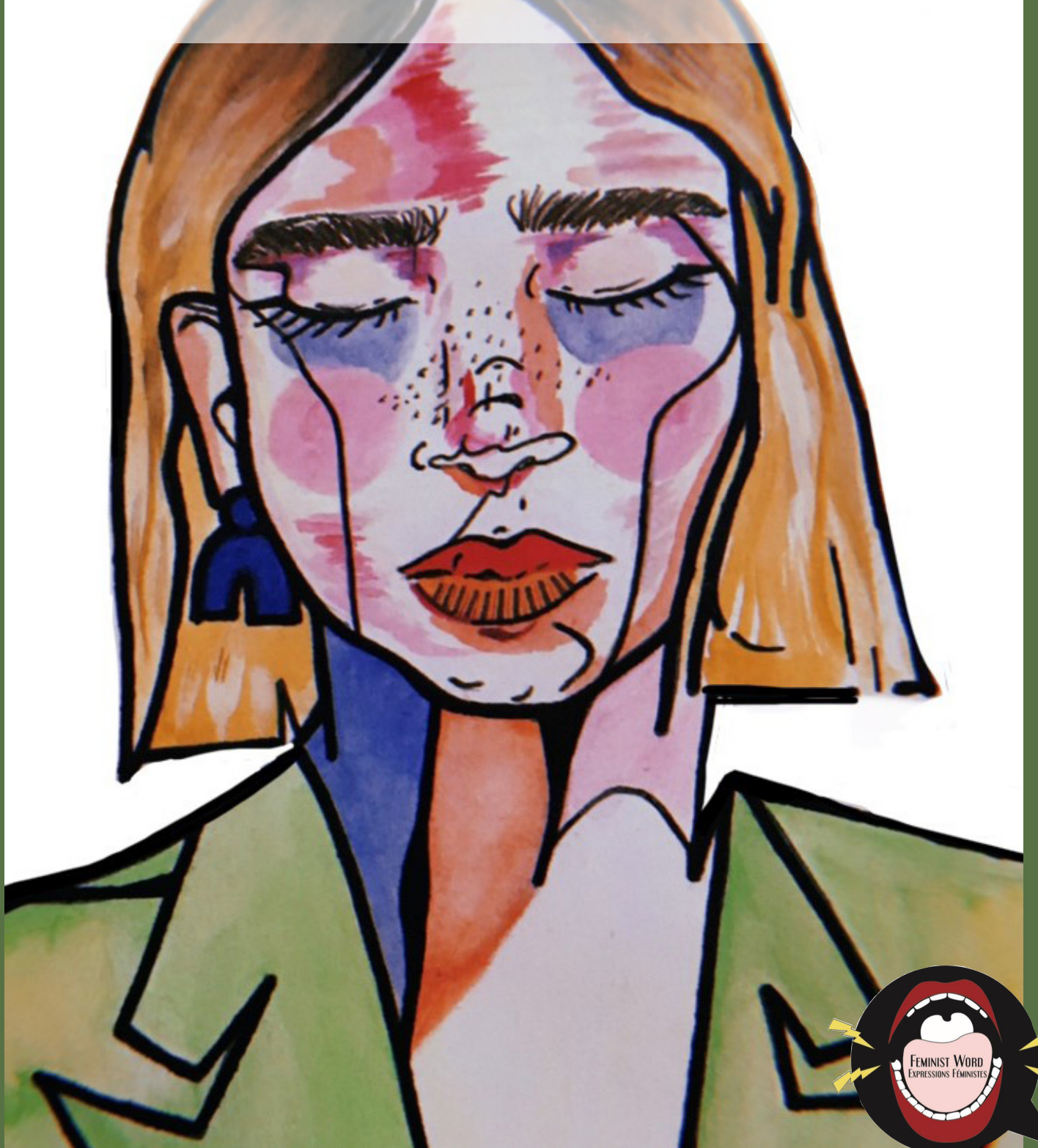


the

# FEMINIST WORD



# COVER ART



**Alixe Ménard** is a woman in STEM specializing in dementia healthcare research and long term care. Although she is currently doing her master's in health sciences, she also has a passion for art. She is proud to call herself a feminist artist and scientist. She enjoys demonstrating the powers of creativity, beauty and femininity through her art.

## Art Description

"Manifestation" was painted while I was in a place of uncertainty. I was feeling unfulfilled in my job and scared by the unknown of the pandemic which had just been declared. The only peace I got was after 4pm when I could open my paint kit and put on really loud music. I painted her as a sort of manifestation for myself. I imagined her to be happy and passionate. I imagined her in her dream job. This was my form of therapy and it eventually led to the job that I have now which is very fulfilling and for which I'm extremely passionate. Now, I look at her and I remember the woman I was and I am extremely happy for the woman I am now. Manifestation, baby.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Design & Layout** ●●● Olivia Atsin, Mélissa Alig, Tatum Brunton - Based on work from Jessica McCuaig, Phalandia Mondésir, and Cyndia Mondésir

**Cover Art** ●●● Alixe Ménard

**Translation** ●●● Johania Joseph, Laurence Bureau Beland and Mélissa Alig

**Review Committee** ●●● Jacqueline Neapole, Mélissa Alig, and Olivia Atsin

*The Feminist Word* is supported by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW), a not-for-profit charity founded in 1976. CRIAW encourages and produces feminist research for the advancement of women and we are very thankful for their support.

CRIAW respectfully acknowledges our presence on Indigenous territories and recognizes the legacy of colonization upon Indigenous peoples in Canada. The ideas expressed in *The Feminist Word* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of CRIAW.

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The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) is a charitable, not-for-profit, member-driven organization. Since 1976, we have produced research, publications, and events to advance women's substantive equality in Canada. Using intersectional feminist frameworks, CRIAW is inclusive and supports the rights of diverse women in Canada.

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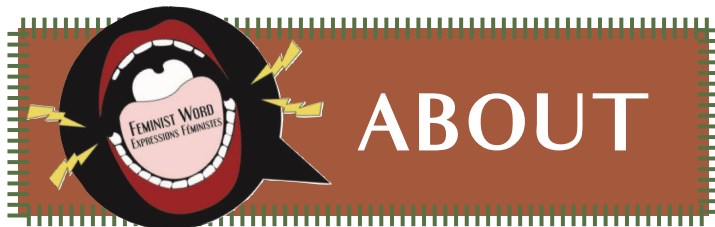
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The Feminist Word (a.k.a. The F-Word) was created by and for young feminists in Canada. We aim to elevate the collective voices of young feminists through a platform that allows us to creatively express our thoughts and priorities regarding women's equality in Canada. Our goal is to provide a meaningful space in which women aged 15 to 29 from across Canada can contribute to the women's movement.

We welcome new submissions in English and French all year long, including articles, poetry, artwork, photography, reviews (of literature, film, music), and stories. So send us your submission today and it may be featured in an upcoming edition!

The Feminist Word was originally conceived by the following women: Sarah Baker, Stacy Corneau, Rachelle DeSorcy, Caroline Flocari, Tess Kim, Susan Manning, Jessica McCuaig, Caitlin Menczel, Caroline Paquette, Jacqueline Neapole, Elizabeth Seibel, Jessica Touhey, and Miriam Illman-White.

# Editor's Note

Whenever it's time to call for submissions, I am equal parts nervous and excited. This is in anticipation of the upcoming contributions which always leave me pleasantly surprised... Although we received submissions from different parts of the world, recurring themes kept bubbling to the surface, begging to be expressed. Such major themes include womanhood, body image, sexual health, and education. The reality is many young women around the world suffer from these issues and changes are needed.

Hopefully this edition empowers you through the stories of young feminists challenging problematic narratives, as well as standing up to the social injustices they face on a daily basis. They take on the task to present womanhood through their own lenses and women in all their diversity are depicted in a way that you may not have imagined them before. You will be invited to reflect on, or even dare I say, remember, what women are capable of when empowered, the power women have, and that same power being passed down from generations to generations. You will be introduced to poems which talk about freedom and liberation as well as written reflections on women's sexual health, education, and liberation. You will also read poems on abandonment, solitude and nostalgia while being invited into the intimacy of young women navigating their traumas and trying their best to overcome them and heal.

As always enjoy!

**Olivia Atsin** is an African storyteller and a wild woman. She is also a dreamer, a creative writer and a dancer. She is an intense person who carries a lot of fire inside her. That makes her extremely passionate about what she cares about and her desire to be of service. The need to expand, know more, dig deep and learn new things always give her soul an injection of excitement.



# Free Me

Adetola Adedipe (aka aloT of Poetry)

Free me

Free me from this body that has been held down

By the chains of misogyny

That hold me down to only the sexual

Views of my body

By the chains of Eurocentric ideologies

That see me as angry instead of passionate

That see me as different.

Rather than beautiful

Free me from being trapped in a body

That has been judged so long

The soul inside has forgotten how to dance

How to communicate with the land

As my ancestors have

A Nigerian princess that has forgotten the weight of her crown

How it used to shine in the sun

How she has forgotten the meaning of that light.

Free me from this caged mind

That has forgotten how to fly

Slip into a trance that

Transcends space and time

Teach me to write in a language I have long forgotten how to speak

Put me into a state of forever

So I can access the great women that came before me

Allow me to reconnect to the roots  
That have the oldest source  
God is a woman and that woman is Black.

Which other body could give birth to  
This beautiful rich land  
Filled with trauma and taken for granted  
She is everything I am and  
Everything I lack.

I tremble at the thought of their spirits moving through me  
As their energy becomes my strength  
I feel it as I dream while I am awake  
I walk down the street but I am not alone there  
My feet connect to the earth just as their past breaths become my air.  
I can feel them everywhere.

Begging me to be everything I'm meant to be  
Let them speak through me  
Free me  
Let their history become my story.

Let their words become my poetry.



**Adetola Adedipe aka aLoT of Poetry**, is a Nigerian poet born and raised in South Africa. She is a published Black youth artist mentor, performer, Black Feminist, mental health advocate, event curator and brand designer. She is a spoken word featured artist at multiple events with her powerful poetry about self-truth, acceptance and social justice. She aims to build a community that encourages loving yourself and being unapologetic about it.

# Reflection

Ariel Martin





# Listen

Ariel Martin



# Greek Shore

Ariel Martin



Reflection, Listen and Greek Shore were realised with the intention of bringing positive images of women, girls, and non-binary people with disabilities. The artist's participation is done on behalf of the EDID partnership which produces knowledge at the intersection of gender and critical disabilities studies. Listen and Greek Shore show empowerment and happiness, while Reflection questions the effects of social prejudices against disabilities on self-confidence. You can find the EDID partnership on Twitter (@edid\_gldi).

**Ariel (Ari)** is a graduate student at the University of Guelph. They do research in cultural studies, specifically in queer studies and intersectional feminisms. They are a self-taught digital artist who likes to draw colourful pieces, mainly fan-content. They work with the Engendering Disability-Inclusive Development (EDID-GHDI) partnership as a graduate research assistant.



# Without compromise

Élisabeth Bruins

At night, she collapses on the couch. Exhausted.  
Some still warm leftovers  
stiffen on the counter.  
Everyone has been asleep for a while.

On her stockings, we see the clear polish  
that keeps the fabric from unraveling.

Her face is hollowed out by shadows—  
years of work  
build-up in her wrinkles like blush.

In the blue light of the living room  
muted commercials play on the TV.

More efficient, more versatile,  
This new model can do it all.



Originally from Ottawa, **Élisabeth Bruins** is currently completing a master's degree in Anthropology at the University of Toronto. Before that, she completed a bachelor's in International Development at the University of Waterloo, focussing on the potential of social movements and global solidarity networks as alternatives to conventional international development.



# Descendants of Eve

Damini Awoyiga

Us descendants of Eve  
Are not here to please  
We may be beautiful  
but...  
do not be deceived  
we are smart turning new pages  
making new pages  
in His-story  
and making it  
Her-story  
Our minds shifting like gears  
over the years  
the women before us  
made way for us  
And bestowed upon us  
The gifts of Life intelligence, cleverness, and elegance  
So we could be so smart and poised  
equal to the boys  
To make some noise  
  
To be heard and adored  
we sit on the throne that we made with our own blades  
elevating our sisters  
to sit with us  
and not beneath us

Us descendants of Eve  
All from different nations  
All of different creations  
We all have our past presents and futures  
In the past, we could not rise  
Even when we tried to rise, we were turned  
away  
People said we had to be below  
That we had to be given the microphone  
To speak  
We couldn't take the microphones  
To amplify our **own** voices  
In the present, we are rising  
Hand in hand...  
Together  
With more rights  
Taking flight  
Pushing oppressions with all our might  
In the future, we have risen  
Our daughters coming next  
Have opportunities  
And finally  
Women and men have equal pay  
No matter the skin, colour, gender or race  
And we are all moving forward  
In  
Our

Own  
Way

Us descendants of Eve  
Fighting for ourselves  
In an all-male room  
A woman's opinion falls on deaf ears  
And cannot be heard...  
Because...  
they are silenced...  
People say women can't lead  
They should be led  
But this generation of Eve  
is not led, we lead

Us descendants of Eve  
Fight for what we believe  
And make our voices heard  
Even when people don't want to listen  
We raise our hands high...  
And change the world...  
We don't wait for the world to change for us

Us descendants of Eve  
Are amazing in Every way  
We have girl power  
We fly higher  
Work harder  
They may call some girls  
"men-haters"  
When they call them out  
Boys rating girls on a scale of one to ten

But girls you should know you are a 10/10  
don't let people's comments stay on your skin  
Brush them off  
before they can show  
on your skin like an ink tattoo  
You know who you are  
You are a proud descendant of Eve  
Paving the way, being brave  
Geniuses with passions  
Just imagine

Us descendants of Eve  
Are hustlers  
Badasses with minds  
Rebels with a cause  
When you add brains to our beauty  
We are girls on fire

Us Descendants of Eve  
Emerge from glittering seas  
Filled with identities  
With individualities  
With love and harmony

Us Descendants of Eve  
Are shameless for what we believe  
And now we don't conceal the truth  
Anymore  
Yes...  
this is what we believe  
We believe that Black Lives Matter



Image by: Luwadlin Bosman on Unsplash

We believe that Indigenous Lives Matter  
We are feminists and we should be proud to be  
We value equity  
Us descendants of Eve  
Make up a large part of the world  
But we do not...  
Run...  
The world  
The world is run by men  
But I think that should change  
I think women and men  
Should run the world together  
Side by side, not one below the other

Us Descendants of Eve  
Deserve the recognition  
For the work, we conceived

But too many times  
The men get recognized for the work we  
brought to life  
with our own creative minds

Us descendants of Eve  
Do not wait to be saved  
we save ourselves  
with stealth imaginable  
with mirth compatible  
In gold and frankincense  
We dress  
No longer bequeath  
No longer child brides  
Nor slaves to the eye  
Because  
On gold horses, we ride.

**Damini Awoyiga** is a 14-year-old grade 9 student at Madeline Symonds Middle School, Hammonds Plains. She is an activist, writer, spoken word poet, art illustrator and the Junior artist in residence for Wellness Within. Damini was a Youth Ambassador for Digitally Lit, a youth-led strategy that empowers young Atlantic Canadians through reading. She used Digitally Lit's social media to create a campaign for accessibility awareness in built spaces. Damini also founded the Afro-Indigenous Book Club to encourage young people to read books written by Black and Indigenous authors and to share the realities, perspectives and experiences of Black and Indigenous peoples in Canada. Follow Damini on Instagram: @Damini.awoyiga and Twitter: @awoyiga.



# Denim Dilemma

Neha Vashist

I watch my dad enviously as he  
fills the pockets of his denim jeans,  
with his wallet and phone  
and all of his keys.

See mine are either sewn shut,  
pretty and silenced

or just enough to fit a few quarters  
maybe a stick of lip balm but-  
never enough.

Who decided for me that  
my pockets aren't meant to be filled-  
that they're just an accessory?

But you call them pockets  
and I'm told they're pockets,  
so pockets they must be.

No one ever told me,  
the gender wage gap is proportionate  
to the depth of the pockets  
sewn into our jeans.



Image by: Lucas Lenzi on Unsplash

**Neha** is an undergraduate student at the University of Alberta. Her poetry has been featured in anthologies for the National Poetry Institute of Canada, Polar Express Publishing and the City of Edmonton Poetry Moves on Transit. Neha enjoys channeling her passion for writing into advocacy. She is the writer and director of a One-Act Play called It Takes a Woman- advocating for gender equality and expressing the trauma acid attack survivors endure. In her free time, you can find her watching movies with family or curling up with a good book and a cup of chai.



# when life gives you lemons

Jayde Lavoie

when life gives you lemons,

bleed them out

and thank your higher power

for the ability to choose

feel no compellence to say thank you

for the branches of that tree

have rooted themselves

so violently within you

that you'll wonder if infestation

is too strong a word

when life gives you lemons

be gentle

for the world seems to favour

sour over sweet

and if all we are promised

is quick exits and question marks

at the very least,

we show up for ourselves







**Jayde Lavoie** (she/her) is a queer multidisciplinary artist living, learning, engaging, and creating on Tiohtià:ke, unceded territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka Nation (otherwise known as Montréal). For Jayde, art is a tool of healing and reclamation. As such, her pieces confront various traumas incurred while existing in a capitalist, patriarchal society. Jayde is all about rewriting narratives of shame, and fostering resiliency in her creative work. She does this using mediums including spoken word poetry, collage, and acrylic paint. She hopes the world has been very gentle with you, lately.



# Solitary

I slip quietly from a crowd to be alone, though I go alone  
Thinking I'm loved though I am ignored  
Facing the world with my thoughts ...

Singing my song with no ending  
Having less need in my life, frightened to live my life  
Passing of years, my heart grew  
Building my hopes up for the future, building a bridge over my fears.

Shaping my thoughts to every person  
To Rise, so I could change  
Would change  
The World

Overthinking more than I do  
Searching to live  
Searching for love  
Searching for light  
In the darkness of my fear  
But I was Never heard

Helena Ahiba

So, I went alone

Lying in the dark

Hoping for love,

Hoping for light

Hoping to live

Hoping for an ounce of happiness

For my thoughts is my poet,

My tears are my words

Feeling lost and to know I will never be FOUND!



My name is **Helena Marie-Christiane Ahikpa Badjo Ahiba**. I am originally from Ivory Coast but born in South Africa. My hobbies are graphic design, poetry, reading and dancing. I am 19 years old, currently working as a Marketing Intern for a non-profit organization called Mwasi Africa. During my high school career, I found my passion for marketing management through working in the advertising and marketing industry. I plan to pursue a career in Marketing management, Media Communications and International Relations. My piece, 'Solitary' is a poem I wrote when I feared the unknown and how I felt during that time of my life.

# The Girl In The Yellow Sundress

Christianna Alexiou & Sara Mizannojehdehi

Image by: Sara Mizannojehdehi



She walks along the boardwalk gazing into the depths of the sea below.

The warm air running along the edges of her skin. She pulls her hair up so messy it almost looks perfect.

She is the type of girl with a disregard of time. Not because she's ignorant, but because she only goes where she wants, not where she is needed.

**Sara Mizannojehdehi** is an Iranian-Canadian Media Production and Media Production and Design student at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario. Her spectrum of work is broad, ranging from web to graphic design. She has three years of experience in illustration, 2D animation, front-end web development, and media writing. Currently she's doing her co-op at the IT Branch of the Canada Revenue Agency and working as graphics editor in the Carleton University student newspaper, the Charlatan.



She is the type of girl you want to be. Porcelain skin, small waist, light features.

The girl everyone likes, and every guy wants. Easy to talk to yet somehow intimidating. The girl with a bright future.

“She is perfect,” they said. “Why is she so lucky,” they whispered.

Little did they know that more goes on behind closed doors. That everything they yearned for was simply a disguise.

Silence was never a thing in her life and peace had a different meaning. Her life consisted of late nights and long days. They call her “perfect” but somehow overlook the circles under her eyes. Of course, they can’t see the scratches and bruises underneath her mask.

But somehow, she is “perfect” and yet somehow, she feels useless and unwanted. Somehow, she wants to be everyone but herself.

It was raining that day when she got the call. They said to always drive slow on a rainy day.

A rainy day consists of board games, movies, and hot chocolate. Her’s will forever be the day she cries along with the sky.

The bad news hit her like a tidal wave. She kept to herself and stayed silent hoping no one would notice the extra stress line that appeared on her forehead.

That same day the girl crept into her mother’s closet and slipped into a yellow sundress. When the sky finally cleared, she went for a walk by the water. She gazed into the depths of the sea below.

As she looked up, she spotted a young girl swaying to the jazz music at a nearby restaurant. She wore ripped jeans and a loose white blouse. Her blonde hair rested on her bare shoulders.

Observing her physique, she wondered “How could someone be so perfect?”

Image by: Erol Ahmed on Unsplash

**Christianna Alexiou** is a fourth-year journalism student at Carleton University with a double minor in Spanish and Law. She is also the current features editor at The Charlatan, Carleton’s Independent Student Weekly. Typically, she enjoys writing about neuroscience, social and environmental issues, and communities that are typically underrepresented. Christianna has been working on “The Girl In The Yellow Sundress” since high school and kept reshaping it based on her own experiences in university. The piece is meant to challenge the idea of perfection that society forces upon women and girls from a young age.



# Flakey

Julia Pilon

Content warning: self-harm

our family crumbled / like a peanut-butter Nature Valley bar / she blew her cigarette breath / and the pieces flew / you fell too far from the gust / then alone / on the cold floor / you drew / into your skin / with a dull pencil sharpener / bubbly hearts and family portraits / to hang / on the fridge / like mom used to do / amateur finger paintings and papier-mâché / eventually tossed / gone / along with her sensible teddy-brown slippers / and our baby pictures / homemade Christmas ornaments / your pale thighs cry / tears / into a too-pink-to-be-skin tensor bandage / stained / by every day since she left / your body / does not have to be a gallery / a museum of family history / the exhibit of abandonment / showcasing her frost-covered car / driving out of motherhood / but I understand now: / from a scar / others can see where you have been hurt / pain is easier felt than explained.

**Julia Pilon** (she/they) is a queer, disabled woman, writer, research assistant, and fourth-year sociology and creative writing student at the University of Ottawa. Her creative writing has been published in BiPan Magazine.



# Noon Sharp

Emilie Fundira

12:56 pm

In my vague melancholy  
My thoughts take the sea

12:53 pm

I cast off the moorings  
Towards fragmented islands of memory

12:49 pm

And I float  
And I glide

12:44 pm

On this vast distorted mirror  
Where the faces of the country are reflected

12:38 pm

Land of my childhood  
Land of my imagination

12:31 pm

The wind whispers to me  
News from my motherland

12:23 pm

I would like to be over there  
Where the sand is light

12:14 pm

But the water is uncertain  
And its appearance, deceiving

12:09 pm

So my waves of illusion  
Fall on the shore

12:06 pm

And when the sun of consciousness  
Is at its zenith

12:00 pm

I tame my shadow  
With my memories

**Emilie** is a student in Global and International Studies (specializing in Africa and Globalization) at Carleton University. She is the current co-president of the Institute of African Studies Student Association. She was born and raised in Rwanda and lived in Burkina Faso until the age of 14. It was at this time that she developed a keen interest in the continent and its diasporas. She fell in love with African literature, precisely women's writings of French West Africa when she first read Mariama Bâ's 'Une Si Longue Lettre'. She draws inspiration in the works of Edouard Glissant, Ken Bugul and Gael Faye.



# My Bow & Arrow

Qaila Walji

Image by: Annie Spratt on Unsplash

I remember seeing him for the first time that spring. My first thought was how beautiful he was – and how well he could dress. He wore a crisp collared shirt under a dark sweater, a look that I have never been able to pull off. It was the first day of training at work and he sat across the room from me. Later that day we got paired together, meaning we would be working closely for the next few months. Within the first few minutes of us talking, I felt his warm and vivacious energy, and I automatically knew we were going to click. And we did.

After the holidays, we drifted apart. Actually, it's more accurate to say that I pushed him away. We were at a party, drinking and laughing and then flirting. It was fun, and oddly, it felt normal. I wasn't overthinking it. Then a few days later, I was overthinking it. We started talking less, and then, eventually, we stopped talking altogether.

See, I am a woman under the patriarchy and when you are a woman under the patriarchy **all men** become predators, thieves, parasites.

Trauma gave me a pair of cracked lenses, or whatever the opposite of rose-tinted glasses is. Every interaction, relationship, and environment began to look overtly hostile. Trauma told me to trust my gut but didn't teach me the difference between intuition and anxiety. Is something bad going to happen, or am I just paranoid? Trauma equipped me with a bow and arrow. Anyone that

tries to get past the walls that I've built, gets shot at.

My trauma made me analyze our friendship and find flaws. It made me question his intentions and his actions. It pushed me to (unsuccessfully) suppress my feelings for him.

He texted, a year and a half later, saying he had enjoyed our previous conversations. So, maybe my arrows missed their target, or maybe he had healed from the wounds I inflicted. I thought back on those conversations, it felt like they had happened ages ago. I remembered pervasive feelings of being less intelligent, the discomfort of foreign words in my mouth. I never had radical conversations with friends before him, they were always surface level. "Radical" was probably not even in my vocabulary until recently. He came into my life at a time of necessary growth and he challenged me to be more critical – intentionally or not. In the short time that we were close friends, he made a life-long impact.

I've heard people say that healing is a journey, not a destination. That trauma doesn't have to control your life. But I haven't been able to mend the cracks in my lenses. I'm still learning the difference between what my intuition and anxiety feel like. And I haven't been able to lower my bow and arrow, yet.

**Qaila Walji** is a South Asian-Canadian who loves journaling, painting, and creating radical social change. She recently graduated from Carleton University and plans to continue learning and unlearning by reading, listening, and travelling.





# Misogyny Madness

Self\_Saboteur



Many doctors treat women's pain as insignificant according to the study by the University of Maryland called The Girl Who Cried Pain: A Bias Against Women in the Treatment of Pain (2003), stating that doctors make women wait longer for emergency treatment than men. This showcases what every woman will tell you; medical misogyny is real and it's not going away anytime soon. As a chronically ill person with an autoimmune illness, I've had doctors tell me my pain is due to my hormones or my weight and that I'm overreacting and it's not that serious. This piece is a depiction of what the internal turmoil of the illness and the external ableism feels like. Digital Illustration.

**Self\_Saboteur** is chronically an artist and zinester. Her illustrations, poetry, comics and art explore topics like ableism, racism and living with multiple chronic illnesses. She enjoys playing with her two old cats and eating spicy foods that make her cry. Check out her Instagram and Twitter @Self\_Saboteur6.



# Sex, The Self, and the Sorts of it

Simone Brown

To be a woman is to be suspended in a space between 'whore' and 'prude' where our very existence revolves around our 'performance.' Exposure to societal pressures manipulates many into internalizing and replicating an 'adequate' sexuality. Whether this be in our behaviours or beliefs, we become imitations of the 'ideal woman' rather than pursue an individual identity. In instances of self-determination, the lens of male pleasure corrupts our actions into demonstrations of our sexuality. As we wear school uniforms and chew gum, we are categorized by every person we encounter and then shamed for these supposed displays of sexuality. It is impossible for a woman to have casual sex or wear a tight dress to the bar without receiving social correction in the form of slutshaming or harassment.

The idea of 'sexual liberation' of women arose from the collective frustration felt by women experiencing sexual violence and shaming. There is hardly a step-by-step handbook to sexual liberation, but many feminists agree that by removing performatism from sex, investing in the self, and rejecting the labels placed onto us, we are (in theory) free to express our sexuality in any form we so choose. Of course, there are various ways to define sexual liberation. Is liberation about learning not to care, learning to ignore, learning to enjoy, learning to vocalize, or something else entirely? The era of feminism plays a role in this interpretation; second wave feminists understand liberation to be a fought-for privilege and this can limit their criticisms, while recent discussions by third-wave feminists wonder if the act of having sex in itself is an insufficient solution to toxic sexuality. This can

be observed in the treatment of young pop stars like Britney Spears, where calls to let them 'express themselves' and sing about the things they do in the bedroom have morphed into questions about the commodification of their sexuality. What was once a victory for women's rights has now been appropriated to be a roadblock to further progress. This appropriation was not adopted by the feminists outlining boundaries in their own sex lives and identities, but rather by a wider patriarchal society putting up barriers to progress and capitalizing on fake 'freedom.'

Toxic sexuality begins with the idea that sex, and therefore your sexual identity, has boundaries that make it 'right' or 'wrong.' From there, any action that implies sex must be held under a magnifying glass and scrutinized to determine if it is palatable to the masses. Since there is no consensus on what 'good' sexuality is, the label of 'bad' is assigned as a reminder of the ways in which sex is shameful and crude. Women have a lower threshold for 'acceptable' sexuality, but are held to a higher standard of performance when they do act sexually. Despite being barred from feeling pleasure, we must know exactly what ways it should be provided and we must always provide it correctly. While we must have the hidden talents of a porn star, no one should be able to guess it by knowing us. Women are as sexual as others judge them to be, but with a hypersexual lens, all innocent actions are perceived as purposefully erotic. If you are expected to have sex, can you still participate in sex while rejecting those expectations?

Back in 2014, Rachel Hills did a piece for Time Magazine examining the longstanding debate on



Image by: Mika Baumeister on Unsplash

modesty vs hypersexuality and the little progress made in 100 years in finding the 'appropriate' level of sexuality. Some suggest that sexual liberation begins with refusing to express sexuality and believe that modesty can cure hypersexualization. Others argue modesty only feeds into sexual repression and that women should be embracing hypersexuality as the healthier alternative. Either way, this removes the individual choice and invites a debate for the masses. Not only does this contradict the original message of sexual freedom, but the demand for a uniform 'amount' of sexuality discourages women from exploring the full range of their sexuality. Sexual liberation is not necessarily the normative sexual experience, sex is different for different identities and lived experiences. Without healthy exploration, sexuality becomes exclusive to the able-bodied and heteronormative.

Sexual liberation also acts as an excuse for sexual exploitation; young women are pressured into hypersexuality by predatory men who pretend that their intentions are about 'freedom,' and many acceptable desires rely on violence against women as a source of pleasure for men. It is draining to separate genuine sexual expression from sexual performance, it must be purposeful, independent, and self-fulfilling. In contrast to women's contributions, men's historical role as the perpetrators and benefactors of female oppression

bars them from participating in the revolution. Most men are eager to categorize 'prudes' and 'whores' based on their own values but are reluctant to reject their exemption from these standards. When men are permitted to dictate the boundaries of a woman's sexuality, through media, relationships, work, or otherwise, it strips the woman of her individuality. The concept of sexual freedom is already so frequently watered down to appease the male palate that any demand for meaningful contribution from men will solely result in the reintroduction of patriarchal values.

This article is not to be misunderstood as a criticism of sexuality, it is meant to question how quickly the idea of the sexually liberated woman becomes exclusively associated with the sexual woman. This article also deliberately lacks any conclusions on what a woman's sexuality should be or how it should be expressed. This is because the only reasonable conclusion is that women should approach their sexuality with curiosity and warmth, regardless of the wider preconceived notions of healthy sexuality or 'obligations' to feminism. It is not about men's opinions or the patriarchal values they parrot, just like sexual liberation never has been.

**Simone Brown** is a third year linguistics and history major. In her spare time, she likes to use what she learns in class and apply it to the social movements she observes happening around her. After a long couple of years struggling with mental health and physical illness, Simone found solace in her writing as an outlet for pain. She believes it is now more important than ever to share our opinions and encourage social change through writing.



Image by: Marek Piwnicki on Unsplash

# Table Talk

Vanessa Ervin





Table Talk addresses the socially taboo topic of sexual health education. This piece was created in response to the reversion of the sexual education curriculum in 2019. Many vital topics were removed from student's sexual education such as consent, contraception, sexual orientation, gender expression and much more. At the supper table, topics such as sexual education and politics are not to be talked about. However, avoiding or extracting these important conversations have damaging and life-altering affects. Therefore, I have placed a variety of sexual health objects back on the table, as they need to be talked about. Table Talk's goal is to create conversation/education for all who see it. There are a variety of labelled objects on the table to see, learn, and ask questions about; such as birth control salt shakers, dental dam placemats, tampon tea bags, soft menstrual cups, condoms, pap & std tests, and more. This table setting is unconventional, and the uncomfortableness that people may feel when viewing it just helps to further my message; it's time to bring sex education back to the table.

**Vanessa Ervin** is a feminist, activist, and multidisciplinary artist that passionately promotes change through conversation, art, and education. Ervin's work is heavily research and content-based and addresses a variety of feminist topics. Ervin's goal is to create open dialogues and critical thinking through her art pieces in order to create change in the status quo. Ervin is a third-year Women's Studies Master student at uOttawa; her thesis focuses on the Importance of Creative Methodologies in Settler Colonial Education Systems. For her undergrad at LakeheadU, she majored in an HBFA and minored in Women's Studies.



# Hits

- 1. Respect**  
Aretha Franklin
- 2. You Don't Own Me**  
Lesley Gore
- 3. Tomboy**  
Pincess Nokia
- 4. Don't Touch My Hair**  
Solange feat Sampha

# Flicks

- 1. Beans**  
Director Tracey Deer
- 2. Wild**  
Director Jean-Marc Vallée
- 3. Inendi**  
Director Sarain Fox
- 4. Night Raiders**  
Director Danis Goulet
- 5. Queen of Katwe**  
Director Mira Nair

# Reads

- 1. Women, Culture, and Politics**  
by Angela Y. Davis
- 2. Against White Feminism**  
by Rafia Zakaria
- 3. Five Little Indians**  
by Michelle Good
- 4. Colonize This!**  
by Daisy Hernandez and Bushra Rehman
- 5. Firekeeper's Daughter**  
by Angeline Boulley

# Fem Hits, Flicks & Reads

## CRIAW celebrated its 45th birthday!

Since 1976, CRIAW has been researching and documenting the economic and social situation of women in Canada. This year we celebrate our 45th anniversary and in order to continue on in our mission, we need YOUR help!

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For more information visit [www.criaw-icref.ca](http://www.criaw-icref.ca) or email us at [info@criaw-icref.ca](mailto:info@criaw-icref.ca)

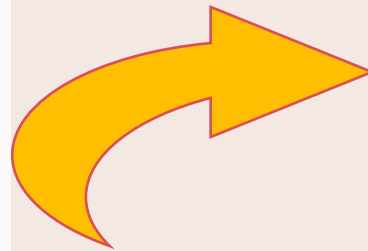
### New Publications

[Feminist Intersectionality Animation](#)

[The Rise of the Alt-Right in Canada: A feminist analysis](#)

[The Rise of the Alt-Right in Canada Infographic](#)

Check out [www.criaw-icref.ca/publications](http://www.criaw-icref.ca/publications) for more!



# NEWS

