unclasped bra and a hesitation that was seemingly understood. Until later, when he found someone willing to keep it unhinged, which in turn unhinged my trust and confidence, suggesting that my worth is nothing more than a female body for his use.

I am thrown back to freshman year, sitting on a bench in the campus quad reading the letter that my childhood best friend sent out to loved ones to inform us about her rape. The knot in my throat grew larger as I wondered why the fork in the path of our lives led her to sexual assault and led me to luckily never know that pain. Yet, while the paths diverge, both sceneries are haunted by shadows. I applaud her and the Silence Breakers for allowing me to see myself in this conversation. For giving us the courage to recognize that every woman has a voice in this movement.

My soul begs to be understood rather than undermined. To be unpacked rather than undressed. For those violating eyes on the street to see me as a person of equal worth, rather than an object for their taking. For the men at the restaurant or the party or the date to see my intelligence, my intentionality, my strength, my dedication, my drive and my passion rather than a mere set of parts under those pesky clothes.

And I know thousands of badass women who would say "Me Too" to that as well.

# A Manifesto of a Hyperactive Mind

By Madison Rose

---

21% of teens with ADHD skip school repeatedly.

35% of teens with ADHD eventually drop out of school.

45% of teens with ADHD have been suspended.

30% of teens with ADHD have failed or had to repeat a year of school.<sup>1</sup>

That is not the human that I am. I am not these statistics. But for the first 17 years of my academic life these statistics consumed my every thought and action.

In 2nd grade, Kevin Miller\* pointed out my every mistake as I read out loud to the class. I had skipped a line, and my cover of being “normal” was quickly blown. He whispered underneath his breath just loud enough for me to hear, “She skips so many lines, no wonder she goes with all the stupid kids”.

I am not stupid.

I come home from school puffy eyed and, hyperventilating, I say to my mom, “The place they take me to get help... it’s like my...prison cell”. My mom pulls me in close, my little body still fitting in a ball on her lap as she reminds me...

I am not trapped.

I walk up to my professor to tell him I am going to take all of my quizzes in the Testing Center - a right assured to me by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). His response: “You only get tests in there? That would be such an inconvenience.”

I am not an inconvenience.

Today, a phone call showed the school system what I had been attempting to prove my entire life.

---

1 <https://www.additudemag.com/the-statistics-of-adhd/>

\*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals mentioned.

My mom's voice comes through the phone, shaky with happiness, "Madison, I have the results of your most recent eval, your brain has compensated to such an extent that your learning disabilities don't show up on the assessments."

I am capable of beating society's constructs of intelligence.

My mind flashes back to the moments in which this truth has been revealed before.

Walking onto the stage, my hands were shaking, my notecards becoming wet with sweat. I looked up, the title "Living with Learning Disabilities" shining across the screen. I looked out at the 500 audience members at my TED talk, and nervously prepared to admit my biggest secret. I spoke about the moments when I had felt like an example of the statistics, and my shoulders relaxed as I realized this was the beginning of proving them wrong.

I am brave.

As I walked into Hemmingson, I glanced at the Spokesman Review. My face stared back at me with the headline "Gonzaga Student Champions Advocacy for Learning Disabled" stretched across the page—finally, recognition that my work did not go unnoticed. I was no longer defined by sheets of paper bleeding with red corrections, making my fight seem endless. I am now defined by national awards, and overcoming adversity.

I am a role model.

I have fallen in love with my label of being neurodivergent. The parts of me that I value the most are those that set me aside from the norm. My learning disabilities accompany me in every faction of my life. Impulsive leaps of faith? A symptom of my ADHD. Constantly thinking of larger than life ideas? A comorbidity of my dyslexic brain. Thinking dynamically about all the ways to solve a problem? The result of my dysgraphic neurons.

I am an agent of change.

# PLEASE underSTAND

By Michael Larson

---

His name is Michael. He's an 18 year old kid who doesn't quite know what he's going to do with his life. He loves to dance, go on random adventures, and play ping pong with his friends. He treats people with kindness and does his best to make everyone feel important. His dream is to someday change the world.

Little does Michael know that because of the color of his skin he will not have the same privileges that those with lighter skin will have. The odds are against him, and he doesn't know that African Americans with degrees are twice as likely to be unemployed.<sup>1</sup> He doesn't know that when he gets older and tries to buy a house, he will be shown 18% fewer homes than white people.<sup>2</sup> Michael is 30% more likely to be pulled over by the police while driving.<sup>3</sup> If he becomes injured, 67% of doctors will have a bias against him as an African American.<sup>4</sup> Michael doesn't know that throughout his lifetime he is six times more likely to be incarcerated than a white man.<sup>5</sup> He is going to have to put in twice the amount of effort in life in order to achieve the exact same opportunities that a white man takes for granted.

This Michael is me. I write this piece to show you that these problems of racism, discrimination, prejudice, and intolerance are real. I found that out this past summer while I was on a Gonzaga Outdoors pre-orientation trip in Montana. The second day of our four day trip, my pod of 25 campers went mountain biking. We were all lined up and paired with another camper to ride side by side as we rode down the 15 mile mountain bike trail. Half way down the trail there was an elderly couple who started passing us in the opposite direction. I was riding on the inside of the trail. My partner and I were the last pair of campers riding our bikes at the back of the pack with a Gonzaga Outdoors leader following close behind. The woman started to pass us and the man followed after. The woman sped past and as the man started to pass me at the back of the pack, he veered toward me, outstretched his arm and shoved me in the shoulder. I swerved to the right and almost fell, then looked back to see my Gonzaga Outdoors leader yelling at the man as he continued to ride in the opposite direction like nothing had happened. I was the only person of color in my pod of 25 campers. He saw nothing but the color of my skin.

After the hapless event, when we all went to a gas station or store to grab snacks or use the bathroom, I had to walk around in fear knowing that at any moment, another act of discrimination could occur. It made my hair stand on edge to think that a man could push me in the middle of broad daylight while I was riding along with 25 other campers. What would have happened if I had

---

1 Ross, Janell. "African-Americans With College Degrees Are Twice As Likely to Be Unemployed as Other Graduates." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 27 May 2014.

2 Cha, Mijin. "New HUD Report Shows Continued Discrimination Against People of Color." *Demos*, 12 June 2013.

3 Ingraham, Christopher. "You Really Can Get Pulled over for Driving While Black, Federal Statistics Show." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 9 Sept. 2014.

4 Culp-Ressler, Tara. "Why Racism Is A Public Health Issue." *ThinkProgress*, Think Progress, 3 Feb. 2014.

5 Quigley, Bill. "18 Examples Of Racism In The Criminal Legal System." *The Huffington Post*, *TheHuffingtonPost.com*, 4 Oct. 2016.

been alone in the middle of the night?

Now you might not live with the same fear that I do every day, but if you believe that this country was built on the statement, “All men are created equal,” then you should care that this injustice is happening right in front of your eyes. Sadly, it is only a matter of time before I experience another instance of discrimination that I will have to overcome because I am African American. As sad as it is, this is reality. This is the world I live in. This is the world we live in, as Americans. If people’s prejudices don’t change, this epidemic of racism and inequality will continue to affect people of color for years to come. African Americans, along with other people of color, need to start being treated as equals in this country. I can’t stand the injustice anymore. The fact that people because of the pigment of their skin will live disadvantaged lives is ludicrous. This change towards being a more open minded and accepting society needs to start with raising awareness and showing people what it feels like and looks like to be discriminated against.

Self-representation is important for African Americans and people of color who live on the margins of this dominative society because it is the gateway to taking a stand against the injustice that we experience throughout our lives. We saw this awareness in 1963 when Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech, and we are seeing it again with the civil rights movement currently fighting for justice, and the Black Lives Matter movement fighting for our full equality as Americans and against institutionalized racism and police brutality.<sup>6</sup> The Black Lives Matter movement has sparked confusion and opposition. When I hear the words “All Lives Matter,” I am saddened to know that people are missing the point. Of course all lives matter, but currently, black people in America are the ones who face discrimination, racism, prejudice, and disadvantages the most. This is why we need to focus specifically on achieving equality for African Americans right now that are facing continued injustice, because otherwise the disparity persists.

Have an open mind and try to understand. Put yourself in my shoes. Imagine if the people you identified with were being discriminated against. Wouldn’t you take action, and do anything you could to raise awareness to the dominative society on what is truly happening? America is slowly starting to take a stand and raise awareness of the injustices that African Americans are experiencing, but it’s not easy. There is still much more work that needs to be done, and many more steps to be taken. Next time you witness an injustice happening, speak up and fight for those who don’t have a voice. Take a step outside of your comfort zone and have conversations with people who are different from you. If you are passionate about social justice, raise awareness by attending a rally or by researching different ways to promote activism where you live. One day, I hope to live in a world where the color of my skin does not make me worry about my future. Until that day comes, I will continue to fight for what is right. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, “He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> “What We Believe.” [blacklivesmatter.com/about/what-we-believe/](https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/what-we-believe/).

<sup>7</sup> Quotes Author: Martin Luther King, Jr. Tag: Apathy.” Apathy < Martin Luther King, Jr. < Quotes, [www.brainyquote.com/quotes/martin\\_luther\\_king\\_jr\\_124474](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/martin_luther_king_jr_124474).

# Diversity Monologues pr



resents...



# the masterpiece within

By Kayla Kim

---

i was born into the world  
with an entire nation already  
in my stomach  
a generation of struggle in my name  
a story of hope in my eyes  
i had crossed oceans even before  
my own conception  
known love and loss before  
my first breath  
i was born with a nation inside of me  
a nation i learned to silence  
when i saw the way my black hair  
and brown eyes stood against a white canvas  
i was a korean stain in an american masterpiece  
and so i picked up a paintbrush  
and began erasing my skin  
my own self with it  
call it brilliant, call it abstract  
this is the art of disappearing  
and when all had been taken  
all had been lost  
i felt it  
the death of a nation  
in a canvas white as snow  
so with my heart on the floor  
i picked up the paintbrush and i drew  
i drew my heart out  
colors like you've never seen  
blue the color of seas i have crossed  
green the color of earth i come from  
red the color of fire inside of people with  
hair as black as night  
eyes as brown as trees  
spirits as strong as mountains  
colors as beautiful as the nation  
inside of me  
-the masterpiece within

# Simply Be

By Zabelle Messick

---

“Nigger,” the man had yelled at me, “nigger.”

“Mm, I don’t know. I don’t think he would say that. No, he didn’t say.....”

I turned to my high school best friend horrified, my eyes desperately searching her face for some sort of confirmation for what just had happened, some sort of comfort, and she told me that she didn’t think he would say something like that and kept walking. It was as if nothing had ever happened.

Regret raced through my veins as my mouth clamped shut. I didn’t stand up for myself. I didn’t demand a conversation about it. I kept it all inside: the tears, the fear, the devastation.

Regret formed words that my voice refused to distribute air towards,  
And pain replayed the experience, interspersing it with childhood memories that flooded my mind.

I walked with her in silence and I remembered.

Kindergarten, my blonde-haired blue-eyed best friend and daughter of the Kindergarten teacher told me that she didn’t like brown people, but that I was okay because I wasn’t brown, I was black.

2nd grade, two girls in my class would stare at my lips, pouting their own lips to imitate my own and tell me that my lips were so big, it would be fun to cut them off.

5th grade, a mixed girl in my class told me that my ancestors must’ve been slaves.

6th, 7th and 8th grade, consisted of friends who told me I was not black enough, that in fact I was not black, but white

Never mind the fact that my only knowledge and exposure to the stereotypes they had associated with my skin tone came from the same reality TV shows and media they’ve seen.

Never mind the fact that I was just as sheltered and as unexposed as they were.

Yes, I thought back and it made me hurt and I'm angry about still having that pain.

I'm angry that freshman year—of college—I still had peers that were ignorant enough to tell me,

“Zabelle, I think that’s the blackest thing that I’ve ever heard you say.”

And it's tiresome having my identity be pushed and pulled, kinda like when professors and peers have come up behind me and played with my hair like tassels.

I am so Tired.

Tired of being too black, or not black enough

Tired of being just the right amount of black, just enough to be tokenized, exotified, belittled, underestimated and generalized.

Because the fact of the matter is,

When I go home, I'm greeted by my loving white parents at the airport, and to them, I'm Zabelle.

And when I look into the incredibly blue eyes of my blonde-haired nephew, I'm just Aunt Zabelle.

And when I'm reunited with my friends, I'm Zabs.

But you wouldn't know that. You wouldn't see that just by looking at me.

You wouldn't know

that I took ballet lessons,

that I did gymnastics,

Won Miss Personality in pageants,

Was a scholar athlete,

Ran track, played tennis, basketball, varsity volleyball, beach volleyball,

that I sing

That I love to sing and that it makes me happy.

You see, I'm happy when I'm not

Judged as being too black or not black enough or Just Black

I'm happy when I'm seen as Zabelle

I'm happy when you ask for my story.

But as soon as I walk outside that door, I'm just another black girl.

A black girl.

When I walk down the sidewalk I'm just a black body,

When I raise my hand in class, and all the students turn to stare; they are looking at the only black girl in class.

And when the professor calls on me and their voice changes to a gentler tone

And they tilt their head and ear towards me a little bit

As if my voice is more delicate and harder to hear than the boys on either side of me

As if my words are more special, more unique

But

I am not angry about being black

I am angry that I am only black to people

That I can only come from THAT neighborhood, that I'm only a good dancer if I can teach YOU how to twerk, that I'm not allowed to exceed THAT level of intelligence or that it's not my RIGHT to dream of becoming more.

Because here I stand.

I'm right in front of you.

Me.

I'm a whole lotta human. A whole lotta black. And a whole lotta woman

I might not fit your idea of what I should be, but I fit the being of which this body is meant to be

I remember coming home to my dorm in tears one night. I was upset about how I was made to feel for black skin and I remember my best friend being there and asking me, "what do you need from me, Zabelle?"

For that moment, I allowed myself to share the heavy weight my heart bared.

I told her, "I'm not asking for you to separate us by telling me that you could never experience what I have gone through. I just need you to listen and sit with me, and simply be."

# My Liberation

By Zaineb Siddiquee

---

So every time I walk out of my house or have people come over, I wrap a piece of cloth around my head to cover what lies beneath. I have done this every single time for the past 6 ½ years. There is not a day that goes by where I do not put on my scarf when I go outside of my home. I say this not to impress anyone or anything but to emphasize the repetition of my actions. When I started wearing my hijab, I knew exactly why I was taking the extra steps and time in the morning to cover my head. Now, almost 7 years later, I have gotten in such a routine that I sometimes forget why I wear a scarf. In those days, I wear my scarf out of monotony rather than from conviction. Every so often when I let my mind wander, I think about why I put a scarf on every single day. It is easy to think of the surface level reasons like wearing my hijab, my scarf, is a part of my Islamic faith and it is one way that I follow the tenants of modesty in my religion. And that an added perk is that I will never have a bad hair day and on those cold winter days, my ears and neck will never get cold. These reasons are surface level and do not fully convey my intentions about my choice to wear a hijab.

I grew up in a moderately conservative Muslim family. While we abide by the tenets of the religion, we also recognize that there is a lot knowledge and information that can be interpreted in many different ways. Throughout my childhood, I learned that there is no one specific way to be a Muslim and practice Islam. My parents set the example of how I should be an American Muslim. They were always there to guide me through my journey as an American Muslim and allowed me to choose how I practiced my Islam. The biggest example of this is my hijab.

I come from a long lineage of strong and independent Muslim women. My great-grandmother and her family fought for girls' education in India. My grandmothers are always ready to serve the community. One of my grandmothers help start a shelter for survivors of domestic violence. My mom and sisters along with my great grandmother and grandmothers are my roles models every single day. They are who I aspire to be. While some of my family members choose to wear a hijab, some do not. My mom, sister, grandmother and I choose to wear a hijab while my other grandmother and aunts choose not to.

I was always given the choice to wear a hijab; it was never forced upon me. In fact, my parents thought that I would never want to wear a hijab. I always knew that I wanted to wear a scarf, but I was not sure when. Eventually, I came to the conclusion that I would start the summer before high school. That is exactly

what I did. I remember the day so clearly. It was the morning June 13th, 2011 that I walked out of my room with a hijab on to go out in public for the first time. Now, beforehand, I would only wear my hijab when I would go to Sunday school or when I would go to the mosque, but I would never have worn it out in public to something that was not an Islamic related event. While I was scared that something may happen to me, I was also super excited to be starting a new phase of life.

As time went on, I became more comfortable when I wore my hijab in public. I also became more aware of my presence in society. Putting a piece of cloth around my head makes me very visible to everyone around. So, when my roommates answer the question “Who is your roommate?” by saying Zaineb, she’s the one who wears a scarf on her head, you probably have a good idea of who they are talking about.

But there are some instances that make me uncomfortable to be so public with my identity and make question my choice to wear a hijab. Like the countless times that I have been repeatedly asked where I am from because saying I am from Sunnyvale, California is not sufficient for them since there is something wrapped around my head. Or the times when professors look straight at me whenever they start talking about Islam, the Middle East or Terrorism and they expect me to represent the entire Muslim community which has a population of 1.8 billion people. Or the limitless times when political figures make unhinged comments about my religion and my people while they try to ban people from immigrating from Muslim majority countries and say it is not a Muslims ban. Or finally, the innumerable times when I see the news about something bad that has happened, I say a prayer hoping that the perpetrator is not Muslim or has a Muslim sounding name because if they do, I know the backlash that my community is going to endure.

So why do I wear a hijab when I have encountered so many instances that have caused me to question my choice? Because my hijab is my liberation. The strength and empowerment I gain from wrapping a piece of cloth around my head allow me to be who I was meant to be. It represents my unwavering commitment to my religion despites what the rest of the world tells me about my Islam. It is an act of faith towards God and society. It is my unshakeable commitment to my faith and trust in God that God will only give what God knows I can handle. It is my hope for society that one day, the people who look like me and people from all marginalized communities will finally be seen as human.

# LEFT ON READ

By Abigail Altamirano

---

[If you do not know what it means “to be left on read/seen/delivered,” it means: To read a message (typically a text or on a messenger app that signals the sender when the message is seen or “read”), knowing the sender is aware that you’ve seen the message, yet they do not respond.]

[Snap=snapchat]

My country left me on read  
Had to sleep knowing my country saw my people’s narrative and dismissed our message  
Our rallies sent off like a text message  
Just to be left on delivered  
Our thoughts and feelings slaughtered  
45th thoughts as careless as a meaningless snap  
A snapshot of our country as a disgrace  
A snap left on seen  
We got seen but not noticed  
We aren’t the focus  
I’m done sending my words to an empty world  
People forget that words carrying meaning  
How silence is demeaning  
How my activism is fiending  
You see to leave someone on read is an active decision, a special intention  
My country actively sought to silence me  
BUT THAT’S WHY I WRITE IN ALL CAPS  
Why my words got snaps  
Why I’ll keep talking like I’m running laps  
Non-stop  
No Cop  
—Outs  
No time hops

Everyday is a fight  
Our history has to always be in light  
Just because we're left on read doesn't mean someone isn't listening  
No response is still a response  
And keep keeping on 'till I see 3 dots replying  
Till all POCs are done fighting  
Ain't no denying  
That being ignored is a struggle  
But I'm okay spending my whole life tired from a fight being left on seen but not heard  
Of being left on read but not understood  
And I get it  
Cause it sucks to send a message saying  
Where were you when?  
Can barely get a text of  
How have you been  
People seem to forget that watching others like us pushed out, killed, and belittled is hard on us too  
It's so difficult to be left on read by a country who's been silent, compliant while we bled  
We have to keep sending our message  
Even with no reply  
We have to keep taking our snapshots even to a blind eye  
Because one day our message will be shared to a network of people  
They will see how we persisted, never backed down, and tried to stay whole  
I call this radical hope  
Cause you cant go broke  
With a heart full of woke  
We fight together  
Our narratives interwoven  
Are better.

# I Eat Buffalo from the Plains

By CJ Werk

---

They may think they changed me

Educated, unlearned me, as my friend would say

Ya I learned

But I left the Rez a kid and

Go back all the same.

A father that says, you know what you do and don't do

You know what you say and don't say

I know who I am.

'Till 18 those years were never untainted,

Then I came here.

The hopes and dreams fell with each day, just like the tears from the hardships no one explained.

Filled with love and openness, you find the lies that were fed to you drifted all away.

Leaving my home with smiles, hugs, kisses and love from family too great to count

GU broke me.

The hopes of becoming a doctor transferred as I left this place to find where I belonged,

where I was more suitable, where I wouldn't be in the way, where I fit.

Going to that place, a school less great, then The Gonzaga University

I fit. I fell right into place. I was comfortable.

Yet I knew better, I knew where I should be, where I got to be.

GU broke me, but never destroyed me.

Don't forget who you are and where you come from

Don't forget who you are and where you come from

With a hug that lasted too long and squeezed a little too tight, those words tattooed themselves inside.

Traveling from the ear to the heart, pumping to the bottom of the feet and palm of the hands.

Warming every part to remember something that was never forgotten but covered from what

was supposed to be.

I know who I am.

Coming to a place where you don't want to be is hard but going somewhere you need to be is even

harder

I went to college to go back home, for my community, to help my people.  
Gonzaga isn't my home, it isn't my community, it tried to unlearn me, to make  
me forget

GU broke me but never destroyed me

I know who I am. I am Aaniiih, White Clay, the daughter of Andy and Leann  
Werk form Hays,

MT of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, White Clay country!

I was told to get an education, to be equal. But the education of a Native today  
does not mean an

educated Native. It's not as history says a Native should be educated.

It's what you see before you, across the nation we have doctors and lawyers, we  
have mothers we have

fathers and yet all you see is the placement of names.

Educated native, with a capital E.

Defining is your way and diluting is your game.

I am not an educated Native.

I am not a Gonzaga Native American student.

Four years of life that almost took the Rez out of the kid

Feeling like a sellout, for a piece of paper that'll be a decoration

Feeding into the Gonzaga experience,

That includes looking in a mirror seeing one color, one name, and not me.

When May comes, so does that paper and the stamp of higher education

Plastered on my forehead

From the way I walk to the way I talk

Assimilate they said.

Is that what I've done?

Rewritten history to play a game I could not win

Just as they said it would be

Unknowingly fed a beast that is already full

Just as water fills a glass, it spills reaching the rim

Over goes the relating, comparing, equating and like a waterfall flows  
the clarity

To not be their equal but nothing of the same

We aren't equal as one man once told me

We are Native We are our tribes We are our own

And I eat buffalo from the Plains.

Gonzaga strives to have educated Natives and let me tell ya, they sure as hell try.

I know who I am.

I am Aaniiih.

# Untitled

By Stephanie Aguilar

---

One's life is comprised of many firsts. It was the first time I had heard someone say that some of us grow up in a storm. There were many instances when I noticed that I was propelling straight through one. My family was and still is comprised of farm workers. Blood, sweat and tears were the bulk of what our family was built on. There were a lot of prayers as well; prayers that were against the rain so we could make enough money for food, for rent, school supplies and clothes. At age 10, I knew what it was like to work full-time in the summer; child-labor laws didn't apply because we had a family to support and it's not like anyone actually regulated the laws. I never knew what an allowance was and for the next four years of my life I wouldn't understand the term because I was brought up in a family that valued a dollar and knew the labor that went into each cent of it. Later on, that year I would come into middle school smelling of smoke from making fires to keep the trees alive. It was for the rest of my life that I would be labeled and viewed by people in the community as a slave that had enough sweat to run down my back that it was permanent.

It was the first time that men who were over the age of 18 had cat-called me. It was the first time that I realized that I didn't have regularly scheduled breaks in the orchards.

This was the first time that I had to hide water bottles in my picking bucket so we wouldn't pass out because of the heat due to new protocol. It was the first time worrying for my father because falling of the ladder could be the end, especially when you didn't have health insurance. It was the first time that I couldn't be my father's daughter because I was light skinned and he was dark skinned. Being followed in grocery stores and asked if my brother was actually related to me. Still being looked down upon because of my last name and gender in academics.

This was the first time that I had realized my brother had gang initials tattooed all over his body and was ready at the age of 16 to give his life for a cause that wasn't worth all the blood that was shed. I later found out he was actually 13 when he was rushed in the family gang.

It was the first time that I recognized what bullet holes were on the side of my home.

This was the first time that my cousin had a bullet shot through his head and was lucky enough to be able to run to a gas station and collapse on the floor. It was the first time in my life I noticed that none of the women in my family wanted to go to college because none of them had been encouraged to pursue education. It was the first time in my life where my family would be split. It was the first time

in my life where I was coasting in school and getting into fights like it was a habit. It was the first time that I realized what shame, pain and worry was.

Although, it was the first time I was told how strong I was because I was helping my father in the fields.

It was the first time that I had heard the pain of the workers around me and trust had been given to me. It was the first time that an old man stood up for all of the women's honor but especially mine when a worker got out of hand and wouldn't leave me alone.

It was the first time that I learned sacrifice goes along with love. It was my first time listening to a man that preached to me about how much my hard work would pay off in the end. It was my first time learning that you can still smile each day regardless of your situation from a woman who was in an abusive relationship, which she later left. It was my first time learning the true definition of what proud meant and embracing who I was. It was the first time that a boy my age called me beautiful and intelligent when I was covered in dirt and sweat from the orchard. It was the first time I realized that hope comes in many forms and I was going to be one of the first to get my master's degree and later my doctorate degree. Did you know that in the eye of the storm the skies are clear up above and the winds are relatively light it's actually the calmest section of a hurricane. Some of us grow up in a storm and some of us reach the center. Surrounded by chaos but making our own skies clear and our own winds light. Maybe we can calm the hurricanes that engulf our loved ones.



Submitted by Kathryn Benson

*Guarani children perform a local dance in the Misiones Province of Argentina.*

# Be Like Water

By Ronnie Estoque

---

Be like water  
Something that Bruce Lee said am I right?  
To be malleable and filling  
Of any space or environment without hesitation  
Flow like water  
Resist the barriers that prevent  
A river's relentless stream  
Be still like water  
Just be to be  
Sustain like water  
Provide life to the desolate  
Through word and touch  
However, there is a punch line  
Life, probably 90 percent of it  
Is not like water  
Sometimes I feel as if I'm more like a block of ice  
Too cold and undeserving of warmth  
Maybe I feel this way because I ask myself:  
Who truly knows who is trapped within this thick sheet of ice?  
Deep family secrets of unforgiveable sins that numb me to reality  
Desensitizing my purpose and being  
I sit in these classrooms  
The Devil in my head constantly telling me that  
My worth is not valued, and that my intellect and my experiences  
Don't matter because a figure in my family's bank account truly represents who I  
am  
The Devil's words become internalized, rooting itself deeply within my humanity  
and my soul  
We get accustomed to reflecting life's pains and sorrows  
For in my reality all I see are masking facades that don't care  
Did the masks care when my family couldn't afford the mortgage for my child-  
hood house?  
Or the nights on cold floors wrapped up in my uncle's  
Air Force boot camp sleeping bag, questioning  
Whether I was an actual trooper at the age of 15  
Where were these masks when I accompanied my grandpa on bus rides  
To his weekly anger management courses in the fourth grade

Conditioned to think at a young age that anger  
Was my only true emotion  
To be like ice, and to feel masked from within  
Becomes a common coping mechanism for this trauma  
But ice is not who I am deep inside  
I think I'm more of a rain cloud  
But hold up, rain clouds are ACTUALLY dope  
Gray and dreary  
Plain but complex in my thoughts  
Pity as the last thing a rain cloud wants to receive in life  
For the tears and raindrops that sky fall  
Replenish earth's driest lands  
Bruce Lee was on to something  
To flow is to embrace a different art  
One that is defined by cocoa butter kisses and sweet like honey bliss  
Just listen, hear, and act on it



Submitted by Kathryn Benson

*A grocery boat delivers food to a river house in Tigre:  
a small town outside of Buenos Aires*

# Rooted

By Diana Nguyen

---

My mother planted a seed in Vietnam and its roots grew across the Pacific Ocean  
to America where it bleeds culture into my veins. I'm here to stay.

My people's lullabies carry in the wind  
as my mother cradles me to sleep.

The scars of their resistance  
are engraved into my bones  
as I listen to their stories.

The sound of my people's screams  
echoes through my mother's heartbeat  
as she tells me she loves me.

My grandmother's tears salts the ocean  
that my father floated across to escape the war.

Every time I struggle to find  
the right words in Vietnamese  
my ancestors turn in their graves.

I bow my head as if I understand  
the weight of what we bear  
how heavy it is to haul alone.

Though my tongue no longer curves the right way  
when I articulate in my mother's language,

I say my name: Nguyễn Trần Kim-Ngân, as if it were a foreign thing.

Though my looks are more likely to be mistaken  
as another ethnicity's rather than my own,

Though my English doesn't have a hint of Vietnamese and my Vietnamese no  
trace of English,

I am Vietnamese-American through and through.

My mother's history will not be forgotten as long as I live and breathe - a  
fragment of her story.

I can only memorize my social security number in Vietnamese, but I recite my  
phone number in English.

America is not a melting pot of different cultures.

If I agreed to that I would be undermining the importance and history of my  
culture... and your culture.

No, it's not a melting pot.

I will continue to recall my mother's gruesome memories of the war. I will  
continue to cry when I think of my mother's sacrifices.

I will continue to celebrate the resilience of my people. I will continue to call  
our capital Saigon and I will continue to wave the flag with three stripes that my  
people became martyrs to defend.

I will continue to just be me.

My presence on American soil is enough to remind the world of the history of  
my people. The tree that I am and will become breathes our narratives into the  
ears of those who will pass by.

It is enough. I am enough.

# Contributor Bios

**Kayla Kim:** Kayla is a sophomore studying Sociology and Elementary Education with a minor in Solidarity and Social Justice.

**Mauliola Harley Gonzalves:** Harley is a student from Maui, Hawaii studying International Relations.

**Ashley Sanchez-Garcia:** Ashley is a freshman at Gonzaga University studying Biology and Social Justice. She started writing poetry her junior year of high school and has loved writing ever since.

**Julia Bellia:** Julia is an Environmental Studies major and in the Elementary Education Teaching Certification Program.

**Giulianna Pendleton:** Giulianna is a sophomore Political Science and Environmental Studies major with a minor in Philosophy. She enjoys exploring the outdoors, binging tv shows, and drinking coffee excessively.

**Brahiam Villanueva:** Brahiam is a senior studying History and English. He likes to write emails and read. His favorite type of cookie is oatmeal raisin, and he has yet to meet someone else who loves oatmeal and raisins together with the same passion.

**Kathryn Benson:** Kathryn is a junior majoring in Economics, Spanish and Latin American Studies and is proud to have a voice in these difficult conversations.

**Alessandra Barros Barreto:** Alessandra is a junior studying Psychology with a research concentration. She was born in São Paulo, Brazil and moved to Bellevue, Washington at the age of two. She later returned to Brazil and completed most of her high school career in Rio de Janeiro, where her family is from. From her multicultural experiences, she has come to value diversity and the change that the difficult conversations present in platforms like Our Voices can bring.

**Kau'i Ho'opi'i:** Kau'i is from Honolulu, Hawaii. She is a sophomore at Gonzaga majoring in Special Education. She is very passionate about her Hawaiian culture and other cultures. She always wants to learn more about other cultures and social injustices. She always wants to learn how she can help and be a voice for those who don't have one.

**Abby Beck:** Abby is a senior nursing student who finds too many things interesting to pick a "dream job". She spends what little free time she has painting, reading, drinking tea, and thinking about the dog she wants to own. She is trying to find new ways to incorporate activism into her daily life, especially as a future healthcare professional. She finds hope in the love of her friends and family, the kindness of strangers, spunky patients, and the beauty of the PNW.

**Andrew Mercer:** Andrew is a recent graduate who still haunts the basement of Hemmingson while pretending to be an adult in the CCE office. He loves home gardening, stories, The Office, long walks with his wife and dog, and short walks to Thomas Hammer.

**Maya Coseo:** Maya is a sophomore from Portland, OR, majoring in English with a Creative Writing emphasis, and a Spanish minor. After graduation, she would love to move back to her hometown and work on publishing a novel. Her favorite things include coffee, her cats, and reading. Two authors she admires are Robin McKinley and Michael Crichton. Her poem, titled “Row” was published in the Writers in the Schools 2015 anthology titled “Off Center”. I have also had an opinion piece, titled “Face[book] You[tube]r INSTA[gram] Fame: A young person’s experience with Social Media” published in “VoiceCatcher Magazine’s” winter 2015 edition.

**Deqa Mumin:** Deqa is a freshman and undecided on a major. She did slam poetry a lot in high school, and enjoys running and writing.

**Lindsay Panigeo:** Lindsay is a sophomore majoring in Biochemistry. As a Native Alaskan, she has always been passionate about intercultural competency and diversity. The painting she has done is a rainbow tree in support of the LGBT+ community. She chose a tree to show her love for nature. It symbolizes that, while we are all different individuals, we are still connected, much like the leaves of a tree.

**Sarah Kersey:** Sarah is a sophomore English writing major with a double minor in History and Women and Gender Studies. She gets asked what she is going to do with her major at least twice a month and she still doesn’t have an answer.

**Joanne Shiosaki:** Joanne is a third generation Japanese American. Her father and uncle served in the US Army during WWII amidst harsh racism and prejudice. She believes that love, laughter, understanding, humility and forgiveness are key elements in bridging the divide of difference. She is blessed to have spent the last 24 years working in Gonzaga’s Student Media Office, where she is a student and a teacher. She is the proud mom of Sydney and four cats that include the internet’s most famous musical cat, Keyboard Cat. She is married to a “follows the beat of his own drum” artist named Charlie Schmidt.

**Serena Carmona-Hester:** Serena is a junior from Pleasanton, CA majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Sociology. She works for the Office of Sustainability as a Sustainability Engagement Coordinator at Gonzaga and her area of interest is environmental justice.

**Madison Rose:** Madison is a senior at Gonzaga and is heavily involved in social justice advocacy.

**Michael Larson:** Michael is a freshman at Gonzaga from Everett, Washington. He is passionate about social justice and is about to declare Sociology as a major with a minor in Leadership Studies. His christian faith background is very important to him. He created this piece for an English project, but it serves a purpose larger than just the classroom.

**Zabelle Messick:** Zabelle is a sophomore majoring in Psychology and minoring in Music. She enjoys singing in Gonzaga's Concert Choir and Chamber Choir. Zabelle hopes to pursue clinical psychology and or law.

**Zaineb Siddiquee:** Zaineb is a Junior majoring in Psychology and minoring in General Business. She is also Connections Student Leader for CCE's mentoring programs.

**Abigail Altimirano:** Abigail is a senior Sociology major with minors in Women and Gender Studies and Criminal Justice. She works on the activities team in the Center for Global Engagement, serves as Vice President of La Raza Latina, and devotes the rest of her time to student activism in promoting diversity and inclusion within Gonzaga.

**CJ Werk:** CJ is from Hays on the southern end of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in North central Montana and a senior Environmental Studies major.

**Ronnie Estoque:** Ronnie is a student journalist from South Seattle. He hopes to master his craft of story-telling, and wants to travel to the Philippines after graduation and produce a documentary highlighting Filipino indigenous culture and heritage.

**Diana Nguyen:** Diana is a freshman from Seattle, WA studying Computer Science. She likes to be involved in social justice work because she wants to use the privilege that she has for the advantage of others. She has a paw tattoo on her

Thank you for reading this journal. Our Voices Volume 5 was published March 6, 2018 at Lawton Printing in Spokane, Washington, with the assistance of Trevor Werttemberger. This journal was edited by Rose Kingma, Elizabeth Terry, Celeste Klug, Kathryn Benson, Alessandra Barros Barreto, Monica Kastilani and Sabrina Villanueva Avalos. It was designed by Mary Jenkins and Sabrina Villanueva Avalos. It was printed using Accent paper, 100# uncoated paper for the cover and 80# for the inside pages. It is 8.5 inches by 5.5 inches. Additional journals can be attained by emailing [ourvoices@gonzaga.edu](mailto:ourvoices@gonzaga.edu).





—Martin Luther King Jr.

YAGA  
UNIVERSITY