

ang(st)

the feminist body zine



ISSUE I / APRIL 2019

angst: anxiety/ frustration

ang (अंग): body/ part/ member

Rebecca Norman (she/her)
Aishwarya Javalgekar (she/her)
Lara Yildirim (she/her)
Saesha Kini (she/her)
Mansi Shanbag (she/her)
Emily Bruusgaard (she/her)
Supriya Rakesh (she/her)

Creator/Editor
Aishwarya Javalgekar

Cover Art Illustrator
Rebecca Norman

Your lips taste like wine

He drinks me in kisses
butterflies laid gently
on my arms my cheeks
my lips
taste like wine
because I am wine
in this moment
the drink and I become one
red
liquid
drunk
consumed
in large rapid gulps
my lips
like cheap wines
are never worth the wait
will never drink wine
again.

Aishwarya Javalgekar

XXXL

I feel my nipple graze the itch fabric.
I can't speak today or they'll see
the several locked buttons to undo on
my dyke stained plaid shirt. I like
to drown in waves of excess material,
rather than in a pit of your prick
fingers itching at the red boundary line.
I finger the tight collar till I can
breathe, fabric touches my nipple again,
my shirt's first button chokes me
soft enough, after some time I can't feel
those breaths taken from my grasp.

Lara Yildirim

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

This Body of mine was defined for me/ The day I was pronounced a boy/ Spent twenty-four years of my life thereafter/ Struggling to play to this lie.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

Was told early on I had a fat Body/ BMI shooting through the roof/ They said I couldn't compete in this Body/ I skipped all my try-outs, stayed aloof.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

My Body only accessed boy spaces/ Boy restrooms boy seats boy everything/ Femininity became a sin for this Body/ 'You can't wear a dress' my learning.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

Puberty made a bloody mess of this Body/ My voice deepened, I barely had breasts on this Body/ Yet everyone around me seemed proud of this Body/ Got me tailor-made suits to man up this Body.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

As I grew I received a new tag for my Body/ My voice, my comportment were gay for a 'bloke'/ I found willing gay men ready to bang this Body/ And bullies who saw me a butt of their jokes.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

Tried everything they said would bring peace to this Body/ Shed the pounds, picked the weights, fought them like the boys do/ None of these lifted the pain off my Body/ I drifted even further from the truth.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

I finally came out as a trans woman/ On my own terms defined my Body, my soul/ The world was torn up in confusion/ Thought my Body too unladylike in mold.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

It relentlessly kept policing my Body/ Laughed off its act of disobedience/ Shunned it from all female spaces/ Forced treatments to make it appealing.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

Its pursuit to define my Body shan't cease/ Its standards unreal shall undermine me/ Even if I pass muster in attempts to please/ This world shall persist to define me.

(This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define)

As I take a long look in the mirror/ Its surface reflecting my non-conforming outline/ I say to myself both loud and clear / This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define. This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define. This Body is Mine, Not The World's to Define.

CACT(I)

I asked my mother woefully,
If I was truly beautiful.
She smiled softly and said to me,
She thought my pros were bountiful,
My resolve was immovable,
My vocal chords were musical,
My manners were suitable,
Good conversation with me was usual,
As a daughter I was dutiful,
Sure, I could be juvenile,
Sometimes my thoughts inscrutable,
But my pros were irrefutable.
And if I thought I was beautiful,
With my ample body,
My frame so asymmetrical,
My hair too big,
My ears too little,
My fingers so stubby,
My weight immovable,
Then maybe, just maybe,
All my pros were confusional,
Because all I was,
In that moment, with all my flaws,
Was purely delusional.

Mansi Shanbag

St. Patrick Station

The doors peel open and shove us out
onto a cracked and bleeding platform
water leaking from the ceiling
edging slowly in the moist and muddy
prints from a thousand other feet

I follow Trisha's green parka
While someone's dirty Kleenex balled into mush
is stuck to my boot and
the escalator is broken again
I sweat and puff in my old down coat
up the crowded sodden stairs
pulling loose my scarf
stand panting at the top
A muted curse behind
reminds me to move aside from the swelling tide below
A slow old woman blocking the way
I could not find my boots this morning
And Trisha moving me along
I feel the leak and my squelching, cold toes

There is relief in the sharp tang shrilling down from the street
everywhere that briny smell of puddling snow

Near the booth a man is playing the violin
He is wearing a red muffler tied jauntily
He will swear he is a Gypsy
and that his great-grandmother read the fortune of a Czar
but mostly he plays Bolero badly
and sometimes a tango
if you ask him nicely

Today music bullies the scarred walls
threatens the smeared glass of the ticket-taker's booth
and the blackened dripping tiles
the dirty puddles of slush and salt

I am going to see another doctor
one of many
who will poke and prod and ask imperative questions
without inflection or emotion
not even impatience
but look through my wrinkled frame
And porcelain cage
to the Fate that lives behind my eyes
She will of course pretend not to see Atropos sitting there
but send me for an ultrasound
and a nurse will have to delicately wrestle my unwilling arms
from my dress
another fat old woman in her underwear
and another round of tests

For a moment the music as it bounces
off the muffled heaving bodies pouring between the walls
strident in the sea-green smell of melting snow
in the sharp cacophony of nearly spring

fills my shallow bones with fierce joy
soaring strings in a broken down station and
a broken down old woman in her late husband's rubber boots

Mother please says Trisha
And again we join the tide.

Emily Bruusgaard

Affirmations of a Living Body

Squealing babies. Squabbling siblings.
Intoxicated friends bickering over life philosophies.
Tingling in my fingers. A pounding heart.
Dentist tugging at my tooth. Left cheek going slowly numb.
Cars honking, skidding shrilly against concrete.
Birds squawking in their make-believe trees.
Friends catching up. Niceties. Memories. Clicking pictures for Instagram.
Food and how it tastes. Gut-sapping spice. Sickening sweetness. Eating till I'd burst.
A dark room. Grasping at tiny slivers of sunlight.
Riding ahead. Trying to ignore the angel of death that follows.

Supriya Rakesh

Our bodies speak. Are you listening?

ang(st)

Intersectional. Transnational. Diverse. Inclusive.
Body-positive. Sex-positive.
Queer. Non-conforming.
Feminist.

Created and Edited
by
Aishwarya Javalgekar

Find us on Twitter @angstfzine