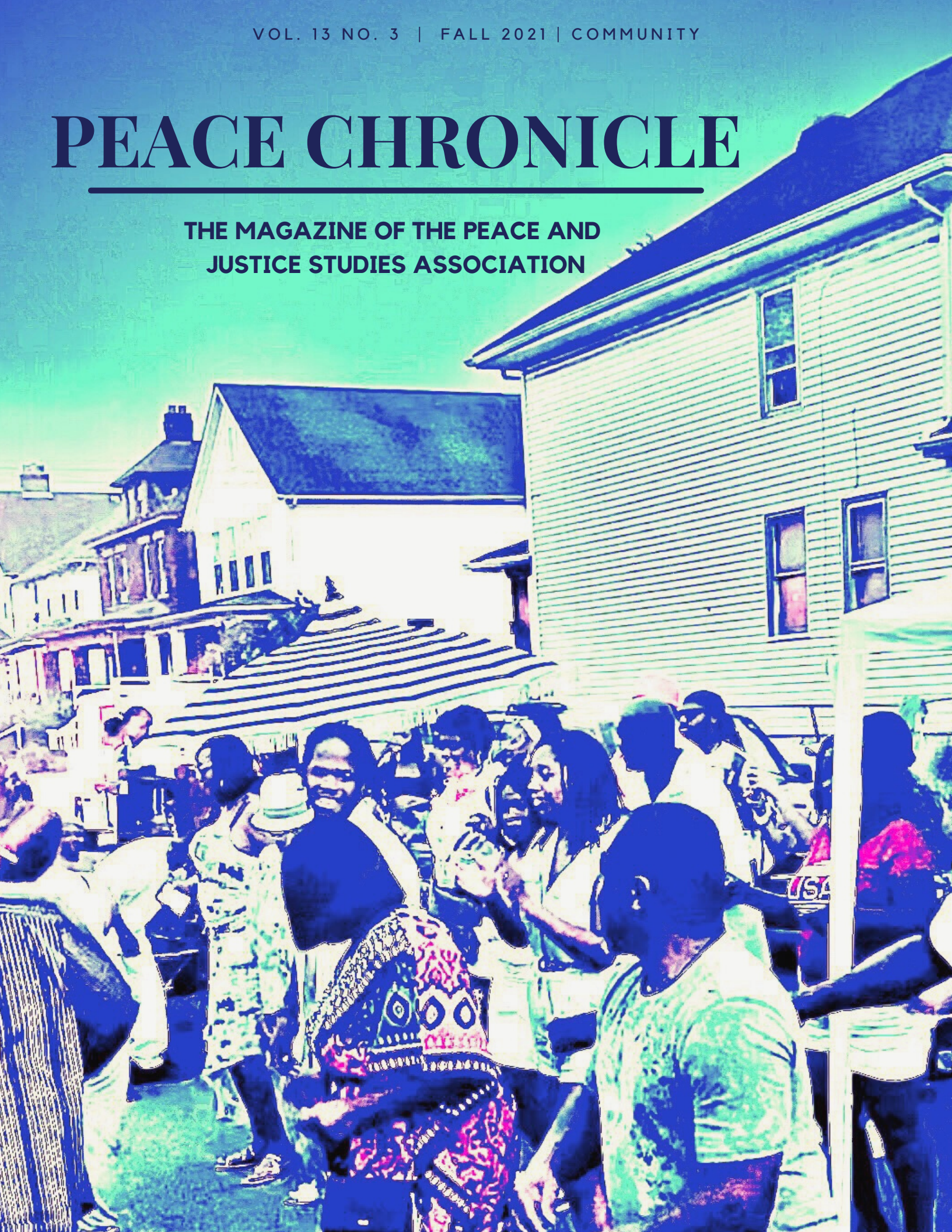


PEACE CHRONICLE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE PEACE AND
JUSTICE STUDIES ASSOCIATION



NONVIOLENCE MEANS...

A VISIONARY POSTER SERIES BY CAMPAIGN NONVIOLENCE ARTWORK BY ROSIE DAVILA

In all 50 states and around the world, Campaign Nonviolence has been building a culture of active nonviolence, free from war, poverty, racism, and environmental destruction. We share skills and tools with which people can practice nonviolence toward themselves, one another, and the Earth. With this poster series, we are boldly asserting that nonviolence means . . . using bold solutions, big visions, and basic human rights to create a world that works for everyone.

Nonviolence is a word that describes hundreds of practices, actions, philosophies, solutions, policies, systems, and more. It is full of creativity, power, and healing. It is a transformational force that has helped millions of people assert their humanity, win rights and freedoms, protect their homes and communities, end tyranny and restore dignity. From nonviolent actions (like protests, boycotts, and strikes) to nonviolent solutions (like restorative justice, renewable energy, and trauma healing), nonviolence means tapping into the practices and approaches that can change everything. Nonviolence means . . . advancing racial justice, waging peace, welcoming everyone with dignity, teaching nonviolence in our schools, ensuring affordable education along with housing and healthcare, creating community safety rooted in nonviolent responses, and more. Wherever systemic or structural violence exists, we can

dismantle it and replace it with the viable alternatives that form the infrastructure of a culture of nonviolence. Solutions abound. We need to spread the word and start using them in our communities.

We can lift up these nonviolent solutions by putting up these posters in our communities. Post them on bulletin boards in coffee shops, workplaces, schools, and faith centers. Send them to friends. Place them in your windows. Put them on cardboard and hold them up on the street corner. Anywhere and everywhere you take them, you're building the culture of nonviolence in a creative way!

You can download these posters by clicking each image below, print them on your home printer, or purchase them from Redbubble and put them up in your community. You can also download a PowerPoint slide with all of the posters to use on a zoom course! Thanks for supporting the movement for a culture of active nonviolence. Nonviolence means . . .

From the Campaign Nonviolence website.

PEACE CHRONICLE

The Magazine of the Peace and Justice Studies Association

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WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER: THE BLOCK PARTY

BRYAN EDWARDS

To My Oldest Son, Special K, on his 40th Birthday.

The live band playing soulful sounds as the aroma from the food on the grill brings the neighbors around. If grandpa were here, I'd know he would be smiling from ear to ear.

From Dad 7/24/2021

This image showcases a party—a block party—that serves as family tradition. I learned of block parties from my grandfather, a true party master. January 1st was his birthday, his New Year's Day parties were legendary—"the best ever."

A block party is a moment in time, when neighbors come outside to party in the streets. Coming together to share good food, it's all about the Bar - B-Q. Good music, mostly "Old school R&B with that Summer party vibe. Enjoying the weather together as we dance as one in the late day summer sun. Showing love in our community, ... this is how it's done. This is a community at its best.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

EMMA LOVEJOY

September 18, 2021

This issue of the Peace Chronicle focuses on the theme of Community. Like everything else, the way we understand ‘community’ has been deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The move to digital in place of physical gatherings in 2020 may have given us access to new communities, or it may have separated us from communities we already held dear. I would guess that most of us experienced both of these things in combination. The past 19 months have been isolating for many, and for others have meant more time with the people in their “bubble” than ever before – at times, even too much. The context of the pandemic has provided fertile ground for camaraderie where none previously existed – it has also exacerbated divisions.

This issue explores what it means to be a part of a community on any scale, from the international to the individual’s “bubble,” and even the individual in their own company. It examines ways the pandemic has changed how a community is built and experienced. And, it delves into what it can mean to be part of a community that society has “othered,” in or out of pandemic-times.

In “Three Campuses, One Community,” Luke Shorty writes about the international community of Lee Academy, and their coordinated approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic. He gives us an inside perspective on seeking the balance between responding to each campus’s unique context, and internal consistency as an organization. Luke’s article also sheds light on what worked to maintain a sense of camaraderie between students continents apart, and how that experience has served the students.

Adama Bah shares the story of learning she was an undocumented child in the United States, and the decades-long fight that ensued – first against deportation, and then for citizenship. She writes about the way she was treated as an undocumented minor, and as a Muslim following the 9/11 attacks, as well as the importance of her community’s support.

Kyle Ashlee writes about the challenges of building successful learning communities in the age of online education. A longtime proponent of the “brave space” model, he shares his experience translating that teaching philosophy to a digital space. The lessons learned about the viability and maintenance of digital community extend beyond the classroom.

In an interview conducted by Gabriel Ertsgaard, Kim Baldwin talks about her work with the nonprofit One Fair World, a fair trade store in Salem, Oregon. Through their work promoting fair trade values at home, and partnerships with artisans at home and abroad, One Fair World has helped to bring a global community into their local community. Kim discusses the ways that One Fair World serves Salem, while keeping the focus on the artisans whose stories they are sharing.

Quentin Felton has contributed two pieces to this issue. Their poem "Belly Up: an Etymology" explores the shifting landscape of generational trauma and healing, and of developing one's "self" in that space. Their essay "Portrait of a Sundial on All Fours" discusses the ongoing struggles for safety and respect within Black Transgender communities, and delves into their experience of self-discovery as both a member of that community, and an individual apart. Quentin allows us a glimpse of the intimate and on-going process of cultivating a sense of community with and within oneself.

Gabriel Ertsgaard shares a moment of family normalcy in the form of a haibun – a blend of prose poetry and haiku. The poem captures the idea of family (or one's "bubble") as one's community during the pandemic.

Caleb Robinson writes about the importance of staying an active participant in your community, especially during periods of extended lockdown. They share several personal examples of times that someone making the effort to reach out made all the difference. They also acknowledge the reluctance many of us feel to "put ourselves out there" by taking that first step, and introduce some tools to help us help ourselves over that hurdle.

Throughout this issue, we see community as an active, participatory thing. In any context and on any scale, the opportunity to show up for one another – and for ourselves – is the gift that community gives us. As we enter another season of pandemic restrictions, complications, and struggles, we hope that this issue of the Peace Chronicle reminds everyone of the importance of the Peace and Justice community we are all a part of.

With tremendous gratitude for the chance to serve the community through the Peace and Justice Studies Association, we thank you.

CONTRIBUTORS



Emma Lovejoy (they/them) is a writer, artist, gardener, and the production manager for the Peace Chronicle. They graduated in 2020 from Miami University, where they earned their B.A. in Social Justice Studies. Currently, they are working towards their M.A. in History at UMass Boston, continuing their undergraduate research focus on social movements, radicalization, and political violence.

Bryan Edwards has worked in the graphic arts industry for more than 4 decades and photography has been a passion for much longer. He is a graduate of Columbus State Community College, Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Akron.



Luke Shorty is the Executive Director of Lee Academy and oversees the operation of the organization's educational programs and its three campuses in Maine, South Korea, and China. He has served in Education for over a decade both as a Mathematics Teacher and School Administrator for STEM magnetic Schools and Educational Non-profits. He received his MS in Mathematical Sciences from Montana State University and his BA in Mathematics from the University of Maine at Farmington.



Caleb Robinson (they/them) is a writer located in a small city outside of Cincinnati, Ohio. Robinson acquired their Masters degree in Cognitive and Social Processes from Ball State University, focusing on research related to language and digital communication.



Kim Baldwin has been working with non-profit, mission driven educational organizations since 1990. She joined the One Fair World team in 2011 to support its non-profit mission "to transform lives of artisans in developing countries by providing a marketplace for their products, paying them fair wages, and increasing local awareness of the importance of fair trade." She resides in Salem, Oregon with her husband, and enjoys spending time with her grown children and 4-year-old granddaughter.



Adama Bah, the oldest of five, moved to the United States in 1990 at age 2. She grew up in East Harlem but was born in Guinea, Conakry. She works as an advocate for human rights, and she focuses on advocacy for refugees and people seeking asylum.



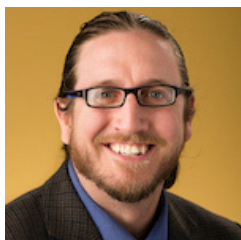
Quentin Felton (they/them) is a writer, poet, educator, and recent graduate of Brooklyn College. Their work aims to scale the mountain of black queer transness, basking in the multitudes of terror, beauty, & cliff clutching the seams of a marginalized experience. Forever invested in generational resistance, Felton positions their work outside of oppressive institutions, each word a weapon sharpened on all sides. Felton currently resides in Brooklyn, and teaches classes on Digital Storytelling, Playwriting, and Art.



Gabriel Ertsgaard (he/him) is the interviews editor for Peace Chronicle and copy editor for the literary journal Drifting Sands. A former English lecturer, he earned his Doctor of Letters from Drew University with a dissertation on environmental themes in a medieval legend. His criticism, poetry, and fairy tales have appeared in various print and digital publications.



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Wim Laven, Ph.D. (he/him), instructor of peace studies, political science, and conflict resolution, focuses his research on forgiveness and reconciliation, which he relates to his wide range of work and research experiences. His experience in the field spans 4 continents and includes many processes from mediating disputes in small claims court, to interventions during complex humanitarian disasters. He is on the executive boards of the International Peace Research Association and the Peace and Justice Studies Association, and is the Editor in Chief of the Peace Chronicle.

THREE CAMPUSES, ONE COMMUNITY: COMMUNITY RESPONSES DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

LUKE SHORTY

The key ingredient to community regardless of time or space is a group of individuals sharing an experience in their continued formation as human beings. Over the last five hundred days the human species has been experiencing a global pandemic the likes of which has not been seen in over a century. It has impacted all aspects of our society from industry to education. Though the pandemic is a shared experience on a species wide scale, our local responses have been very different. Lee Academy, a 175-year-old independent school with three campuses in three different countries, is no exception to this disruption. Though there were similar responses early on (e.g., pivoting to remote learning on each campus using video conferencing technology, etc.), each of Lee Academy's different locations responded in a unique manner in the 2020-2021 school year while trying to meet their school's community needs.

American Lee Academy International School (ALAIS) in Shanghai, China had perhaps the smallest impact on their student community comprised mostly of Chinese students looking for an American style education. Early in the pandemic the Chinese government quickly and with its full authority locked down cities and

citizens for an extended period. During that time school was put on hold and attempts at distance education were made using Zoom to help salvage as much of the year as possible. The complete lockdown did present difficulties for hiring international teaching staff, as the lock down prevented foreign nationals from entering China. The nimbleness, creativity, and resourcefulness on the part of the community of educators was astounding, as they found ex-pats to fill the open teaching positions and prepared for the uncertainty of the 2020-2021 school year. Thankfully, the swift lockdown response allowed ALAIS to operate as normally as possible. The extremely low COVID-19 cases in Shanghai allowed students and teachers to continue their school year with the least possible disruption, without the need for masking (except on public transit) and social distancing.

Daegu International School (DIS) in Daegu, South Korea was the second campus to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. On February 18, 2020, Daegu, South Korea experienced one of the largest outbreaks in the early days of the pandemic. This caused DIS to go remote, but thanks to our weekly meetings of the small professional learning

community of campus leaders, DIS was able to transition smoothly to a virtual environment. Due to the consistently low infection rate maintained by national policies and protocols [in S Korea], DIS and other schools were able to operate in person. These protocols involved the use of screening apps, multiple temperature and symptom screenings throughout the day, masking and social distancing and plexiglass barriers. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, DIS has continued to establish connections despite these disruptions, through the establishment of a staff run “sunshine committee” to help keep morale high with small acts of appreciation. When transitioning to periods of remote instruction during outbreaks, students and staff participated in recognition activities to remind each other that regardless of the distance they were a valued part of the DIS community, and they were not alone in navigating these waters. While in-person students worked with younger students to build connections and help mitigate learning loss, and mentoring to normalize the new protocols. These actions helped ensure a sense of normalcy in their day to day operations.



ALAIS students prepare for their Art exhibit at School where they invited parents and members of the public.

Lee Academy’s original campus, the Moores Campus, located in Lee, Maine (a rural village in the middle of the North Maine woods), went remote on March 13th, 2020. Thanks to a statewide initiative that provides one to one Internet-connective devices to students in the State of Maine, Lee Academy was able to ensure that all of their students had the opportunity to connect remotely for School. During this time, we discovered that because of Maine’s rural nature, many students had devices, but were not able to connect due to insufficient cell phone coverage or lack of high-speed broadband internet. For these vulnerable members of our community we established material drop-off and pick-up protocols to touch base with them and keep them connected to their learning community. In rural communities such as Lee, school tends to be a place where families who are food insecure look for stable meals, and we were able to provide twice weekly food pick-ups for families in need. The Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Education (DOE) established COVID-19 recommendations for in-person instruction for 2020-2021 which included precautions very similar to those in Daegu (masking, social distancing, regular screening, and contact tracing). Lee Academy’s Maine campus’s identity is anchored in place-based outdoor education, and we fully leveraged this aspect of our community to deliver in-person education. We constructed two outdoor classrooms, and collected portable seats and clipboards to utilize as many outdoor, well-ventilated classroom spaces as possible.

Professor Cope, et al. of the Sociology Department at Brigham Young University in their article titled: “Community as Story and the Dynamic Nature of Community: Perceptions, Place, and Narratives about Change” speak on the importance of

narrative and place in establishing a sense of community. I believe the dynamic between an individual's narrative and a community's narrative can be helpful in synthesizing the experiences of the individual campuses into the larger narrative of Lee Academy's community. Though each campus experienced and navigated the global pandemic in the context of their own country's pandemic response, in some ways we acted in sync as a global community. This can be attributed to the general support among school leaders trying to navigate the same problem in very different political and social climates, as well as to regularly scheduled meetings between the Heads of Schools to build some sense of a virtual community, and help each other navigate the pandemic, and learn from each other's successes and failures. I believe this points to the ultimate direction of Lee Academy's future. In a World that seems to be becoming more divisive than collaborative, deliberately creating a shared global community could bring more people together than apart. Though each campus has its own unique flavor and flair, it is my hope that students and staff can come together in a shared purpose: opening up doors to the world, sharing lived experiences, and expanding their sense of "place" and community. We hope to achieve this by piloting a program of exchanges between cohorts of students and staff from each location to visit and exchange with the other campuses in the coming year. Perhaps by sharing their pandemic stories and experiences with each other, our students will be able to establish a mutual connection, and will plant the seeds of a global community that can help open doors to the World for the Lee Academy community.

As Cope et al. mention in their article, the connection of one's individual story to that of the bigger community is a critical dynamic in



Lee Academy students tap maple trees and do forest surveys in some of Lee's outdoor classrooms.

discovering oneself and one's role in a larger community. I assert that the same is true for individual communities trying to thread themselves in a bigger collective's narrative. As is the case of three campuses as part of one larger global organization. The only way that these narratives can evolve, and reconcile themselves with one other is through consistent and regular communication, sharing their stories and listening to others' perspectives. Through this process, each campus can discover where they fit into the larger narrative. This work is hard, and takes time, but it is some of the most important work we can do today in a society that trends toward the divisive instead of the inclusive. Building community is how we build peace. It is how we break down the "other" and welcome them into the community as a friend and peer. Through this, our own narrative grows and evolves. It is my hope that Lee Academy's work with young adults in this regard can be a step forward in this journey towards global understanding, tolerance, and community.

References:

Cope, Michael R., Paige N. Park¹, Jordan E. Jackson¹, Kayci M. Muirbrook¹, Carol Ward, Scott S. Sanders, and Ralph B. Brown. 2019. "Community as Story and the Dynamic Nature of community: Perceptions, Place, and Narratives About Change." *Social Sciences*, 8(2): 70



COMMUNITY IS FAMILY

ADAMA BAH

Community equals family to me. My community stepped up when I needed them. I grew up in East Harlem but was born in Guinea, Conakry. My mother and I arrived in the United States in 1990 when I was two years old. I'm the oldest of five. My parents left Guinea for many reasons. My father had two daughters and knew we wouldn't have a great life in Guinea. My older sister, who passed away, would have been subjected to cruel customs; she would have been married off early and endured forced circumcision if we stayed.

9/11 took place 20 years ago, and I was 13-years-old. I lived in the bubble before that. The world was small in my eyes, but things started to change. After 9/11, many innocent Muslim men were rounded up and accused of terrorism. Many of these innocent men were subsequently deported.

March 2005, federal agents raided our apartment and arrested my father and I. When we were at the federal plaza, a federal official told me I was undocumented. I wasn't aware I was undocumented. I knew I wasn't born in the U.S, but I didn't know I was undocumented. I was arrested by immigration and was never charged with terrorism, just accused. I was charged with overstaying my visas.

While held at Federal Plaza, I was interrogated by the FBI, CIA, NYPD, and law enforcement. They

kept asking me about places and people I didn't know. They wanted to know my religious and political views—at 16 years old! In the middle of being interrogated, one officer said, "Tashnuba," another young lady detained at the same time, "put you on a list to become a suicide bomber." I asked why she would do it, and later, I found out they told her the same about me. There are many different prisoner's dilemmas; perhaps it is worth thinking about the impact of police officers lying to children.

Tashnuba was with several officers when they informed me that I was undocumented. I recognized her from the mosque. We weren't close friends but knew each other from social gatherings. We were both detained together and held in the same cell for a while. I remember the night we were finally in our cell together. We spoke all night. We had so much in common. Her mom had just given birth, and so had mine. We talked about plans for the future—our dreams—we thought about what we would want to do when released; we were naïve, not knowing this was just the beginning of a long journey. The last time I saw Tashnuba was in the juvenile detention center. That was so long ago. I haven't been in touch with her, but over the years, I have received updates from reporters who were in touch with her.

I spent six and half weeks in a juvenile detention center. Once released, I was honestly confused. I

was sent home with an ankle bracelet and a gag order stating that I couldn't speak about what happened. I went back to high school the following week. I tried to go back to society as if nothing happened, but so much had changed, and so much had happened. It was just a matter of time.

I didn't know at that moment, but if it weren't for so many people within the community helping me, I wouldn't have gotten this far. I later found out all my teachers from high school reached out to the juvenile detention center to find out more information about me and to talk with me. Many of my teachers had the students write letters to me if they wanted to. I wasn't allowed to read any of those letters until I was released. I was never told about the letters or calls I was getting until after I left, but it meant a lot to me that they all had reached out and cared.

Navigating the system was an impossible task for a teenager. I didn't know much about bills, and I dropped out of high school to help take care of four siblings (they were documented, American citizens). We didn't have enough food at home, and the Administration of Child Services (ACS) was constantly nagging and adding pressure that they would separate us.

They wanted to deport me, and I had many court proceedings where the state argued for my removal. In 2007 I was granted Asylum. If I had returned to my native country of Guinea, I would have been circumcised. In 2009 I was given a green card. In 2014 I applied for citizenship and was met with considerable resistance from the Department of Homeland Security.

I fought them in federal courts and can proudly declare: on August 4, 2021, I was granted citizenship to the United States of America.

It has been a long journey, 16 years, dealing with law enforcement and legal battles. But the journey is not over; there are many people suffering in the broken and flawed system, and these cycles of violence will continue. I was accused of being a terrorist, charged with visions of attacking the only place I've ever called home, and threatened with being deported to a place I have never known, but now I can return the love so many showed to me by helping others. I share my story hoping that what happened to me does not have to happen to anyone else.



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REFLECTING ON LEARNING AND COMMUNITY IN TROUBLING TIMES

KYLE C. ASHLEE

Before the pandemic, I didn't really believe it was possible to build community online, at least not in the way that I had come to understand community through my work as an educator. For years I had practiced the art of in-person group facilitation, guiding groups of college students through meaningful learning experiences and creating opportunities for them to reflect on those experiences. For me, the goal of my work as an educator has always been to help students better understand themselves and the unique gifts they have to share with the world. And for the first ten years of my career, that was always done best in face-to-face groups.

But in March of 2020, everything changed. The COVID-19 pandemic imposed a virtual paradigm on the field of education. Online classes went from being optional for some to being mandatory for all. I was not at all prepared for this abrupt and seismic shift to online teaching. I had taken a class about online pedagogy in my doctoral program, leaving me with the belief that teaching online is harder, more time-consuming, and less engaging than in-person instruction (Dykman & Davis, 2008). So, when I was asked to teach an online class in the fall of 2020, it felt like learning how to teach all over again.

Then, in May of 2020, George Floyd was murdered. As a result, racial justice took on a new meaning and significance for me. I had previously considered myself an ally for racial justice both personally and professionally. I often discussed race and racism in my classes, but typically this happened only when the course learning outcomes specifically called for such content. When I witnessed the world rise up to demand justice for Floyd's unnecessary death however, I realized that racial justice could no longer be a supplemental topic in my courses. I resolved to focus every aspect of my teaching on examining systemic racism and exploring possibilities for racial justice.

Reflecting on Community

Needless to say, as the fall semester approached, the challenge was stark. Not only did I have to learn how to teach in a new virtual platform, but I was determined to promote racial justice in every aspect of my classes. As I began preparing for the fall, I realized that adapting to the challenges of the context would require more of me than just attending a few webinars and adding new assignments to my syllabus. To be effective in teaching online with a focus on racial justice, I needed to re-examine how I thought about learning. As I said, I have always facilitated learning

in group settings and as a result, have come to believe that the best environments for learning often resemble communities. More than tips and tricks, I needed to open my mind to the possibility that genuine community could—and must—be built amidst the isolation, fear, and collective trauma that many around the world were feeling.

This led me to reflect on a simple question: What is my definition of community? I began remembering the many communities that I had been a part of in my life, both within and beyond educational settings. I soon discovered that there were a few underlying characteristics that cut across them all. In my experience, communities are made up of diverse people working toward a common goal. I trusted people in these communities and felt comfortable sharing my honest perspectives. When conflict arose, I made a genuine effort to understand others' perspectives. Being a part of a community also required me to reflect on my strengths and areas for growth. Mostly importantly though, strong communities that I had been a part of often formed when individuals were experiencing difficult challenges in their lives and needed support.

The more I reconsidered the idea of community, the more I came to see that the COVID-19 pandemic and the global outcry for racial justice were not barriers to creating community, but opportunities to remember the importance of community during difficult times. I began to see possibilities instead of problems. Suddenly the virtual learning environment presented new ways of creating community that I had never imagined. Focusing on racial justice opened doorways for developing community in my classes that I hadn't considered. And just as I began to open myself up to the many possibilities hidden within what I

previously saw as challenges, I also began to identify strategies for how I might go about building community in my online classes.

Foster a Brave Space

There has been much controversy in the field of education about the idea of *safe space*. Traditional academic wisdom values freedom of thought above all else. The idea of imposing limitations on what can be said within the walls of the classroom contradicts the fundamental purpose of education, and in the eyes of some, striving for a safe learning environment crosses that line (Ali, 2017). For others, a safe container for educators and students is not only a goal, but a prerequisite for learning (McGee, 2016). Many who advocate for safe space in educational environments believe that true intellectual freedom cannot be achieved when there are some who do not feel physically or psychologically safe in the place where they should have liberty to explore all perspectives (Arao & Clemens, 2013). Recently, a new educational philosophy has emerged, called *brave space* (Ashlee & Ashlee, 2015). Focusing on learning over comfort, brave space encourages educators and students to focus inward on their own growth and development by practicing mindful self-awareness of one's own comfort zones, triggers, and learning edges.

Even if you are aware of the benefits of brave space, voluntarily leaning into the discomfort that is required for learning can be difficult. Being vulnerable enough to identify and acknowledge one's own limitations takes courage and conviction (Brown, 2012). However, exercising bravery can be an incredibly powerful educational experience as it often leads to personal transformation. I have been fortunate enough to experience the transformational power of brave space throughout

my time as an educator, and as a result have successfully used this learning framework to foster meaningful learning communities for many years.

When it came to developing brave space amidst a deadly pandemic and the sweeping calls for racial justice, I was unsure how to proceed until I realized that the circumstances of the times actually held rich opportunities for building community in my virtual classroom. Rather than avoiding these difficult topics in the classroom, I decided to dedicate the first few minutes of each class for my students and I to check-in with each other about how we were experiencing current events. I always led by example, being the first to share openly and honestly before inviting others to do the same. Sometimes these discussions were brief and surface-level. Other times they were intimate and emotional. Regardless of the depth of these discussions, my students often expressed their gratitude for the space to process our thoughts and feelings.

Although my classes this past year were virtual, I felt a close connection to my students. Living through 2020, and processing what was happening through the lens of brave space, proved to develop some of the most robust learning communities that I have ever experienced. Through course evaluations and one-on-one conversations, my students commented on how supportive and meaningful the brave space was for their mental health. Others shared how they made socially distanced connections with classmates in real life, which is not something they had done since the pandemic started. I, too, benefitted from the perspective and processing that happened in my classes this past year. My understanding of how to build a learning community has expanded and much of that has

been the result of fostering brave space in my online classes.

Focus on Self-Work

Just as safe space is a contested issue within education, so too is the practice of self-reflection to promote learning. Historically, educators and students have been encouraged to leave their personal lives at the door of the classroom in order to remain objective to academic facts (Freire, 2000). Traditional models of education consider personal experience to be secondary when compared to the insights that have been discovered through rigorous scientific research and peer-reviewed discernment. So, for some, personal self-reflection is something that is best done with a therapist, and not with a teacher. Still, others believe that it is impossible to remove oneself from the learning process. For these educators, meaningful reflection upon personal experience is the basis for all learning and development (Dewey, 2007). Similarly, others refer to education as a liberatory practice, whereby personal freedom and social justice can only be pursued through critical self-reflection (Hooks, 1994).

I have always fallen in the camp of those who see self-reflection as an effective pedagogical tool for learning and development. I often refer to the process of self-reflection as self-work because it involves looking inward to identify where my students and I have room to grow in our understanding and awareness (Ashlee & Ashlee, 2015). Again, I have been fortunate enough to be a part of educational communities where self-reflection was encouraged and as a result, I learned. As an educator, I've seen self-reflection lead to powerful discoveries for my students. Rather than seeing what we were learning as separate and

distant from themselves, self-reflection allowed course content to take on personal meaning for my students.

Through my experience teaching this past year, I learned that self-work is not just an effective teaching tool, but also a powerful means for building community. At first glance, self-work might seem contrary to the goals of community. Given that self-reflection is often a deeply personal exercise, those looking to build community might opt for more collaborative ways to engage individuals in the process of community development. In my classes this year, self-work was often a gateway to community because it has encouraged everyone in the group to operate from a beginner's mindset (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Rather than being another way my students and I felt disconnected, practicing self-work actually brought us closer together. We were all experts in our own experience, and everyone understood that we all had room to grow.

Self-work was an especially productive framework when having conversations about racial justice this year. Many White students and educators, including myself, often resist conversations about race and racism because of the discomfort that comes from facing one's privilege and the harmful oppression that People of Color experience as a result of systemic racism (DiAngelo, 2011). Framing these discussions in the context of self-work gave my White students and I permission to acknowledge our lack of racial awareness and encouraged us to focus on listening and learning. For students of Color in my classes, self-work became an invitation to care for themselves in ways that were not encouraged in other spaces. This meant speaking honestly and being validated about their painful and traumatic experiences with racism.

Despite focusing on self-work, the conversations we had about race and racism in my classes this year were not easy. Grappling with the harsh realities of systemic racism with eyes wide open was both infuriating and heartbreaking. But whenever White supremacy reared its ugly head, we took time in class to talk about how we were experiencing these horrifying events. While these conversations were some of the most challenging moments in class this last year, they were also meaningful opportunities for learning and growth. Leaning into the uncertainty of what was happening in the world through self-work not only supported our learning, but it also contributed to the development of a strong community in my classes.

Facilitate Story Sharing

When it comes to stories, there has long been a tension between academics. The art of narrative has always been beloved among those in the arts and humanities, but stories tend to hold less weight in the sciences. On the one hand, romantics argue that narrative accounts of personal experience help students make meaningful connections for learning. People on this side of the fence view stories as the closest approximation to truth we humans can muster. Classicists, on the other hand, believe that while stories may be nice, they hold little scientific value. As such, these educators prefer to stick to cold, hard facts.

Recently however, researchers of all stripes have started to explore the impact of stories on the human brain. Stories are the most effective way to communicate complex ideas that will be understood and remembered over time (Simmons, 2001). Humans love the thrill of a good story. Even very simple stories can contain complex lessons, insights, and perspectives (Simmons, 2015). Bring to mind a boring presentation where the presenter

read statistics directly from the slides. Regardless of how factual the information, most of us lose interest and forget what is said during these types of presentations. Now recall a riveting action film or a captivating love story. Oftentimes we can recite specific details from our favorite movies or books without even trying to commit them to memory. This is the power stories have to help us learn.

I rely heavily on story sharing in my teaching. Both in and outside the classroom, some of my most meaningful learning moments have come from bearing witness to and sharing personal stories. My perspective on the world is limited to the things that I've seen and done, but when I've heard stories from those who have different identities and experiences, my eyes were opened to so much more. Story sharing has allowed me to truly understand many of the unearned privileges I benefit from as a straight, White man because I've heard heartbreaking experiences from those who have been marginalized and oppressed in ways that I've never had to consider. At the same time, I've been given the opportunity to share my own story while in community with others. This allowed me to reflect on my identities in ways that I never would have otherwise. Powerful experiences like these have compelled me to facilitate story sharing in my classes with the hopes that my students will benefit from the practice, as I have.

When it came to processing race and racism in my classes this past year, stories were key. As an introduction activity, I invited my students to share the story of their lives through the lens of their racial identity. I asked my students to practice appreciative listening, or observing aspects of the story with which they resonate with most. I modeled for the students by sharing my own experiences as a White person trying to understand

my privilege and unlearn the racist ideas that society has taught me to believe. My students told their own troubling and tragic stories about race. After each student shared, there was time to express gratitude and highlight similarities between experiences. Even though the students shared vastly different experiences, the exercise always seemed to bring us closer together.

Based on my experience teaching online this year, I learned that not only is story sharing a powerful teaching tool, but it is also an incredibly effective way to build community. While COVID-19 impacted different people in very different ways, it touched the lives of everyone in my classes. Some students got sick and had to miss class. Others had family members and friends who contracted the virus, had to be hospitalized, or worse. This past year was an emotional roller coaster and I realized what my students needed more than anything was to share their stories and have someone to listen, really listen. My online classes this year became communities in part because they were spaces for my students to honestly share stories about what they were experiencing with others who cared enough to listen.

Lessons Learned

As an educator who successfully facilitated in-person educational communities for years, I had always been skeptical of online education. And during such an unprecedented time with multiple pandemics, political turmoil, and collective trauma, I was not feeling particularly optimistic about teaching online this past year. Not only was I doubtful about developing virtual community, but in the wake of George Floyd's murder I was also committed to pursuing racial justice in every aspect of my classes. Either one of these would have been formidable challenges on their own, but 2020 was

an unrelenting year for educators. I felt unsure about how to be an effective educator and when it came time to plan for my fall classes, I was stuck.

As I often do when I am stuck, I stepped away to reflect. I focused on my most formative learning experiences and realized that my most meaningful learning experiences happened in community with others. More often than not, those communities were strongest when individuals were going through troubling times. I began to believe that what was happening in the world might actually be an opportunity for learning, and not just a problem to be solved. Rather than being barriers to community, the challenging circumstances of this past year became points of connection for me and my students.

With this realization in mind, my classes became some of the strongest communities I've ever experienced as an educator. As a learning community, we discussed what we would need to foster a brave space in the class where each person felt supported in stepping outside their comfort zone to learn. We prioritized our own learning and growth throughout the course by focusing on self-work as a shared goal. Finally, we processed what we were experiencing in the world, practiced appreciative listening, and established trust with one another by facilitating opportunities for vulnerable story *sharing*.

The strong community in my classes this year would not have been possible without the courage and conviction of my students, who accepted my invitation to share their personal stories with total strangers. It also would not have been possible without my own commitment to self-reflection prior to teaching this year. Rather than gripping to my old ways, I took time to wonder about how

building community might take on new meaning in light of everything that was happening around me. As I have so often found in my work as an educator, the most meaningful experiences happen when everyone in the learning community has the opportunity to let go of who they think they are supposed to be and express who they truly are.

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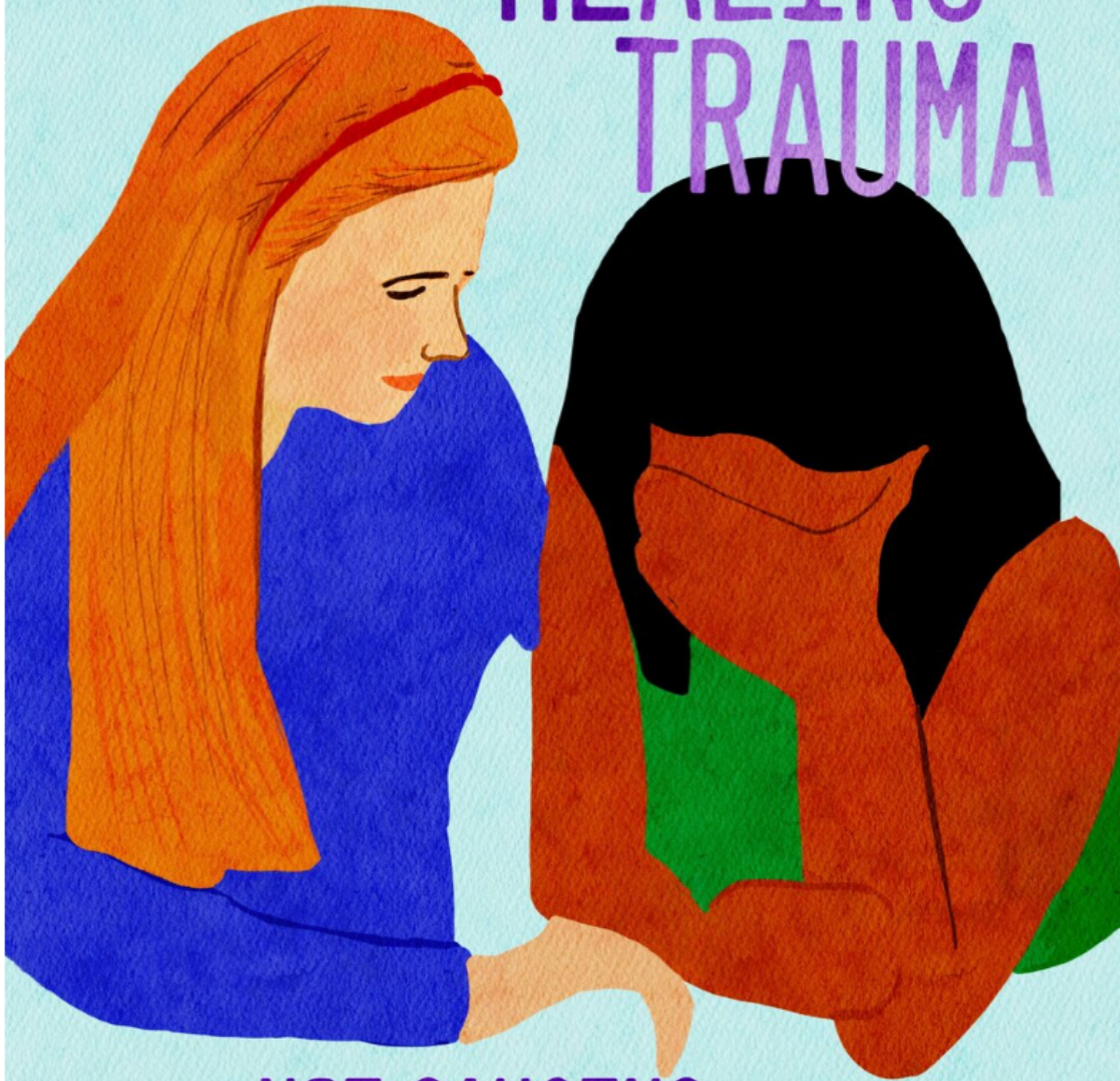
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NONVIOLENCE MEANS...

HEALING TRAUMA



NOT CAUSING
MORE HARM



Rosie Davila

CAMPAIGN 
NONVIOLENCE

GIVING ARTISANS AN OPPORTUNITY: AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM BALDWIN

INTERVIEWED BY GABRIEL ERTSGAARD

Kim Baldwin has been working with non-profit, mission driven educational organizations since 1990. She joined the One Fair World team in 2011 to support its non-profit mission "to transform lives of artisans in developing countries by providing a marketplace for their products, paying them fair wages, and increasing local awareness of the importance of fair trade." She resides in Salem, Oregon with her husband, and enjoys spending time with her grown children and 4-year-old granddaughter.

GE: For the past decade, you've been the manager of One Fair World, a nonprofit, fair trade store in Salem, Oregon. Could you tell us a bit about your background and the background of One Fair World?

KB: I started working in nonprofits about 25 years ago. I did a lot of development, staff management, building things—especially at the Gilbert House Children's Museum where I worked for 15 years. Then I just needed to do something different for a while. I came across this position at One Fair World and figured it was a great transition from working 70 hours a week to something a little more 9-5.

The mission of this store, of course, appealed to me greatly. The basic mission is to alleviate poverty in marginalized countries, or areas of countries, with a poorer economy. We do this by giving artisans there an opportunity to earn a fair living and a better way of life by providing this marketplace here in the United States.

The history of this store goes back to a wonderful group of ladies. Most of them worked for the Oregon Department of Human Services in social justice venues, such as family services. They were big fans of a fair trade store in Dallas, Oregon that was carrying Ten Thousand Villages* items. When that store closed, these ladies decided that a Ten Thousand Villages store needed to stay in our local area.

They started One Fair World, which was then Ten Thousand Villages, Salem branch, in 2002. They worked hard, put a local board of directors together, and refurbished the place we're in now. Of these ladies, some are still on our board of directors today. We're very lucky that they had this vision. The store went fully independent and changed its name to One Fair World a few years later, but still has a good working relationship with Ten Thousand Villages.

GE: Could you tell us more about the “fair trade” concept (not to be confused with “free trade”), since that’s at the heart of your store’s mission?

KB: The concept of fair trade has roots heavily in the Mennonite community. It started back in the 1940s with a woman who saw that artisans doing needlepoint work in South America lived in severe poverty. They were not getting paid fairly for what they did. So she began selling their items, and from that emerged what is now Ten Thousand Villages. SERRV* took on a similar approach.

The whole idea behind fair trade, the principles of fair trade are (1) making sure that people are being paid a fair wage, (2) that their communities are being built, (3) that there’s no child labor, slave labor, or human trafficking, (4) that cultural identity is respected and encouraged, (5) sustainability for the environmental resources in the area, (6) healthcare, (7) education—these are all important aspects of fair trade. It’s about treating people as we would want to be treated, and giving them the opportunity to share their talents with us through their beautiful artistry, or their agricultural products, as the case may be. We want them to have an opportunity to be recognized for this work and to earn a fair life, just like us.

GE: The theme of this issue is community. What is the role of One Fair World in the local Salem, Oregon community, and what role does your store play in connecting your local community to global communities?

KB: In our little niche of downtown Salem, we’ve become known as the only store that’s a nonprofit, that brings in items from all over the world, that serves the community like this. We’re a strong part of downtown, a thriving part.

We’re a place people can come to volunteer. People who want to help alleviate poverty in the greater world, but don’t have the resources to travel to foreign countries, can come be part of a community that helps others get out of oppression. We only have two paid staff members: myself and our assistant manager Desta Serrine who works two days a week. It’s really a labor of volunteers in our community, from the beginnings of the store all the way till now. Even through COVID, as difficult as it has been to have volunteers in the store, we’re finding our way back and allowing our volunteers remain part of who we are and what we do.

Bringing the global community here has also been very important. We even have products in the store that have been designed by refugees in resettlement programs. Many refugees come to the United States seeking asylum from war-torn countries. They need to learn English. They need to learn a skill, or need the opportunity to share a skill they already have. One of our vendors, Prosperity Candles, gives them the opportunity to go through a mini-MBA program. They learn every aspect of the company, while also learning English, how to apply for jobs, and how to do finances and budgets in a new culture. That’s similar to what Catholic Community Services and others are doing in Salem for refugee resettlement.

GE: As I understand it, one of the emphases of One Fair World is not just on the products, but also on telling the stories of the people who made them. How important is storytelling for your mission?

KB: That is actually the key piece of our mission. Storytelling is where it is at for fair trade. That’s how people learn why this product that they hold in their hands is so important to other people, why it means so much to them that someone would buy

this product. We hear the stories of recycled tires being collected in the dumps of Nepal and being made into beautiful handbags by paraplegics in wheelchairs. You hear about people in South Africa going through a similar business program to create the beautiful spices, jars, and labels that we have in the store. You hear about people in Cambodia collecting grasses from farmland that they don't want to put chemicals on. They pull the grasses out, which are so strong that they then weave them into baskets and purses.

Women rescued from sex-trafficking are the creators of many of our products. Gender equality is one of the principles of fair trade. Women in many countries have been subjected to things that are horrific, but they still need to be wage-earners for their families. Fair trade addresses that.

These stories help us understand why fair trade is important, why you should buy something from us rather than a big box store where the product may have been created in a sweatshop. With fair trade you know that the creators are being paid up front, they're being paid a good portion of the money. As a nonprofit, what we make on top of the price we pay for products just keeps us flat. We pay for rent, insurance, lights, phone—all the things it takes to run a business. But we're not here to make a bunch of money. We're here to alleviate poverty and create opportunity.

**Editor's note: Ten Thousand Villages, a nonprofit organization, is one of the oldest and largest importers/retailers of fair trade goods in the United States. SERRV International is another nonprofit, fair trade importer/retailer.*

**A “DRAG PARTY”
RAIDED:** “THIS
MORNING, JOHN
SMITH, JACOB
BYARD, **WILLIAM
DORSEY**, WHO BY
THE WAY, WAS THE
“**Q U E E N** , ”
CHARLES MYERS,
JACOB LEWIS,
SAMUEL LEWIS,
SAMUEL JACKSON,
JAMES WATERS,
LAURA HOWARD,
JAMES TAYLOR
BENJAMIN MOORE,
& LEWIS JACKSON
WERE CHARGED IN
THE POLICE COURT
WITH BEING
‘**S U S P I C I O U S
C H A R A C T E R S**’ .
LAST NIGHT,
ATTIRED IN
HANDSOME SILKS
& SATINS, EACH IN
C O M P L E T E
F E M I N I N E
C O S T U M E , T H E Y
INDULGED IN A
“**DRAG**” IN A
**QUIET-LOOKING
HOUSE** ON THE
SOUTH SIDE OF F
STREET, NEAR
TWELFTH. **THE
‘PARTY’ WAS
RAIDED** BY
LIEUTENANT
AMISS & THE
OFFICERS OF THE
FIRST PRECINCT.”
— “THE NATIONAL
REPUBLICAN,”
NEWSPAPER
ARTICLE, 1888

BELLY-UP: AN ETYMOLOGY

QUENTIN FELTON

(jericho's intro)

no one seems to care who threw the first brick, nor the fact that
said brick was actually a period, quite possibly a comma,
ricocheted off the hooves of a cop car patrolling the furthest arm
of atlantic avenue, its industrial color-block sharpening
the line between flesh & fluid, more or less

less flesh, more fluid, the in-between choking on its children
in fear of nurturing a monstrous grammar, unwilling
nor controlled, molars serrating the edges of paper-
weights & pistol-whips scoring pangs of the personless,
rarely being who you must, no matter the moment

but this moment matters, your must's rarely rubber-
banded to silk cityscapes, high-topped by ivory towers
or inhaled with black exhaled elsewhere, that is, of course,
if elsewhere leaves you bated, balmed, belly-up
no longer latched to the awakened, history another hued river

no longer rivered by history, another hue is awakened
one fueled by suspicions of character, quiet-looking homes
at times louder than the corsets stitched to caged sidewalk
columns running up & down st. james place, always
sticking. no one seems to care who threw the first brick.

I. DORSEY

DERIVED FROM THE OLD GALLIC "O'DORCHAIDHE,"
 MEANING: "A DESCENDENT OF THE DARK ONE"
 OR, "RACE, A NOT-SO IMMACULATE CONCEPTION"

& how dare i not imagine us sooner
 before our names were thrown into the arms of white teeth
 sludge slicing sister to sibling then back again
 as muvha earth's umbilical lineage throttles breath
 veering its lukewarm through washington's south side sashay
 raids thundered as slick as the rain falling
 on f street, lights syllabled with the lilac, the blue-black
 skylit beside bloodshot mornings, bruising easy
 after years of sinking into satins & silks mistresses
 used to keep the shackles hidden, the first of many
 historical fires dressing wrists in welts
 bodies bloated in the house

of pierced passage
 of curdled cement
 of blowed bawdy
 of glittered gash
 of wounded wing
 of foddered flight
 of liquored holy

ribboned by figure eights, limbs sweating hellfires
 tucked into duckwalks that reach for you, our queen
 only after elbows lock, a highness hiking the court's tender
 up her dress, its boning judged for rhetorical realness
 as if our own could never be real enough
 without a tinker or two, or three, or twelve
 our brothers blooming posies beneath a mother's
 architecture, circling a cell soon readied
 to escape a country one barely wishes to save
 nor write any further from its well-deserved
 grave, unless that country is made of you
 & yours, a negro swan

fleeing the flame
 neither the first
 nor last of its wing
 despite all
 the moons
 we've been pitied

II. MYRICK(S)

the first god i understood was relative. improvised. a runner's grammar tattooing his gospel from georgia to brooklyn, leaving a grandmother's hands coated in paternal debris. my brother & i would simply congregate beside it, buck-teeth pulling year-long gaps from three to sixty after every friday-night sleepover. with bellies bent backwards over the beats of tile & toothpaste, the both of us would sift through typhoons of talcum in search of the bacon & hash smuggled from the bathroom's kitchen vent, our hunger weaving past portraits of *daddy*—the great-grandfather—always addressed with the a stretched skyward toward the second d's mountaintop. we'd wade our growing pains within this generational divide, completely unbeknownst to familial blood. most tongues in this apartment curled at the myth's edge, myricks being the most swallowed. this story of a former-myrick man fleeing southern concrete, his embers caught in a whistle's breeze towards some white woman's direction. the running now routine, later slapping an s to his own backside so the hounds wouldn't catch his scent. or at least, that's how the story fell onto my mother's lips, her childhood also narrated by layers of lotion smoothed into the bristled brows of black folk drenched in spirit, hushed products of a grandmother's craft, parts of me wishing i could bottle it up. hold it close. & write it.

DERIVED FROM THE LATIN "MAURITIUS," MEANING:

- A) "DARK"
- B) "GRISTLE"
- C) "SHOVEL-TONGUE"
- D) "MOTHER-TREE"

PROOF OF MYTH



III. FELTON
 DERIVED FROM THE
 OLD ENGLISH
 "FELD," THE
 MEANING:
 PASTURE;
 PLUS "TUN,"
 MEANING:
 ENCLOSURE
 OR SETTLEMENT

ing to cage the feminine, convincing myself it
 ce to survival. in a way, it was throughout middle
 ss, craving a world where little black boys could
 selves in forbidden scents, passion fruit flexed past lower lips &
 each fuzz, lavender lacing itself into nose hairs, all while vanilla
 vexed the soil beneath, scorned non-existent breast tissue, once
 running out of limbs to douse, i'd make my way around the
 bedroom, lovelorn & dazed, spinning as i shot aerated meadows
 across the walls & ceiling, adding to the dramatics, i'd shake out
 one of my mother's folded tee shirts, fasten its collar around the
 hairline, & flip it to & fro, thinking it a fresh, twenty-four-inch install
 from the beauty supply. **after hours of unburdened bliss, a**
feeling of deep shame would pinch the gut, butterflies
fluttered to sounds of my father's leather belt, its whips slicing
through clouds of musk. attempting to sweep the smell under
the rug, i'd pull the ceiling fan's cord like an escape hatch,
hoping my mother would pass through unaware of the mess
i'd made. of course, she didn't, for it was the first thing she
smelled once coming home. for the first couple of incidents,
she'd tell me to stop my antics, but after a while, she let it go,
finding humor in the fact that i truly thought she wouldn't
notice. we made a pact to never tell my father, though i'm sure
he already knew, or merely taught himself to forget.

i've spent years trying to cage the feminine, convincing
 myself it was in the name of survival. in a way, it was.
 throughout middle school, i'd race to the perfume cabinet in
 my mother's bedroom after class, craving a world where little
 black boys could coat themselves in forbidden scents:
 passion fruit flexed past lower lips & peach fuzz, lavender
 lacing itself into nose hairs, all while vanilla vexed the soil
 beneath, scorned non-existent breast tissue, once running
 out of limbs to douse, i'd make my way around the bedroom,
 lovelorn & dazed, spinning as i shot aerated meadows across
 the walls & ceiling, adding to the dramatics, i'd shake out one
 of my mother's folded tee shirts, fasten its collar around my
 hairline, & flip it to & fro, thinking it a fresh, twenty-four-inch
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 for the first couple of incidents, she'd tell me to stop my an-
 tics, though i'm sure he already knew, or merely .

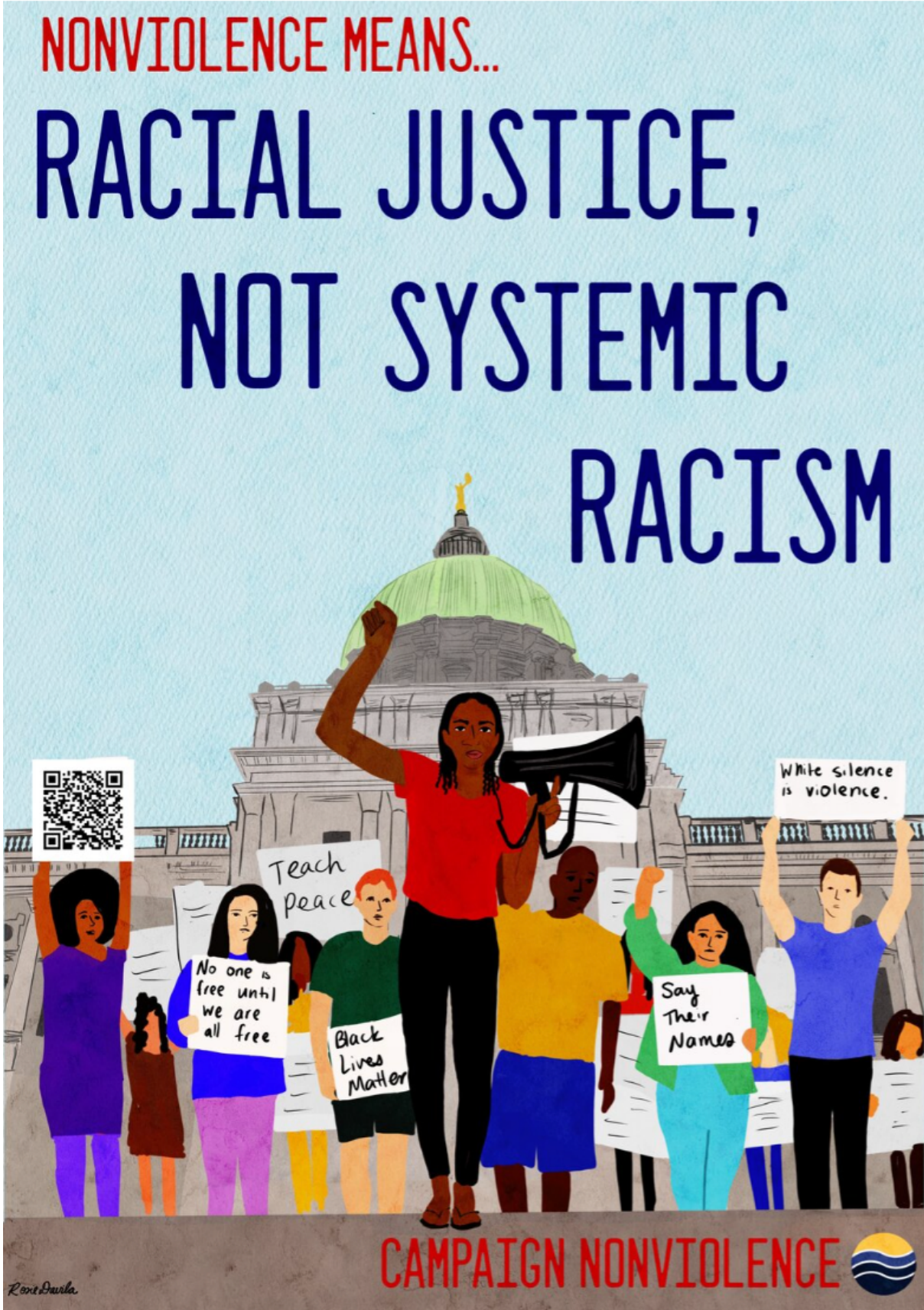
APPLE DRAGON

GABRIEL ERTSGAARD

"How about a snack now?" My toddler nephews abandon their plastic shovels on the back patio next to a five-inch mound of flower bed dirt. I help my sister-in-law strip them out of puffy seafoam jackets, blue Paw Patrol galoshes, and the stocking caps they didn't want to wear. It's still too cold to go bare-headed on this faux spring day, a brief reprieve before napping winter reasserts itself.

The normalcy feels strange. My nephews don't understand that they missed starting preschool, nor find it odd to don face masks while choosing a Christmas tree. Valentines for classmates must wait until next year. The twins' entire world is this home, their backyard swing set, visits to grandparents (our COVID bubble), and petitions for stories about faraway, magical realms.

three apple slices
young boy's dragon hoard
eats one, guards two



A VIRTUAL HAND: REACHING OUT AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

CALEB ROBINSON

Note: this essay was written in spring 2021, and reflects some hopes about an imminent end to pandemic shutdowns that has not materialized. Rather than try to make edits that would change the character of the piece, we've opted to share it in its original form - the message is no less relevant now, even if the landscape has shifted.

There were a number of times I reached out to one of my old friends from August to December of 2020 who I hadn't stayed in contact with for years. During the pandemic it seemed like there was an uptick in public transparency and what some may describe as "calls for help." This particular friend had a handful of these cries; declaring they were at the end of their rope, speaking about their depression, admitting they were barely holding on. The messages I sent weren't groundbreaking by anyone's measures - "I saw your post and wanted to check in," "I wanted to let you know you still have my support, how can I help?" One last "how are you feeling?" must have been the dealbreaker of extensions on my part, as they said they were having a rough time and a phone call might help. We made a plan to talk after I got off work.

These instances of reaching out are necessary regardless of the circumstances, but in times of collective isolation they become indispensable.

There's a huge body of research detailing the negative effects of social isolation, from infant care to retirement homes, that emphasize the vitality that comes from offering empathy and solidarity. These moments can be as small as a gentle nudge that someone can open up if needed or as big as talking a friend off the proverbial ledge when their emotional exhaustion might lead to a drastic, or life altering, decision. There's always someone you know who feels alone, whether they publicly declare it or if they hold it to their chest and guard it from eyesight.

I'll admit that reaching out was never my strong suit. There's a tendency to talk yourself out of checking in with your loved ones, much less strangers out of fear of rejection; someone could think you're being weird, creepy, manipulative, disingenuous, or opportunistic. Once those thoughts start to set in, the likelihood that you make contact go from slim to none. This is typically where my thought process would go. I was happy to respond to someone else reaching out and never perceived the effort as underhanded by any means. As early as April 1st of 2020 a childhood friend sent me a message to apologize for the long years that had passed without any contact on either part, and we both admitted that when things went sour between us we were struggling with mental health.

I would argue this is where the majority of us sit when the conversation is approached in a meaningful, and importantly, tactful manner. Even for those who are inherently guarded like myself, the initial response when an individual extends an invitation of conversation is almost always positive; we feel good when someone says hi to us. Even if your default is to assume someone could be two-faced in a natural setting, if someone seems even remotely sincere we're likely to give them the time of day in the hopes that it could be a meaningful moment. We don't linger on the possibility that those who reach out to us are dishonest at best or frightening at worst.

This should suggest that the fear of being rejected is unfounded when we consider how we, as individuals, respond to others. However, we tend not to consider how we would feel ourselves, and we instead find ways to psych ourselves out before even making the initial attempt.

This all may seem somewhat inconsequential on face value, but when you think about just how critical social interaction is to well-being, then the weight of the conversation becomes much heavier. Think to yourself about the early shock of the pandemic lockdown in the early months of 2020 - we missed our family, we justified small interactions with friends, and those anxious moments at the grocery store lost some of the tension if we had the chance to have a passing interaction with the cashier. This is especially true for people with a more extroverted disposition who are fueled far more by the socialization opportunities compared to their introverted counterparts. Even for those who are more withdrawn, you may have started to wonder how long the momentum could last without passing social interactions. Is Netflix going to be our only

comfort forever?

For better or worse, technology has become our best friend over the last decade or so when it comes to our ability to stay in contact with friends and relatives. When close friends move away we can always add them on Facebook and look at their posts, when we're strapped for time and can't visit family we can always default to a text message check-in, and romance feels like it is almost exclusively driven by dating applications. Our utilization of social media, online communication, and video chat applications became golden in a time in which our face-to-face interactions were virtually nonexistent on an average day. To our families dismay, we may have even Zoomed in for holidays last year.

We're slowly stepping away from shutdowns, whether you are starting to feel comfortable taking your mask off around family or if people had to stop giving you dirty looks when you refused to put your mask on at Target. This doesn't mean that our utilization of digital communication should completely fall away, though, now that we can recognize just how essential it has become for our daily socialization. Coming out of the pandemic-era of our lifetime (hopefully), viewing how much our online presence drove our ability to cope shouldn't be entirely lost. Many family members and friends have become closer, and while they are still a long distance away, that doesn't mean those relationships we've fostered should cease to exist. Even those we've come to appreciate in small bursts online can find their message pinned to the top of our apps.

Unfortunately, this isn't as easy as it seems on the surface. There were many during the shutdown that were deemed "essential" whose schedules

were even more hectic, and there were many who lost their jobs and faced crippling economic turmoil even with increased government assistance, and those individuals are likely still just trying to emotionally and financially catch up after the last year. However, if you were blessed with a job that could be completed from home like myself, a lot of the time consuming work requirements started to fall away. Preparing for the day may have been lighter, long commutes to work were eliminated, and some places of employment might have even given reduced hours due to a lack of necessary tasks. Many also had fewer social obligations; being encouraged to stay home, there were fewer events inundating our schedules, and most purchases were delivered straight to our door. If this was a period of time in which your life requirements started to thin out you likely went through the three stages of quarantine life: motivation, boredom, and desperation. After the thrill of picking up new hobbies and learning to bake bread lost their luster, many of us were seeking out alternative ways to keep ourselves busy. This might have been when we started to pick up the phone more to call our mom instead of browsing shopping sites.

As previously mentioned, shutdowns are diminishing, our socialization is entering back into the physical world and our obligations are picking back up in a way we're having to readjust to. If you're getting called back into your office I'm sure you're already starting to miss doing your work from the comfort of your home - the sweatpants are back off, you're back up in the early morning hours, and you're having to commute to work again. Once you realize just how draining that process can be, and how much additional time is required to drive to work and, god forbid, shower every day, the reality sets in. Keeping up with loved

ones starts naturally taking the back seat to what we see as mandatory. It's likely one of the reasons we're entering a new phase of younger individuals trying to find new career moves they are passionate about, rather than meandering in the same dead-end job for a lifetime.

As difficult as it may be to work up the mental fortitude to keep up our online relationships, regardless of who they may be, there's good reason to at least try. Some people still aren't at ease about being in a physical space, some have grown accustomed to the increased digital presence, and of course many are still hundreds or thousands of miles away. Some just desperately need it.

In January of this year an old friend of mine announced on social media that they would be killing themselves. They had been, for months, posting memes about emo music and depression with people sounding off their amusement with a lot of "hashtag me" responses. It's hard to say how many of them took it as a siren going off. Without warning, they posted this:

"I am ending my life today. Take care of yourself if it feels like too much, reach out. I just don't have the energy anymore, please seek help if you need it. I love you."

Thankfully, a number of their close friends knew where they lived and what car they drove, so after some searching they were found and were taken to a hospital. They made it out okay and even posted a joke about what song they heard coming out of treatment days later (Switchfoot - Meant to Live).

On the lightest end of the spectrum, view reaching out to your loved ones as a way to maintain your small community and brighten someone's day. At

the heaviest, consider these measures as a form of preventative care for suicide. There are a lot of clichés; you never know where someone might be emotionally, the saddest people on the inside are always the happiest on the outside, and so on. But the reality is that the pandemic was hard on all of us. For many, life didn't just go back to normal, and for others a sense of meaninglessness creeps in as we escape the last year. Any person you could shoot a quick check-in message to right now is likely to still have lingering emotions after the collective trauma we all endured.

There are positives to be had from all this at the end. I've kept up with the friend who reached out in April, visited them in the summer and had the chance to meet their two daughters for the first time that year. Just a few days ago I got to talk to them on the phone and could hear their youngest

daughter talking, which she wasn't doing at all when I visited last year. The friend I started reaching out to in September still talks to me almost every day. I got to meet their son. I consider them, among others this year who I either remained in contact with or reconnected with, some of my most meaningful relationships today. There have been plenty of times in the past year where I felt at the end of my own personal rope, or completely devoid of energy to keep moving forward. Therapy definitely has helped work through these feelings at different points, but in the sappiest way possible I likely wouldn't have manifested the energy without having the ability to reach out, or be reached out to, the last year. Ideally the stakes won't always be high every time you ask someone how they're feeling, but it's best not to find out when it could have been preventative.

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PORTRAIT OF A SUNDIAL ON ALL FOURS

QUENTIN FELTON

The body is a kind of negotiation. It twists, curls, and fists flesh to bone with ease, never looking to mend swollen spaces. Ever since childhood, mine has made a habit of forking between split roads, both sides now trying to catch their breath on stale terrain. The exhales become more strategic navigating the world as a Black trans femme, a reality at once visible and unnoticed. On behalf of a personal protest, I decided to draft new terms with the body I call home. Last summer—with the whole world in flames—I'd lead myself to the nearest mirror and undress the ashes draped along my skin, soon laying naked against a wave of window-light. Whenever recounting this ritual to my friends, the moment rarely left without entering a forest of bewildered growls and eye rolls. To them, I've merely failed at any attempt to sound edgy, now being an inconvenient time to measure the passing of days by how many nudes I can take in thirty minute intervals. Honestly, their response was—and still is—warranted. Both the COVID-19 Pandemic and the endless swirl of Black death on repeat makes all matters of the self-involved seem trivial and unproductive. Who am I to put myself on display? To push through years of eating disorders, dysphoria, gender discomfort, and deem this body good enough to document? Hence the metaphorical fork in the road: for I've carried centuries of generational trauma and strength funneled through a mother's tongue, while also

being unable to shake the history of dehumanization whenever stepping into my reflection. It wasn't long before my obsession with nudes turned into a desire to remember a body caught in time, before it is unjustly taken.

If exhales lie in possibility, I'm tired of watching them suffocate. With 2019 and 2020 consecutively being the deadliest years for Black and Brown Trans women, 2021 already carries at least 23 trans-involved murders in the United States, not counting the many unnamed faces and brutalities uncovered by widespread media outlets. According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Black trans women are disproportionately disposed to fatal violence, navigating the intersections of racism, transphobia, and socio-invisibility. In providing statistics that illustrate the labyrinth of challenges institutionally placed on Black trans, non-binary, and non-conforming bodies, HRC outlines the ways in which anti-trans stigma leads to an overall denial of opportunity—educational setbacks, employment discrimination, exclusion from social services, and barriers to gender-affirming legal identification. This results in the further subjugation of the Black trans community, triggering increased health risks such as heightened rates of sexual assault, homelessness, physical and mental health disparities, and higher likelihood of engagement in survival sex work.

Whenever thinking about my body's relationship with Trans-queerness, I start falling down similar rabbit holes of dysphoria that many of my societal siblings know to be true. Still, for the majority of my early life, my gender discomfort was not part of my narrative. I did not have to sit down and talk myself out of my assigned sex, and into a preferred gender expression. For all intents and purposes, I was a little Black girlfacedboy, fully embracing a personalized non-binary identity where my genitals were a non-factor. This comfort waned, however, after graduating college on the heels of a worldwide pandemic. With no one around, I started to clearly notice how the genderless framework I built myself had its fair share of cracks. I realized how much I still policed the ways in which I perform in social spaces. I wouldn't walk out the door without shaving the upper half of my body. I'd make sure any jeans or dresses covered the entirety of my legs, their rows of hair a threat to others. I'd tuck my bulge between my backside's fold and pray that nothing slip on my nights-out. Frankly, I wanted to pass as a man's wet dream of a cis-leaning femme, one catering to a male gaze that swiftly turns its back on non-binary transness. I began to wonder how the avenues of safety for Black trans women have become so closely tied to this notion of cis-respectability. This is where the anger kicked in. While I had thought of myself as an exception to the rules of binary policing, I quickly recognized just how deep the conditioning had affected me. In order to survive, we're told to conform, even when we're sheltering in place with no one around to watch.

The legacy of social and economic instability reverberated in new ways during the COVID-19 Pandemic. According to Columbia University, this modern-day public health crisis has deeply affected the trans and gender-nonconforming communities,

heightening the overall "risk of exposure to the virus and its adverse outcomes, delays in access to gender-affirming care, and diminished social support, which is crucial to protecting against the effects of stigma and discrimination." While the United States's scientific, medical, and public assistance institutions have continuously failed those disenfranchised by race, gender, and socio-economic standing, COVID-19 shined a light on the very structural wounds that marginalized communities have seen clearly for decades. The political pitfalls of COVID-19 cannot overshadow the intensely personal hardships—such as mental health and wellness—brought about by social isolation. These regulated cruelties add up, and must be taken into account when considering that the average life expectancy of Black trans women is 35 years of age. We are living lives shorter than any other subset of the LGBTQIA+ community.

There is an epidemic of Black Trans death.

America has become all too familiar with the destruction of Black lives, replayed over and over for public consumption. Without societal support, legal protections, and individual respect, Black trans women will continue to be erased from our present histories, scrubbed by a system making space solely for our death's headline: albeit rare and fleeting. Often, I find myself envisioning a life long after expectancy. I rarely thought I'd breathe past a certain age. Beside the obvious roadblocks stacked against Black folk in this country—police brutality, unequal access to public health, an unfair representation in our legal system, the school-to-prison pipeline, the many micro-and-macro oppressions embedded in our path—I dimmed my hopes for the Black, queer girlfacedboy I recognized myself to be. In spite of fading away, I skimmed past sixteen, then eighteen, and now twenty three, the majority of me arguably still intact.

Last week, I told my therapist I didn't want to live anymore if I'd just end up like my father. To be honest, I had agreed to never speak truth to this nightmare, in the same way you're told not to say certain names three times fast while facing a cracked mirror. Ironically enough, it's when peering into my reflection where this tidal omen rears its monstrous wave. Having been on neither hormone blockers as a teenager, nor gender affirming hormones as a young adult, I'm constantly reminded of an unwanted cis-future whenever looking at my father. This image frightens me, shoving me into pools of various gender anxieties and dysphoria. Still, these paternal gripes tend to work in opposition to my own maternal admirations. Once parsing through the potholes left by my father, I'm at once reminded of my mother's opposing gifts. Since childhood, I had been deemed her carbon-copy. We share the same face, the same smile, the same trio of moles staked in the corner of our left eye, and the same everyday expressions that are oftentimes hardest to hide. As a result, I had taken pride in how much I look like my mother, not only for her beauty, but for the bridge built between her appearance and an affirmation of my gender identity. If I looked like my mother, then I looked like a woman. I *passed*.

We're all passing in some way. Whether it be on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, socio-economics—or even relational dynamics between friends and loved ones—there is always an element of performance as society boxes us into the most convenient binary. Before long, I started to understand just how loaded this concept of passing can become. Regardless of what we pass as, there's forever this notion of who, exactly, we're passing for. Who constructed this need to perform in the first place? The answer is usually tucked in the oppressor's back pocket. For Black folk, white passing is determined by white-

supremacy. For trans folk, cis-respectability. For women and femmes, the ever-present patriarchy. I yearned to rethink not only for myself, but for my community at-large, how we see each other, and why—for so long—we have named ourselves using the master's tongue. Even still, it is through this discomfort that marginalized folks have reimaged new realities, reclaiming language as a weapon to be used against ivory towers.

But, of course, things are never that simple. We've grown used to watching our present drown in past lament while dancing in future melody. Attempting to record time's rivalry proves to be yet another difficulty, knowing it hard to write something on a continuum. This leads me here, typing words as wormholes in an effort to sift through my own timestamp. As I sit naked in front of an air conditioner losing its power, I watch my fingertips grow drunk off the summer solstice. I write circles around the longest day of the year, with thoughts lit by the slow burn of my own gender story. A larger narrative unfolds once the smoke clears, illuminating the path toward my iPhone's hidden folder of about fifty nudes. My attention turns to one image in particular, where I kneel before a mirror settled gently against a bedroom wall. My eyes trace the coils of hair running past my thighs, trialing the groin before dispersing into pockets of unseen skin. With tits ready for battle, my nipples pierce through the camera's flash and into the reflection before them. I unapologetically bask in the golden hour on full display, well aware that my existence was never to be apologized for. If anything, there is a great sense of gratitude, watching the surrounding shadows wrap themselves in equal parts power, pleasure, and *Black Trans Presence*.



Rosie Davila

CAMPAIGN NONVIOLENCE 