

**RISING**



**UP  
DOULA**

**WHAT**

**CO-CREATED BY  
WHAT WOULD AN  
HIV DOULA DO?  
+ ONE ARCHIVES  
FOUNDATION**

**DOES AN**

**UPRISING  
DOULA**

**DO?**

**EDITED BY  
ABDUL-ALIY A MUHAMMAD  
+ PATO HEBERT**

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# FOREWORD

On January 6, 2021, as this zine was being designed, democratic organizers in Georgia woke up celebrating their hard won victory of winning two house seats in the US Senate. Later that afternoon, white supremacists and others, disrupted the U.S. Congress's confirmation of the Electoral College, claiming they were protesters.

This led the collaborative editing and production team to slow down our zine distribution process. Since the summer of 2020, our work had already been deeply informed by our experiences related to the pandemic, police violence, and other factors. Amidst the violence in Washington, D.C. we found ourselves reflecting anew on how the terms uprising and protest get used and can circulate. One of the main ideas of this zine is that there is no firm definition of uprising, and yet, we can also say that what happened at the Capitol on January 6 was not the actions of a protest led by the dispossessed, the othered, and the marginalized. Rather, what transpired was a coordinated and violent disruption carried out by white people with grievances, privilege and assistance from elected officials, former military members, local cops, and others. That wasn't an uprising. Like a lynch mob, it was a violent spectacle that not only ended in the death of five people, but was also intended as a message to everyone else.

Abdul-Aliy A Muhammad, Pato Hebert,  
+ Theodore (ted) Kerr, January 2021

# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT DOES AN

## UP<sup>RISING</sup> DOULA

## DO?

**ABDUL-ALIY A MUHAMMAD + PATO HEBERT**

October 2, 2020

We understand a doula to be someone who holds space for others during times of transition. In our rage and resourcefulness, our hope and our hurting, our conviction and our care, we hold space for the transition that an uprising might be.

We can also safeguard and shepherd seeds, helping to cultivate conditions for change. A doula minds demands and dangers, needs and the nascent. A doula asks. A doula listens. A doula can be quiet. A doula can scream. Doulas can use our hands, networks, traditions, skills, phone chargers, stimulus checks, leftovers, voices. A doula can lose their voice, happily hoarse with the recourse of call and response. A doula can sing, and a song can doula you through transitions.

A doula can give water and masks, Zoom massages and knowing nods, harm-reduced healing touch, delivered meals and transferred coin, a couch. A doula can be scared,



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## WHAT DOES AN UPRISING DOULA DO?

sick, skeptical, believing, embarrassed, ecstatic, evolving, humble(d), joyful, spent, rejuvenated, determined, deliberate, irreverent, innovative, interconnected. A doula recognizes and honors limits. A doula can offer reassurance and rest, replenishment and release. A doula dances with uncertainty, admits to not knowing. A doula is a formulation, a formation, a praxis, an action, an opportunity to give and to grow. Solidarity and love are doulas.

With this in mind, then, we know, we feel, we witness how an uprising doula would sit with the manifold complexities of the moment, in the love and solidarity, and not only. An uprising doula asks more questions than can be answered, and collectively pushes for a less brutal future. Why? Because we have to. Because this past year we have seen unprecedented shifts in how we move through the world, precipitated by the emergence of COVID-19 and the continuation of state-sanctioned violence and white supremacy levied against Black, Brown and Indigenous people, which reached another moment of unified rage. Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Manny Ellis and Dijon Kizzee are a few of the people who have been killed. We value them and the vitality with which they lived.

In uprisings we say their names.

But we have had enough. Again. The have-nots are also those who have had enough, over and over and over and over and over again. We are constantly told to bear witness to our own demise. But an adequate and healthy response to this has been to rise up against the structures that would have us die before those who have claimed capitalist power admit their own culpability.

This year's uprisings have modeled masked togetherness and safety amid the plagues of racism and the coronavirus, class inequity and police violence. Uprisings are visceral and visionary action against what only seems impossible. Uprisings can be simultaneous yet highly localized, shaped by different formations and demands, tactics and tensions, even as we inspire and conspire across time and space. Uprisings ripple. An uprising might mobilize the underground and the electorate, the digital and the material, the streets and the sheets, the first timer and the oldhead, the intergenerational and the future.

We are also learning that uprisers – and uprisings – need to sleep. Hydrate. Eat. Write. Shower. Shut up. Shout. Strategize. Celebrate. Cum. Cry. An uprisher – and an uprising – might have to make room for maneuvers, tenderness, horror, candor, rupture, indignation, revelation, imagination. We also know from our own experience that not everyone can be in the streets or in jail, in public or on camera. Yet everyone can contribute in their own unique ways to an uprising. Change has many rhythms, forms and scales. We can help each other rethink and reshape our shared relationship to resources, our commitment and accountability to mutual care, our very understanding of power. And ourselves.

In the place and time of uprising, one of the things that doulas can ask is what does an uprising need, and what does this tell us about our roles? The collective, as stated above, understands a doula as someone who holds space during times of transition. And isn't an uprising a series of transitions that begin long before any of us may notice, and last long after many of us might stop paying attention? Uprising is a collective process over time that happens because of us, through us, and around us. Without being too human-centric, and keeping in mind that "us" is a collective

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## WHAT DOES AN UPRISING DOULA DO?

term, we wonder, can we uprise ourselves, each other, an institution? Must we? To complicate matters further – and make more space for consideration – we want to pause here and ask: What are the limits of doula work? How do we make space for boundaries? How do we hold space for the fact that an uprising is loud, public, and includes bodies and souls on the line, but can also be private, intimate, internal, and maybe almost unseeable?

Early in our process, the editorial team had a vibrant and vulnerable conversation online. We were in Philly, New York and LA. We scraped against the intense violence and loss that we ourselves have experienced in relationship to the state's monstrous machinations. Our sharing was raw, revealing, loving. We made extensive notes in the chat. And then forgot to save them as we each zoomed off to our next commitment.

What does an uprising doula do? We begin anew.

And we ask others, “How are you? What do you need? Are you resting and playing? What might you be able to contribute?”

This zine is the third in our series. The first two had us holding space for COVID and bodies: **What Does a COVID-19 Doula Do?** (April 2020) and **In Our Bodies: A Zine About Pleasure, Intimacy, and Reality in 2020** (August 2020). As summer's uprisings mobilized us, we imagined a third zine and, working with ONE Archives Foundation, prepared a call for submissions. We crafted a series of prompts to pose to community contributors. The aim was to spur conversation about uprisings, highlighting our often

unspoken and disparate definitions of the word, assumed impacts, and various goals. The prompts were as follows:

- ¶ What Does a Collective Grief Doula Do?
- ¶ What Does a Doula Do with Anti-Black Racism?
- ¶ What Does a Doula Do with Burnout?
- ¶ What Does a Doula Do with Fear?
- ¶ What Does a Doula Do with Rage?
- ¶ What Does a Doula Do with the Construct of Time?
- ¶ What Does a Horny Doula Do?
- ¶ What Does a Hungry Doula Do?
- ¶ What Does an Abolitionist Doula Do?
- ¶ What Does an Anti-Capitalist Doula Do?

Some of our invitations went unanswered due to illness, another due to someone working so hard there wasn't time or room to respond, yet another because text messages simply hadn't gone through. Some folks were just exhausted. Others are part of collectives and generously took up an invitation to share their work. What we know is that this zine is full of brilliance, vulnerability, beauty, and pain. Yet, it alone does not contain the answers to any of the questions. What you see and feel and read in the zine is just as valuable as what is missing, what has gone unshared, and what the lacks and absences tell us about each other, ourselves, and the worlds we live in.

Uprisings are exhilarating, messy, magical, hard. Crafting this Introduction, as part of crafting this zine, has been too. It eluded us. We fumbled, erased and rewrote it over and over. We confided in each other our rage, doubts and exhaustion, leaned on our collaboration, camaraderie and care. We continue to lose people. So many people.

Something that is clear to us though is that for an uprising to succeed, demands for better must be taken up at multiple levels, in multiple formations and across time. Doulas have our part to play in this process. As systems die, our collective rage, when shared, can help us survive, until we can get to a place in which, together, we can dream into existence the world that we want to inhabit. This is why it is important to consider the many ways we help each other move through the transitions of upheaval.

In rising up, we doulas give and we scheme, we stumble and we dream, we err and we learn, we grind and we churn, we post and we toast, we bawl and sometimes brawl. And through it all we hold space for one another, as well as those we don't yet know and may never see.

1.

# DOULA DIRECTIVES, ROUTES TO UPRISING

ALEXANDRA JUHASZ  
ALEXANDRAJUHASZ.COM

September 15, 2020

Dear Abdul-Aliy and Pato,

First off, Pato, I hope you're feeling a little better today. Please do let me know the results of your latest lab work when you have the will and energy to share. I know you can find the resolve and strength you need to endure these latest bodily affronts, as you have for the last so many months.

Friends, I've been contemplating your prompts for the Uprising Zine all morning. Your words have been humming in the background as I read the paper, have a coffee, watch the wind flow against my white sheer curtains, and go online to buy my Mom a large print book since her cataracts have gotten so bad during lockdown.

Which prompt will call to me? There are so many. Each one inspires its own potential world with connected people and feminist processes. But honestly, I keep getting stuck. Not because of this overabundance of possibility but actually because of the hard thought and real living experiments—the Doula directives—that are drawn for me by these wondrous prompts that you've offered as routes to Uprising: grief, anti-black racism, burnout, fear, rage, the construct of time, horniness, hunger, prison abolition, anti-capitalism. I am touched, moved, inspired by them all.

But here's the rub. How might these feelings, these ways of being in COVID and America, necessarily, systemically lead to uprising, as opposed to say, sleep, depression, isolation, research, teaching, art-making, numbness, disassociation?

Might it be the Doulas' very function to support, guide, and inspire this transformation from necessary and deserved states of our small holed-up-being into practices of collective action and insurrection?

That seems really hard. And also right. And, wow I feel sad with just a tinge of potential.

Why potential? If I was to really be part of this—something as big and important as doula-ing an uprising—I can imagine no better enclave than our own. Which is not to say that there aren't other magical collectives, political associations, queer co-ops that can and will help move us from our private, distanced, digital suffering and healing into public action—whatever the election results, whenever the vaccine. Rather, it is to understand that in this pandemic, in this miserable nation—as the trees burn and the citizens march, as the fascists congregate and the police murder, as the wind blows through my curtains—you are my worthy allies; we can Doula each other into something larger.

So, I will gladly be on a Zoom call, or probably calls, where I listen and learn from both of you, as well as the many other Doulas, as we share and perhaps invent, in our wisdom, fear, honesty, vulnerability, and commitment, methods to move ourselves, together, into a riotous, righteous public. I know that uprisings happen with and because of other people, and with processes and goals of care.

Thank you for letting me ponder and hope.

With love and thanks,

Alex

# 2. THERE WILL BE ENOUGH.

**ARIELLE JULIA BROWN**  
@RELJULIA



The trees above what should still be my family's land in Montezuma, Georgia. The trees are full of turkey vultures—gathering, resting, preparing for feasting. A collective grief Doula, she induces recollection of memory and debts.





3.

## WOMEN WITH AIDS

### ARTIST UNKNOWN

ACT UP WOMEN'S CAUCUS FLYER, 1994.

JUDY SISNEROS ACT UP/LOS ANGELES

RECORDS, ONE ARCHIVES AT USC LIBRARIES.

This uncredited image appeared on a 1994 ACT UP Women's Caucus flyer. WWHIVDD curators came across it in the Judy Sisneros ACT UP/Los Angeles Records at ONE Archives at the USC Libraries as they were researching for Metanoia: Transformation Through AIDS Archives and Activism.

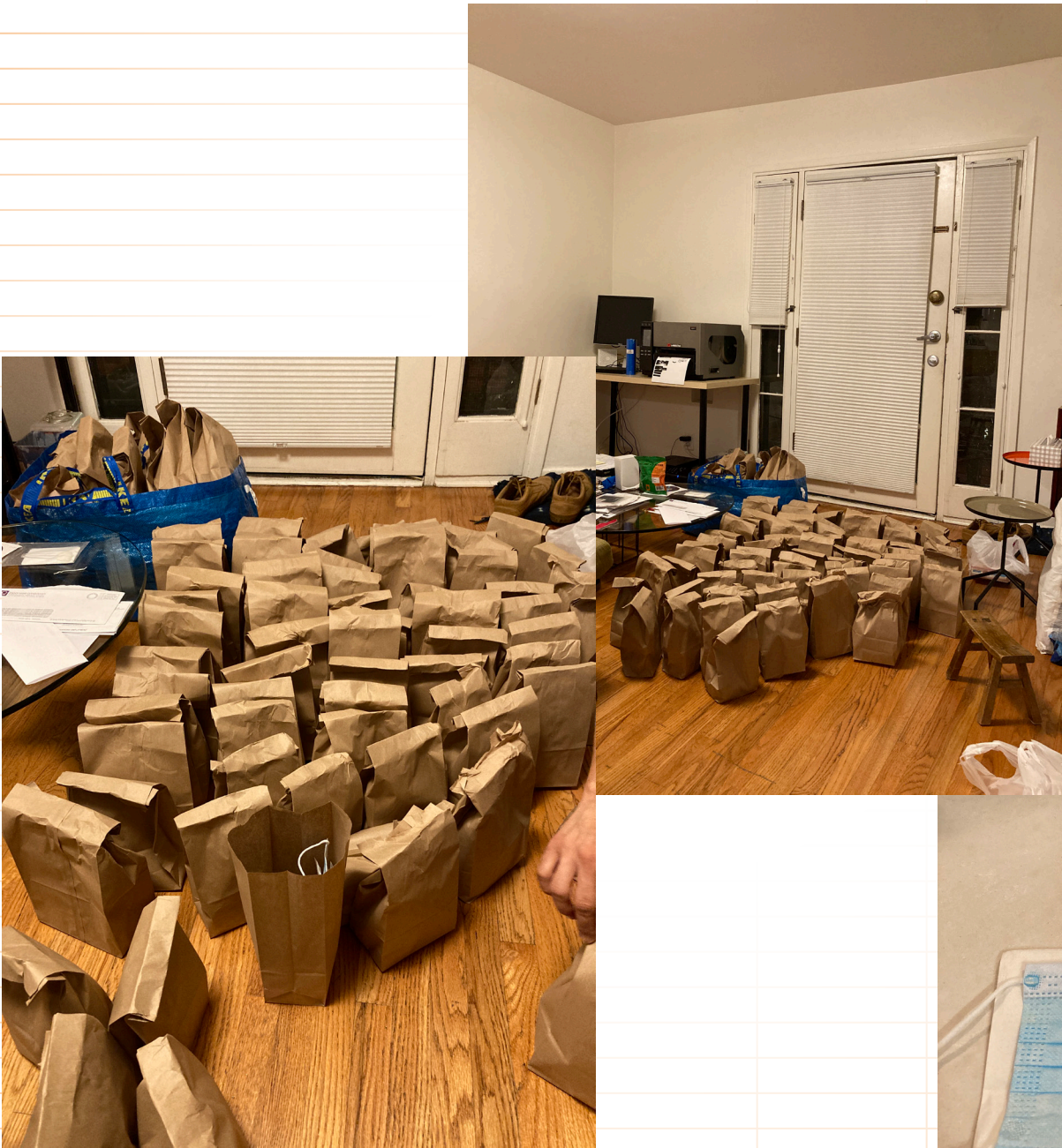
4.

# WE MASK UP

AYA SEKO + DANNY RUELAS

On June 2nd, almost a week after the uprisings started, we ran out and bought masks. We were afraid of losing our friends to COVID-19 and the state. Acting from a place of abundance is something we talk about a lot in Color Coded, the collective we are both a part of. We learn to embody through practice. We practice together. We invested \$300 today to protect each other and invest in ourselves, our family of protesters and organizers. The bags included snacks and a mask and were distributed through our car window, because our pre-existing conditions wouldn't allow us to be on the street. We mask up because surveillance is violence and COVID-19 is spreading. This is a marathon and we need each other.





5.

# BLACK RESILIENCE FUND

**CAMERON WHITTEN**  
@CAMERONWHITTEN

When I first heard about the murder of George Floyd, I braced myself.

I've been a Black Lives Matter activist since the birth of the term Black Lives Matter. Given the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and most especially Eric Garner, I didn't expect much to happen. A couple of hashtags, maybe a rally or two, and of course, the ephemeral thoughts and prayers. But nothing more.

To my surprise, a Facebook post I made the Sunday after Floyd's death struck a nerve within the soul of Portland. The Black Resilience Fund was launched, and within 28 days, over \$1 million was raised to provide Black Portlanders immediate relief from financial burdens such as groceries, unpaid bills and medical expenses. We also launched a mutual aid network, which mobilized to support over 3,000 Black Portlanders by delivering food boxes, performing services such as yard work, and providing household essentials like diapers and furniture.



This magic became possible thanks to the powerful leadership of our Co-founder, Salomé Chimuku. With our lived experiences as Black and Queer survivors of trauma, we worked together to create a trauma-informed approach within the Fund. We welcomed the entire Black diaspora to participate – elder, immigrant, LGBTQ2S+, multiracial – all shades and shapes of Black. Every Black Portlander who has applied for funds is interviewed by another Black Portlander, building community among peers during some of the most isolating times.

One of our core guiding values is that everyone – including our staff, volunteers, and participants – is worthy to give and receive love and connection.

Our work is only just beginning. We have survived 400 years of injustice in America, and every day our Black neighbors must endure the shockwaves of police violence, wealth inequality, the school-to-prison pipeline, and more. As we work to dismantle these systems of oppression, the Fund has demonstrated that we can and must breathe new life into our communities.

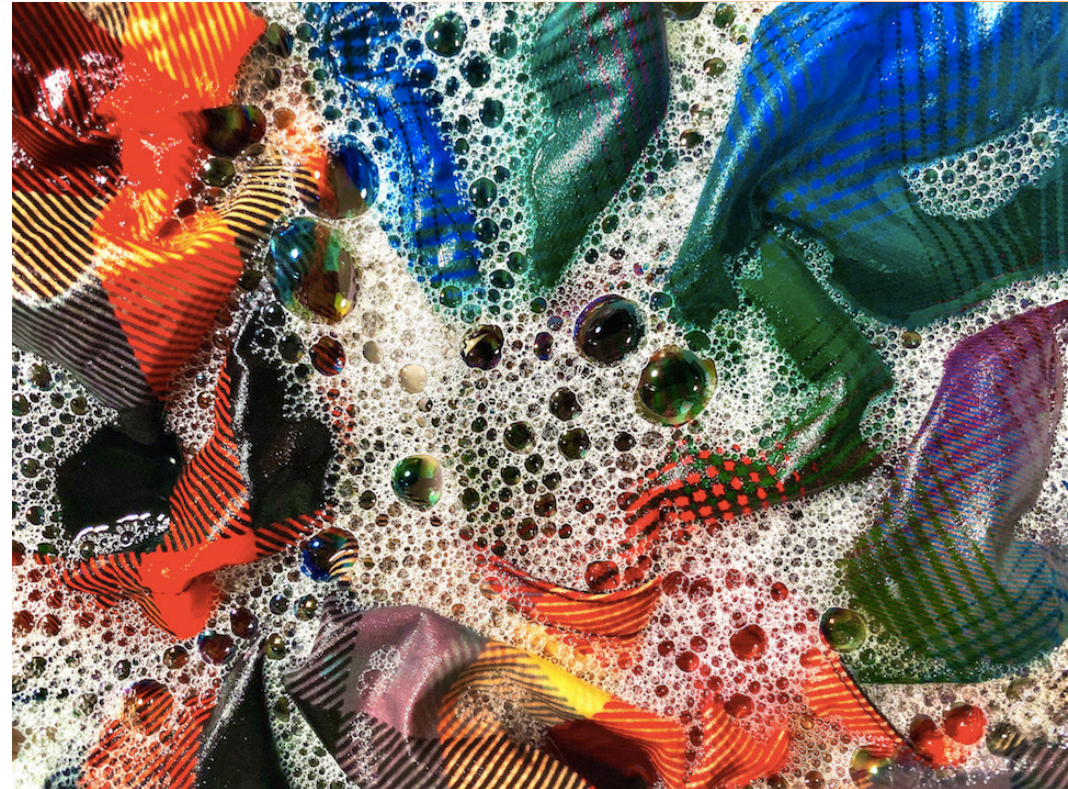
By working together, the Black Resilience Fund has served as a beacon for the rest of the country, sending a powerful message of transformation, hope, and healing. Despite Oregon's racist history, I have renewed belief that we are fighting for a new future where everyone can thrive.



6.

**WASHING  
MY COVID  
MASK 4 MASK  
4 MASK 4  
MASK 4 MASK  
4 MASK 4  
MASK**

**CHRISTOPHER N. FERRERIA**  
CHRISTOPHERFERRERIA.COM



7.

# THIS TIME

**EMILY BASS**

EMILYBASS.CLUB

Among the lifestyle-oriented media coughed up by the COVID pandemic, none bothers me as much as the coverage of “time blindness.” I am bothered because the term is borrowed from neuroatypical folks for whom it is organic, part of an identity that can be a source of struggle and pride, and offered up to anyone who is having trouble with the sameness of days —many, though not all of whom are struggling because they have the privilege of working from home.

I believe in time-blindness insofar as I believe in the anguish of isolation, the work of relapse, convalescence, perseverance in the face of exhaustion, symptoms, anxiety, rage. But this term is not adequate for the sense of time that has emerged. To be blind is not to fail to sense, but to be acutely aware of the surrounding world in myriad other ways. I might embrace the term if that were what it was intended to mean, but it is not. In the “explainer” from Stat, the “report” from Wall Street Journal, the chirpy article from the New York Times assuring readers’ that “it’s real,” the term time-blind



is a needle of Novocain, an invitation to become, or remain, numb.

That's how they want us. Scrolling for sweatpants, desk chairs, task lamps, window boxes. Capitalism steers the hand that scribes these think pieces. Touting time blindness is a tactic for sowing doubt. I know this to be true because sometimes the sources slip up. The Wall Street Journal, for instance, describes the problem of telling time in COVID like this: "The death toll is a clock." As though that were a new thing, as though the death toll were not the metronomic beat of white supremacy since settlers arrived in this unceded land.

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In March, I began singing every day. In late June, I stopped. In between, I sang a song every day in my kitchen to my phone. I sent the song to two friends, who do not know each other. At first I sang songs I knew by heart and almost all of those songs were protest songs.

I learned some of the songs I sang at a Quaker wilderness camp. We lifted the rafters off our barn-like main lodge with "Amazing Grace," "Harriet Tubman Song," "Nicolia" by Holly Near, a song about Seneca Falls by one of our counselors. We sang and then we sat in silence facing a ridge of the Green Mountains while our bodies vibrated with collective song. We were divining rods and I thought then, at that camp of women and girls, that we had found the swift-running water that would clean the world of its hatred of our bodies. We sang a river of strength, love for one another, loud voices, strong odors, unbreakable friendships and iron-clad wills. One of the people to whom I sent my daily songs is a friend I made at that camp.

More of the songs came from the Yiddish school I attended on the weekends from ages eight to eighteen: a secular, leftist shoestring establishment, splintered off of the Workman's Circle shule, squatting in the unused classrooms of the Little Red SchoolHouse and its sister high school, Elizabeth Irwin. We sang the oom-pah-pah socialist anthems of the workers and the World War II partisan resistance, songs about tailors, immigrants, machine shops, armed resistance and saboteurs. We sang other peoples' songs, too. We sang "Nkosi sikelel' Afrika", the anthem of the African National Congress and "Follow the Drinking Gourd," the song of American slaves used to share directions about how to reach the underground railroad.

By the time Ahmaud Aubrey was murdered, I had run out of songs I knew by heart. I thought I had run out of protest songs. For Aubrey, I sang Erasure. "Give a little respect." I sang it because I blasted it in my own headphones when I ran without fear in Prospect Park. I watched the music video to find the lyrics, saw two men in a foxhole who loved each other in a world that did not want them to. "That you gimme no, that you gimme no, that you gimme no." The refrain was always filled with despair.

I sang the Eagles, "Take it to the Limit," and was in high school again, listening to my father sing along to a vinyl LP spinning on the turntable he'd built himself, and was in the present, wondering how many days I had left to see him alive on this earth. I sang "If You Leave," from the Pretty in Pink soundtrack, and was having my first orgasm again. I sang John Prine and Cindi Lauper and Four Non-Blondes and Black Eyed Peas. When I sang "Nightswimming," I serenaded my 19-year-old self, doubled over with depression all through my sophomore year. Each day's song marked , folding it in, bending it towards the dark horizon. In the chorus, a return

to sadness, grief, fear, but also explosions of pleasure and joy. I felt things. Every song is a protest song if the intent, in singing, is to resist.

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Western musical notation uses a “time signature” to specify how many beats are in a given measure. A beat can also be called a pulse, a measure can also be called a bar. When the shut-down began, I became as careful as I have ever been about how much and how often I drank. Bars are found in cages, too.

Western musical notation is not the only way to capture music on paper. Nor is it adequate or well suited for many forms. The “Time Unit Box System” employs a grid; each square houses the emblem of the instrument and can capture, too, its sound. Developed for African polyrhythms, the system puts the body in the box, indicating how the hand strikes the drum. Slap, open tone, and so on.

At my Yiddish school, our teacher showed us photographs of the death camps, piles of bodies stacked like logs. She laid a stack of eight by ten photographs on a desk one afternoon and we picked them up, then put them down. That same teacher had a voice like honey, sweet and huge. Every song she sang was different than when anyone else sang it.

Western musical notation fails to capture the things the voice can do, the way that it can shape the same words utterly differently. Musicologists and scholars of hip hop and rap take note of the fact that the Western time signature is ill-suited to capturing the subtleties and savviness of the voice.

My teacher’s niece was and is one of my best friends. When the weather warmed during lockdown, my family and I walked over to the house where she and her family live and sat in lawn chairs below their living room window. She would leave snacks for us on our seats, but we could not come inside to refill our water bottle or use the bathroom. To her own dismay and self-excoriation, she was also too afraid to let her teenage children go to the protests against the white supremacist state that we lived in and benefited from, the nightly vigils racing through the streets calling out the names of the Black women and men who had been murdered by the state.

This summer, the tambourines and car horns told of seven pm and an alarm blaring from my cell phone called 8 pm curfew for several nights running. The perpetrators of the society in which the syndemics of COVID and white supremacy flourish would appreciate it very much if we accepted that time blindness was real. They do not want a world in which time is marked by communal noise for people risking their lives inside hospitals and nursing homes, the drumbeats and Doppler-ed shouts of approaching protest, or the whining curfew-alert tone of a city whose murderous police faced and feared rebellion. Many of us in cities are sharing more marked segments of our days with strangers than we ever have before. Those that tell us we are “time blind” do so in order to distract us from this collective experience and the action that it could engender.

I did not attend the protests because I was racing to finish a book about America’s war on AIDS, a war which found support among members of Congress after the head of the US Agency for International Development said that Africans could not take AIDS medications because they did not have watches and used the sun and the moon to tell time. I knew

THIS TIME

precisely how much time I needed to do the work of telling the story; I wondered, every time my chest tightened, if I would have enough time to finish my life’s work. I had never in my life been farther from losing track of time.

Before finally taking action on AIDS, President Bush declared that America had never had colonies and therefore was free of the guilt of European countries whose aid was tied to guilt. That is time blind. Not this time.

We all know what day it is. It is a cell in the polyrhythmic grid that is the time signature of the death hunger of the modern world. We are not supposed to notice what our bodies already have figured out. We are supposed to diagnose our bodies’ knowledge as dysfunction. “We have lost our landmarks,” the researchers say. “Who put them there to begin with?” I want to know. There have always been songs and there always will be songs that contain directions that do not rely on the landmarks made by white men.

This time requires new signatures, new pulses, new measures, new ways of sensing what is passing, coming, returning. One night when I cannot fall asleep, I imagine the time signature for these days written out in that grid that captures inflection, action and multiple voices. I imagine squares and symbols and the score to this song:

WHAT DOES AN UP<sup>RISING</sup> DOULA DO?

	o !	▪ //	⇒
+			≠
	▪ *	♦	♦ \$

- That death is imminent
- o That white supremacy is killing us
- ♦ That my privilege may save me this time
- ⇒ That my privilege may not save everyone I love
- +
- ≠ That knowing a song is not solidarity
- !
- // = like a blow to the chest
- \* = through barely parted lips
- \$ = from the angry red slash between my legs
- \$ = while sobbing and scrolling through my phone

On the day I sang “Take on Me,” I sang it twice, as both a pop song and a ballad. “You’re all the things I’ve to remember,” I sang. “I’ll be gone in a day or two,” I sang, reaching for and failing to find a keening note true to the tune.



8.

# RE: 24 HOURS

**EVIE SNAX**  
@SLUTSNAX

> On Aug 20, 2020 at 7:37 PM, Humbledog wrote:

Message Details:

Name: The Professor

Date Field: Aug 20, 2020

Length of date: Arrangement

Incall: ✓ Checked

Outcall: ✓ Checked

Message:

I'd like Exclusivity to be your DominantTop - your wolf  
How did you find me?: The universe brought you to me

RE: 24 HOURS

22

WHAT DOES AN UP<sup>RISING</sup> DOULA DO?

>> On Aug 21, 2020 at 1:17 PM, Jacuzzi-cochie wrote:

Professor,

exclusivity is reserved for the worthy  
i find you to be continually worthy, and more  
in fact i quite enjoy your company, and more  
24 hours on the house; consider it a sampler  
48 hours on the house; consider it a platter  
9 days on the house; consider it my claiming  
15 days on the house; consider it done.  
you have me. i'm yours. you're mine.  
still the feeling of you slipping in and out of me

with love,

Your Submissive Your Whore Your Lamb Your  
Mistress

>>> On Aug 22, 2020 at 7:17 PM, Humbledog wrote:

my submissive  
You're messin with my head  
I feel your flesh and I smell you  
My mouth on your skin  
Slipping my fingers into your wet pussy  
Oh Snax  
You're eating me up!  
Making me so wet for you!  
I'm gonna fuck you til I make you pregnant  
With my baby  
A cat  
Because you're an alien  
Alien fuckdoll

I breathe on your neck barely enough to stir you  
I press my belly on your lower back and wrap my hand  
around the flesh of your thigh  
And I feel your wetness  
Even in sleep you are wet for me  
I move my hand to grab the flesh of your delicious ass  
You give a little moan as I grab your hair  
But I don't feel tender  
I whisper in your ear  
"I'm going to fuck you"  
You breathe in deep and I slip my thumb up your ass  
You breathe in deep  
I pull your hair harder  
We barely move  
Laying still physically, yet moving mountains of energy

And I fuck you like this for hours, for days, for years,  
for ancient times of knowing each other  
Because the search has ended and we have found  
each other on the path  
I am inside you now  
Feeling your heartbeat on my thumb  
My submissive  
Your heart beats for me

9.

# WHEN YOU ASK ME, “HOW ARE YOU?”

**JARED GILES**

[MEDIUM.COM/@JAREDFGILES](https://medium.com/@JAREDFGILES)

When you ask me, “How are you?”, I need you to understand that George Floyd took his last breath on May 25, 2020, my 28th birthday.

I need you to understand that every day I watch my Black brothers and sisters go to work during a pandemic because this country deems their jobs more essential than their lives.

I need you to understand that Breonna Taylor was killed in her apartment on March 13th in Louisville, KY, my hometown. And that for the past five months, I have watched my city be beaten down as it calls for justice that may never come.

I need you to understand that after six months of anxiety, despair, and isolation, all I sought was to run away from everything and everyone that brought me stress. To go somewhere I could forget the world I live in and find peace. But I didn't. Rather, I couldn't.

“I’m worried about you traveling by yourself. You never know what these cops will do.” The relentless violence against Black men and Black women in the United States concerned my mother. She feared for my life, and as much as I wanted to tell her I would be okay, I knew no one could guarantee my safety.

The evidence is clear:

1. On May 23rd, 28-year-old Maurice Gordon was killed in New Jersey during a routine traffic stop (as it has always been routine to kill Black men as we navigate our daily lives).
2. On May 27th, Tony McDade was killed in his apartment in Tallahassee.
3. On June 12th, Rayshard Brooks was shot in the back and killed in Atlanta after police found him asleep in his car.
4. On August 23rd, Jacob Blake was shot in the back seven times in front of his three children after trying to break up a fight.

So instead, I protested. I attended the March on Washington to rejuvenate my spirit and, while indulging in my hope with cautious optimism, I learned of Chadwick Boseman’s passing. He was my hero. He was our king. And with his passing, “hope” became something distant and intangible.

\*\*\*

You must understand that when you ask me “How are you?”

I am trying.

I am trying to carry myself with the grace and courage and patience necessary to survive in an environment that devalues my life and calls for my death. I am trying to find peace. I am trying to fight back.

But, at this moment, I am not okay.

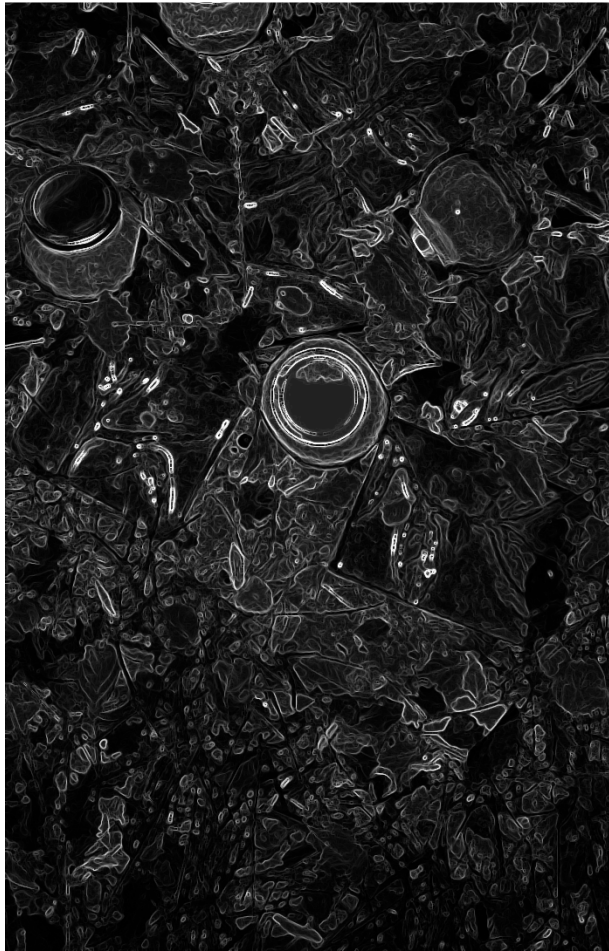
10.

**IN THE CONTEXT  
OF AN UPRISING:  
A SICK AND/OR  
DISABLED DOULA...**

**JD DAVIDS**

CRANKYQUEER.ORG

*In the context of an  
uprising A sick and/or  
disabled doula...*



*Question Posed via Internet:*

Posited in the context of an uprising,  
the Q was also posed within  
the context of the creation of an uprising zine.

The question posed as such was thus:

In the context of an uprising,  
what does a sick and/or disabled doula do?

Full Responses: in text and images at:  
[bit.ly/sickdisableddoula](http://bit.ly/sickdisableddoula)

These Pages:

*Excerpts of Submissions  
in response to the Question  
+ an excerpt from Care Work by  
Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha:  
an interview with Stacey Milbern Park,  
disability justice “powerhouse” and  
queer femme of color who birthed  
the language of disability doulaship,  
who passed away this May.*

*Photo by Summer Diegel*

*Q posed + As collected, collaged by JD Davids*

They would say a doula who lives with XXX is simply a doula, that is a person who holds space and nurtures. Their lived experience may or may not make them a bearer of trauma, a person who can hold others' trauma with ease. But what is true for is as doulas who live with a disease or a disability is our ability to thrive... Prioritize their own care first. Living with XXX means that i can easily disregard my own care when caught up in the struggle. And when that happens its a fast track to feeling spent. So, an uprising doula who lives with XXX must be gentle with themselves, balancing the outward energy with the inner one. A yin yan that's very personal and weighted occurs. Can I? Must I? Should I? And if I do partake in this uprising, what is next so I can sustain my commitment and my life? *Anon.*

A sick and/or disabled doula cries. They know how to bend down to others without hurting their back more than it already does. They know what chairs to use for the circle. They don't say "everything will be alright". *Fee*

... wouldve held my hand for the words that changed my entire world and ripped the air out of my my body as if it were never mine to breathe. *sarah beth st marie*

*In the context of an uprising* A sick and/or disabled doula...

In the COVID-19 era, listen to your disabled doulas because we have faced death with a doctor who doesn't care. *Kap*

... is happy with the start of this sentence. *Anon.*

This is a typeface called Dyslexie. It is specifically designed for people with dyslexia so why not use it. *Also it is really cute.*



A sick and disabled doula looks back at me in the mirror;  
brace themselves against the sink; they cry.  
They hold their heart and breathe into rhythm  
and shake off the stickiness and crumple onto the floor.  
They stay there. They wait.  
They sink into their whole bodymind  
and ask all themselves all the right-or-right-enough questions...  
*Summer Diegel*



Gives and takes space to recognize all the shit the non-crips  
**DON'T NEED** to think about... We welcome discomfort from  
those who don't know what's up. We dazzle them with our amazing brains,  
cyborg bodies, perfectly different and powerful assets...  
We ask each other questions because we want to hear the answers.  
*Sully Carmona*

Does Mikveh from their home...  
A sick and disabled doula knows that  
the medical industrial complex  
does not keep them healthiest,  
but the love of fellow sluts and crips do. *Mae*

They carefully plan the route  
to the protest site, choosing  
the path with places to stop  
and rest. They pay attention  
to where there is a  
washroom open (if at all) and  
bring needed supplies and  
water and snacks. Often,  
attending isn't possible, and  
they cheer from home. *Kristy*



11.

# WORST DAY OF MY LIFE!

JOANN WALKER

Coalition to Support Women Prisoners at Chowchilla.  
Article. "A Woman's View: The Worst Day of My Life!" c.1994.  
The Cap publication, text by Joann Walker. Judy Greenspan  
Papers, The LGBT Community Center National History  
Archive. This appeared in **Metanoia: Transformation  
Through AIDS Archives and Activism.**

## JOANN WALKER PRISONER ACTIVIST

June 1, 1950 - July 13, 1994

We'll continue to give them "hell" for you!

### A WOMAN'S VIEW

#### The Worst Day of My Life!

by Joann Walker

I thought the worst day of my life was when, I was told I had the HIV virus. I was wrong!

When I became incarcerated at Central California Women's Facility, was the worst day of my life! I never knew people were so narrow-minded about the virus. When the judge gave me four years and four months, I said to myself "well it's over." I was wrong again!

There was another sentence waiting for me. A sentence of persecution, depression, discrimination, stress, poor nutrition, poor medical care and stupidity of the other incarcerated women, because there was no education here on the virus. That included the staff because they weren't educated either and frankly, most don't give a damn.

A person incarcerated with HIV is just another added problem for the California penal system. I can't see why correctional officers make the large sums of money they make for walking around with a bunch of keys. Maybe an officer will walk down a hallway one or twice a week. If a prisoner makes them mad then the staff will get back at the prisoner by tearing up their room. The title "correctional officer" should be changed to Overpaid Baby Sitter.

Central California Women's Facility is said to be the largest human ware-

house for women in the world. It is also the worst run warehouse in the world. When one runs a conglomerate as large as CCWF, you must be equipped to give fairness to the officers and the incarcerated. There is none here. I will not even write of the treatment that HIV/AIDS prisoners get. I would have to publish my own paper.

True horror stories of the of the HIV/AIDS incarcerated women are many and painful. There are very few like myself who will write, speak out, and act up. I will not die at the hands of the system. If I do, the world will know who my murderer is — The California Penal System!

I realize the public can't imprison the whole penal system. But because of the power the public bestows on officers, most think they are above the law. So please give them hell in memory of me.

*Walker is regular contributor. She covers women's issues for The CAP.*

*Editor's Note: Walker's article opens the door for others to speak out about HIV and AIDS in prison. In this issue, The CAP provides information about a lawsuit that the PRU has joined to provide proper medical treatment at CCWF.*

Joann Walker died on Wednesday, July 13, 1994, two months after winning compassionate release from the Central California Women's Facility at Chowchilla. We will continue her fight for justice for prisoners. For more information contact the Coalition to Support Women Prisoners at Chowchilla, (510) 530-6214 or (415) 641-4156.

12.

**BLACK  
TRANS  
FEMMES IN  
THE ARTS  
COLLECTIVE**

**JORDYN SMITH**  
@BTFACOLLECTIVE

Gia Love performs at BTFA Open Mic





I conceptualized BTFA in response to the lack of representation of Black trans femmes in art history, contemporary art spaces, and art scholarship, because I understood that lack of representation as a symptom of anti-Blackness, transphobia and misogyny, which produces a lack of resources and opportunities.

To begin to address this issue, I organized a Black Trans Femmes in the Arts Meetup in September of 2019 to connect with other Black trans femmes in the arts, understand the obstacles they were facing, and organize towards erasing these challenges. In this first small meetup, it became abundantly clear how necessary it was for Black trans femmes to have a community within the arts to share resources, expertise and talents.

Two months later, I organized BTFA's first Open Mic Night, which featured performances by eight Black trans femme artists, to showcase the talent in the community and officially launch the BTFA Collective.

At the beginning of 2020, BTFA began to build a platform on social media through highlighting members of the collective and interviewing well-known Black trans femme artists on our Instagram.

On June 2nd, BTFA announced the Black Trans Protesters' Emergency Fund, in collaboration with The Okra Project, For the Gworls, and Black Trans Travel Fund. The Fund was initiated to protect Black trans protestors in preparation for a rally in New York City honoring the lives of Nina Pop and Tony McDade. With the world's eyes on the Black Lives Matter movement and the LGBTQ+ community exploring ways to celebrate Pride virtually, BTFA became a

global phenomenon overnight as our message was spread by celebrities and major publications.

Now, a little more than a year after that first meetup, BTFA is reaching Black trans femmes and impacting them in spaces and ways that I never imagined. We are continuing to develop our public programming, both virtually and in-person, when it is safe, providing mutual aid to Black trans folks, and producing projects led by Black trans femme artists in New York City.

In all of this success and joy, we also hold space to mourn the lives we have lost and the violence we endure as a community, which made folks pay attention. We are organizing and building as a community so that violence and trauma are no longer our only paths to recognition, while also de-centering and destabilizing institutions and systems that have not offered us any other way. We are mobilizing our resources to offer paths of hope, resistance and imagination. BTFA envisions a world where Black trans femmes are able to create without limitations.

To donate to the BTFA Collective, click [here](#).

13.

**VOLEUR,  
VOULOIR,  
VENIR\***

**JUSTINE DESA**  
@DESAJUSTINE

**\*TO STEAL,  
TO WANT,  
TO COME**

**Voleur**

Viral replication is repeated violation.

An insidious crossing of boundaries, a skirmish followed by annexation of a foreign body. All of this is done in shadow while the host goes on performing life as if it were normal, as if this state of health would continue indefinitely. Time continues in orderly sixty second parcels. One of the chief victims of the viral invader is time. Time we did not know was being taken from us. Time that threatened to break us.

What would the virus take that we did not realize was being stolen?

**Vouloir**

Stopped progress is pointed stasis.

A fly slowly drowning in honey, a slow death that shows the chasm between the ordinary and the extraordinary. In the libertine capital, I found my escape from the viscous pressure to exist as I always had, this obedient and submissive daughter, sister, wife. Releasing my sexuality in the luminous city was too delicious to resist. An immediate decampment was impossible, so I sent my sexual energy as an envoy for the future I was manifesting.

A swipe and a ping and there he was. Together we embarked on an unfettered exploration of sexuality, a sacred union of pleasure, openness, fluidity. The throb of passion allowed for the transgression of boundaries - both sexual and geographic. The separation by a vast stretch of salt water was a minor inconvenience. Before the unwanted replication, it was nothing more than a journey of twenty-seven thousand parcels.

What is time in comparison to riding the waves of orgasm into my future?

**Venir**

Accidental distraction is delayed arrival.

The particular cruelty of viral invasion is that borders have become more rigid. New edicts are delivered on what is acceptable risk, how pleasure can be experienced, and what transgressions are strictly punished. I feel the absence of pleasure acutely. Tying my sexuality to the land of my future has unforeseen repercussions. My pleasure is now a prisoner in a foreign land that no longer greets me with open arms. Being penetrated by his foreign body would release a pent-up ocean that would breach the shores of my future home.

We connect sexually behind the safety of zeros and ones. These encounters are a salve that temporarily soothes the burn of desire unfulfilled. The other option is to remember when we were together. The heat of the memory offers enough plausible deniability to allow my hand to feel like his. Waves of dopamine and oxytocin radiate to the furthest extremes of my body. This sweet little death reduces the potency of the memory. Next time, pleasure will be more elusive, require more focus, more embellishment. One day the images will be blurred beyond recognition. After the initial rush, the ever-present loneliness crashes around me. Remembering has become an act of self-harm. The parcels accumulate without end.

What is the longest amount of time one can exist without being touched?

14.

# HOW DO WE MAKE SENSE OF WHAT WE ARE LIVING THROUGH AND EXPERIENCING?

**KATHERINE CHEAIRS**

Several grassroots voting rights organizations led by Black women not only registered new voters and counteracted voter suppression in GA, but swung votes in favor of down ballot candidates with progressive platforms. One of the local news affiliates in GA did features on Latinx and Asian youth organizers who were also instrumental in getting out the vote. I've been in GA for a few months now because of family health issues and was able to register in time to participate in this historic election. I'm somewhat cynical about electoral politics' ability to create radical change, but I must say the energetic shift I've been able to witness challenged me to extend my frameworks around harm reduction to the election cycle. I'm also proud of the Black women who engage in the slow and steady work that is required to produce radical change and certainly consider myself a part of that even if I do it through different methods. That's why instead of having my attention redirected to the events at the Capitol on Wednesday, I chose to continue reflecting and honoring Black women voters who actually

## HOW DO WE MAKE SENSE OF WHAT WE ARE LIVING THROUGH AND EXPERIENCING?

## WHAT DOES AN UP<sup>RISE</sup>ING DOULA DO?

did the work of holding the nation accountable to its own embrace of Democratic ideas while not living up to them.

White nationalist/supremacy culture takes up a lot of space. It's the loud guy in the room who's drowning out the other voices so it can be heard. It always redirects energy away from the accomplishments of BIPOC communities and/or attempts to co-opt and embody the legitimate grievances of those communities and reinscribe with their own pain. It's violent. It destroys. It confounds. It deflects. It excuses its own behavior. It is always upheld by institutions. The events at the Capitol were not surprising to me at all. I expected it and quite frankly thought it would be worse. Security was pretty tight in GA on runoff day. Polling stations had additional security. The ballots in DeKalb were counted in an undisclosed location. Poll workers were escorted to cars. An outdoor rally set to take place outside Ebenezer Baptist Church with Warnock on election night was cancelled and replaced by a phone call. The signs were there and the GBI took the chatter seriously. Let's be clear that the kind of mob violence witnessed on Wednesday while shocking and saddening to many, does not compare to the kind of vigilante violence meted out on Black people throughout the Jim Crow south that led to The Great Migration only to find the same mob everywhere African Americans tried to go in the continental United States. Many of us finish out this week exhausted. I know I am. The contrasting tension though of Black women voters creating historic change while angry white men take selfies of themselves in the House chamber is American as it gets. The work of Black women doesn't get shared virally on social media (unless it's WAP) and is largely ignored with maybe a few uncomfortable sound bites here and there while a guy wearing a fur hat gets his image reproduced millions of times.

In residing in the United States at this time in history, we are a part of the continued afterlife of The Civil War and slavery. We are all implicated in this history by virtue of our shared inheritance and irrespective of our entry points to it. It is built into every aspect of our current society. I've been saying for quite some time that the dependent variable for inequality in the US is not racism, but slavery. So many aspects of our way of life in this country are built off the plantation economy, not industrialization as many are oft to believe. There is a lot of denial and shame that black and white alike feel around slavery so it becomes the festering wound that cannot heal. A trauma we ignore still comes to the surface and manifests itself in many ways. As in any grief and trauma work, it has stages and exists on a continuum and we are nowhere near a collective consciousness that can move to acceptance from our traumatic past.

A battlefield has pauses, truces, white flags, rest periods, retreats, losses and the sending in of reinforcements. It is also a counterweight of two opposing forces with both sides using various tactics and strategies to out maneuver the other. Stacey Abrams' strategy in GA was to cover all one hundred and fifty-nine counties. Not just assume the same lines of blue and red that had become the state's identity. That's a tactic of enlightened diplomacy. Scaling a wall at the US Capitol and flying a confederate flag inside of it is a tactic too, though not sure how enlightened it is, but nonetheless a tactic. Both require leaders and followers. Both understand that it's a battlefield. Many of us in the US are asleep to this battle and every now and then we wake up in shock and awe and ask, what's going on and where we are heading.

## HOW DO WE MAKE SENSE OF WHAT WE ARE LIVING THROUGH AND EXPERIENCING?

## WHAT DOES AN UP<sup>RISING</sup> DOULA DO?

Stay in your abolition lane. Black women activists in GA focused on abolition in the face of secession and prevailed. We can do it too.

“If I fall, I’ll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight of freedom. I’m not backing off.”

— Fannie Lou Hamer

Key texts about slavery in the US (Not an exhaustive list by any means):

¶ Frederick Douglass, **Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave**

¶ Harriet Jacobs, **Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl**

¶ Zora Neale Hurston, **Barracoon: The Story of the Last “Black Cargo”**

¶ Olaudah Equiano, **The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavas Vassa, The African**

¶ Katherine McKittrick, **Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle**



# 15. ASIAN FAMILIES & WORKERS 4 BLACK LIVES — NOW AND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

**KIMI LEE**  
DIRECTOR, BAY RISING



**The only way to survive is by taking care of one another.**

— Grace Lee Boggs

Like so many of us in the US and around the globe, I've spent many days and nights on the streets demanding an end to white supremacy and police brutality, the forces that so violently took George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many Black lives from us.

Over the last two weeks I've taken my daughters (ages 8 and 12) to join with thousands of others to caravan, chalk, and chant in family direct actions, standing up to Oakland, CA's oppressive curfew and to raise our voices to #DefundPolice and get police out of Oakland public schools. In each of these actions we can feel in our hearts and bodies the powerful multiracial and multigenerational organizing of families so many of us have so deeply nurtured year in and year out. I am so proud to have been with my family in community with Rice and Beans Childcare Cooperative, Sama Sama Cooperative, Asians4BlackLives, Black Organizing Project, and many more.

We are living in a movement moment that we've long prepared for. I feel incredibly proud and grateful to be the director of Bay Rising, a regional coalition of grassroots organizations, which has played such a key role in bringing communities together for social justice and building long-term power that positions Black, Indigenous, & people of color as the decision-makers for themselves and their own families.

I am also deeply proud to see our work with "Masks for the Movement" featured in the Vision Through COVID: Portals to Our Future video series. This video was filmed on zoom while my family and I were sheltering in place. It tells the story of Masks for the Movement, a pop-up effort that I created with immigrant workers in response to COVID and the widespread unemployment our communities face. The

workers of Masks for the Movement made over 10,000 masks that generated nearly \$40,000 in direct earnings to workers and \$15,000 in revenues to local businesses that provided supplies. Masks for the Movement also donated thousands of masks to front line workers doing deliveries and stocking groceries.

I believe that Masks for the Movement offers a glimpse of the future now, of a world liberated from white supremacy where today's commitment to Black lives ensures that our grandchildren's children live in a world centered in community and abundance.

I hope you will take a moment to watch our video and all the powerful stories in the Vision Through COVID series.

See you in the streets and everywhere we need to be! #RIPGeorgeFloyd #RIPBreonnaTaylor #BLM #BlackPower #DismantleWhiteSupremacy #DefundPolice.

This piece first appeared at the website of the Movement Strategy Center. It is reprinted here with permission of the author.

16.

**WHAT  
WOULD  
A DOULA  
DO WITH  
RAGE?**

**LOUIE ORTIZ-FONSECA**  
GRANVARONES.COM

break this poem  
break this poem in two,  
leave half for me  
take half for you,  
break this poem as you please  
bit by bit, piece by piece,  
feed this poem  
and declare a bountiful feast,  
break it against chains  
and prison cells,  
break it against bodies bruised  
with skin scars that never tell.

divide this poem  
onto everyone you see,  
take some for you  
leave some for me,  
break-in case of emergency,  
light in on highways  
to guide ways of urgency,  
break it against the universe  
strike it across the night,  
tear it apart and use it as a shield  
should the battlefield need you to fight

break it against feet  
that are battered and tired,  
break it against minds and hearts  
that yearn for the burn of fire,  
break it till it inspires  
and gives us a day to understand  
break this poem,  
take this poem as means into your hands.

ignite this poem  
and light dark places,  
bang it against the ground  
to find the traces,  
left by deaths and breaths  
of ancestors never found,  
break it, i say.  
break this poem!

17.

# CONVERT YOUR CRISIS INTO CONNECTION

**MARTY FINK**

MARTYFINK@GMAIL.COM

Slightly before the COVID-19 pandemic began, I went on hormones. The fact that some trans people go “on hormones” actually obscures the fact that all cis people are also “on hormones.” If I wasn’t currently on testosterone, I would surely default back to estrogen. Torrey Peters deals with all this in her 2016 novella **Infect Your Friends and Loved Ones** where in a not-so-distant future, trans people manufacture a highly infectious pandemic in order to force cis people to also choose a hormone; this pandemic does not merely increase cis awareness of gender self-determination but actually forges trans connectivity, desire that is t4t. I am 38. I already know how my body deals with being on estrogen. I am familiar with how estrogen makes my voice trill, makes my hair curl; I know how it feels to jerkoff on estrogen, to get called “she,” to get ignored completely by cis fags on the street, on the Internet. But going “on testosterone” feels curious. How interesting to hear my voice sing low, the secret pleasure of riding a bike, getting called “buddy.” Most curious of all was Grindr: “do u have dick or pussy,” “u horny,” “good job I can’t even tell you used to be a woman,” and even, “what are you looking for? Into? You up for fun?”

Hookups seemed risky but potentially thrilling, as did Grindr’s pacing of entering a stranger’s house and becoming immediately naked. This all felt strikingly different from t4t dates where hours of conversation (or dancing) gradually formed connection and comfort, creating the delightful progression from first kiss to full nudity, or the decision by one or both of us to leave on some inner layer, an undergarment, a pair of jeans. Despite my attempts at learning cis gay cultural norms such as butt douching—which on first attempt led to pooping my shower floor—so few of the cis gays on Grindr wanted to put a dick in my ass, most asserting their preference to try out my “other hole” (and,

puzzlingly, requesting my assistance with this, as if somehow their butt sex skills felt non-transferrable).

When I tested positive for COVID-19, I initially regretted failing at the cultural imperative to stay healthy. I could feel myself internalizing that being a faggot slut is morally bad because it is also deadly (not a new narrative, and so, very powerful). But I also know that individual behavioral modification has never worked to stop any systemic health problem, and that the individual imperative to avoid illness is antithetical to the disability activist work of destigmatizing and valuing disability even though it can cause change, pain, risk. I keep wondering how to better desire masculinity (including my own) in a way that isn't toxic, that doesn't uphold misogyny, antiblack racism, serophobia, capitalism - the factors that cause pandemics. Bleach on shower floor, I feel inspired by trans pasts and AIDS activists to imagine how I can convert to testosterone, can convert health crises into connection, risk into thrill, without stigma or shame.



18.

# FROM YOUR OWN THROAT

MAX ZEV

MACKENZIEREYNOLDS.COM

**You know the murmurs, they come from your own throat.** These words have been haunting me, ricocheting around my brain and heart for the past few weeks. Muriel Rukeyser wrote them in 1958 when she was 45, just a few years older than I am now. She was an activist and a writer, queer, Jewish. Throughout the 2nd World War, she lectured on poetry and creativity. Words, she taught, feelings, are our path to ourselves.

Our imaginations and our capacity for feelings are linked, and if we use them to see and understand the truth of the world around us, we would be able to live relationally with the earth. Free. It's a feat almost divine. But in truth, it's what we were made for. To dream, to feel, to create. To give voice to the wildness of our imaginations, and in doing so set ourselves free and see what worlds we might create when we can see ourselves, and each other, clearly.



For months, I've come home from the hospital I work in to sit down at my computer and try to write. I stare at the cursor on my blank page, willing the words to come. In that blinking cursor, I see the echo of the lines of the machines that measure patients' vitals. In August, I couldn't stand the echoes in lines and beeps that haunted me when I came home, so I turned away from my own emotional and creative work and threw myself into organizing. My community crafted a protest of mourning for Tisha b'Av in which Black Jews led us through refrains lamenting the loss of Black lives to the violence of white supremacy, interspersed with chanting from the biblical book of Eicha/Lamentations, carving out a holy space to cry out together against the tyranny and violence that terrorize Black people in this country.

My tears caught in my throat as a teenager chanted, lifting her voice in the refrains of grief. My tears caught as I looked at the sea of Black, Brown, and white Jewish people gathered around us, mourning the destruction of Black lives in the same way we mourn the destruction of the Temple, the holiest site in our history, performing an ancient ritual of grief by sitting in the street and tearing cloth and calling the dead by name out loud. Each person a Temple and a world unto themselves, destroyed. My throat caught as I cried out with my community in despair, demanding a world reborn.

Through the spring, I'd leave work and join a protest, desperate for change: we cannot continue like this, I would think as I raised my scratchy voice. And then, home, running on adrenaline and burgers. I ran like this for months, until I was numb and needed to sleep for a week. Now, I'm more rested, the pace has slowed and I eat vegetables again. I am not less desperate. Today my throat is dry, parched. Every day as I walk into the hospital, I complete a health assessment. Any symptoms? Any changes in taste, any fever, any aches,

any respiratory problems? My throat tickles and tastes metallic, but no, there is no change.

The catch in my throat persists. When I led Kol Nidre in the park with a small group of friends on Yom Kippur, the words jammed in my throat. Our vows are not vows, our prohibitions are not prohibitions, and our oaths are no longer oaths. We are free, the prayer says, unbound as we begin this new year. My voice cracked through the second chanting, shattering the prayer with words that would not entirely leave my mouth. It is fitting, I think. We are not unbound this year. We are not free.

We are bound to each other in dreaming, in action, in healing and in grieving. You know the murmurs, they come from your own throat. The murmurs must be let out, in shatters, in cries, in shouts and chants, and in reckless wild imaginings, the murmurs need to flow. We must demand freedom and joy and love from ourselves and each other. It is the only way to assert our humanity, to break ourselves free. Every glimmer we dream up: we must write down, shout out, free from our throats.

19.

**ALL HOMES ARE BUILT ON  
THE FOUNDATION OF STORY,  
MINNEAPOLIS MUST RE-BUILD  
FROM STORIES OF RESISTANCE**

**MELISSA OLSON**  
@MIZZILINA

Melissa Olson is a person of mixed white and Anishinaabe heritage, and a tribal citizen of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

Thursday morning, May 28th I woke up a few minutes earlier than usual. The night before, John and I watched the 3rd precinct get set on fire on national TV. As the sole support for my aging mother, I had decided not to join the protest, uncertain of the probability of contracting COVID-19. I brushed my hair. I scrolled through my social media to see if I could find an update on Migizi's building and whether it was still standing. A post by one of its staff members confirmed it was, just a block and a half away from the now destroyed 3rd Precinct.

I called that same staff member and learned the protestors and others stayed off the street where Migizi was located out of respect for a sidewalk clinic staffed by medical professionals treating injuries that protestors had sustained during the standoff with Minneapolis police. We learned that members of the American Indian Movement had stood guard in front of the building to protect it from others. I told John I needed to drive over to see for myself.

Migizi has been a part of the Minneapolis community for 45 years, one of the oldest non-profits serving Native communities through journalism and youth training. Earlier, in the fall of 2019, we'd begun a project to digitize and preserve Migizi's archive of its original radio programming. The archive was recorded on magnetic reel-to-reel audio tape and stored in bookshelves inside a small utility closet in the center of the building. The archive consists of approximately 1200 tapes. News stories evidencing the movements for civil rights and treaty rights, stories about AIM and Red Power activists of the 1970s, an irreplaceable social history of both Native journalism of the 1970s and 1980s and their community.

John and I drive ten minutes across town. We took his clunky conversation van. John remembers turning onto

Minnehaha Avenue and narrowly missing a guy weaving through traffic on an old motorcycle. I remember an air of chaos. The air was thick with smoke and smelled strong like oil paint. We parked and then walked five blocks towards Migizi. There was some minor tagging on the south-facing wall but it was otherwise untouched — a fact we marveled at as we walked past the smashed-in window of the restaurant next door. People paced slowly in two or threes to survey the damage, some snapping photos of the property damage. 'Fuck-12' in ragged handwriting tagged everywhere. Black and Brown youth on their bikes surveying people. One man across the street from the police station yelling into a bullhorn, "Am I a Man?"

We walked back to the van, and cut through alleys and side streets to find a way through the crowds beginning to re-assemble. It was maybe ten o'clock. John was driving leaned up against the door. He lowered his shoulders and lowered his chin, and looked over at me. "The building is not going to survive the night. If you are going to get the tapes out of the building, we need to do it now."

We returned home. I called the same Migizi staff person I'd spoken with hours earlier, and explained the need to move the archive. A second call to another staff confirmed the plan.

John and I returned an hour later with boxes. Un-detoured, we parked the van in the alley behind the building. Together with staff, we packed the tapes in about forty minutes. We left the alley, headed north toward Lake Street and drove twenty-some blocks to the community radio station where I work as a producer. We'd been granted permission to store the boxes in an empty studio, where they remained through the next day.



Top photo:  
Melissa at KFAI with the  
Migizi Archive Thursday  
May 28, 2020.

Bottom photo:  
Migizi Archive Piled Up  
Next My Desk

That night Migizi caught fire as embers from fires on either side of the building blew into the roof. Migizi's executive director, her husband, and their daughter stayed as long as they could before being asked to evacuate. They remember calling 911 and asking for fire trucks and how the fire trucks never came.

That next morning I arrived back at the radio station to check on the boxes, and to make sure the room wasn't too hot. I learned from station staff they were forming a neighborhood group to keep watch from the roof of the building in preparation for the coming night. I made the decision then to move the archive a second time, this time to my own house in Northeast Minneapolis. We moved the boxes again later that afternoon.

For the next five weeks the archive took up residence in our small house between the living room window and my desk. It was a small peace of mind. The tapes smelled of dust and metal. Still, I thought of stories held there. I thought about the journalists whose many hundreds of hours were recorded there, and community members, many of whom I'd known myself, whose work had carried us forward as communities. So, I thought of the boxes like an Auntie or an Uncle who had come to visit for a while. But, unlike a living relative, the boxes required that we create a plan for the archive's storage. The presence of the boxes was an everyday reminder of how the violence had taken up literal space in our house. Minnesota's stay at home orders and continued curfews meant that I rarely travelled. Home was a refuge from the pandemic, but now the boxes served as a literal reminder of the violence that took George Floyd's life and the violence of the fire that had destroyed parts of the city.



A couple of weeks later we learned that we had been granted an award from a local civic organization to digitize the majority of the tapes. One of Migizi’s community partners, an archivist and librarian from Augsburg University, offered to help. I asked about safe storage for the archive and the University agreed. I re-packed the tapes into still sturdier boxes and drove them to Augsburg. All of the boxes have been safely stored there since the beginning of July, and in August our larger digitization project began in earnest. Migizi has raised over 2 million dollars in the hopes they might find a new building in the neighborhood and renovate it anew.



20.

# NOT BY THE CADENCE OF THE CLOCK

MICHAELA HOLMES

I am an abolitionist, anti-capitalist, agricultural-time doula. We engage in natural rhythm, not the cadence of the clock.

But you don't need to know that. For you, for your journey, we are companions, comfort, and support.

We cannot fix you, save you, or heal you. We know the teachings of our ancestors. We know you will feel the insistent desire to heal what is harmed or broken and we trust the steadiness of your spirit to accomplish your task.

But you don't need to know that. For you, for your journey, we are holders of space and we see your strength.

You will labor to heal yourself. We don't know how easy or hard it will be. The end of life is a period of transformation of the body, mind, heart, and spirit. It is a rare time when you will own your labor. An un-alienated labor. A labor for yourself, your ancestors, and your future, known and unknown generations. You will labor to reconcile and heal intergenerational trauma. You will labor to find peace.

But you don't need to know that. For you, for your journey, we are grounded and present as you find your way.

Your body belongs only to you, not your boss. You will decide your value, not the market. You will direct your effort, not material need. You will die on your own time and in your own way, following the rhythms of your heart, not the cadence of the clock.

21.

# WHAT DOES A DOULA DO WITH BURNOUT?

**MOLLY M. PEARSON**  
@DISCO\_WISDOM

Release is necessary. It prevents burnout from becoming a permanent state of being. The visionaries that created and sustained disco knew that. With the 1964 passage of the Civil Rights Act, the 1967 Black Cat Tavern riots, the 1968 passage of the Fair Housing Act and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the 1969 Stonewall Riots, contemporary Black, brown, and queer folks knew a thing or two about burnout. They can teach us something about what we face today if we listen.

Disco was born, gradually yet loudly, beginning in 1970 when DJ Tony Smith, at age 14, began playing some of the earliest known DJ sets in between live band performances. Smith sensed something that people needed. For the first time, a night out dancing became a night out with a whole community. Rather than the standard routine of one man taking the lead with one woman to distinct songs that had clear beginnings and endings, dancing became a fluid experience of time and bodily expression. The beat never stopped as long as the bodies kept moving. You could face one direction and dance with a lover, then spin around and dance with someone you had never met, and continue until you danced with everyone in the room. The same year, David Mancuso opened The Loft with the first underground disco party.

Tony Smith was, and continues to be, a burnout doula. So was David Mancuso, and so were Larry Levan and Frankie Knuckles as disco evolved and expanded into sub-genres. They, and so many others, made space for collective release, all set to a beat that gave permission for embodiment through collective movement.

WHAT DOES A DOULA DO WITH BURNOUT?

WHAT DOES AN UP<sup>RISING</sup> DOULA DO?

Today, disco is often derided as corny stuff that the world would be just fine, or better, without. It is not to be taken seriously. Many scoff, and have even devolved to rage, as evidenced by the 1979 Disco Demolition Night. Blanket hatred of disco is racist and queerphobic. It’s also fear of liberation.

To really experience disco is to bear witness to a possibility model from the past that we still draw from today. The “corniness” many hear is an unwavering and unapologetic emotional expression. On the disco dance floor, we create intimacy with ourselves, others, and our community that moves like water. Disco gives us permission to feel deeply, and to embody those feelings in our asses as we shake them for hours and hours.

The pain and struggle of this moment is deep. Burnout is real for anyone engaged in our current uprising, no matter the method of resistance.

We urgently need to dance with each other.

Here’s a list I offer to turn your living room into the quarantine disco you might need. While all disco has value, these songs in particular speak to struggle and release. Listen closely to what the lyrics have to offer. Notice where you feel each song in your body, and let it move accordingly. Release.

22.

# COOKIES WITH MOM

**NICHOLAS D'AVELLA**  
@NNIICCHHOOLLAASSSS

Cooking with my mom, I pulled her laptop over to check in on the recipe and saw a banner ad for Biktarvy (an HIV med) descending down the right half of the screen.

I didn't panic. I am out to my mom about my status. But I thought of the panic I would have felt if the situation were different.

For the rest of the day, I sat with my new awareness of the unclean separation between the two of us in the digital ether, and started to try to piece together the contacts of our digital selves to figure out how this targeted ad meant for me ended up on her laptop. I thought of my own subscription to the cooking magazine, a gift from her; our shared Netflix account; the Echo dot in my bedroom at her house that listens to my words, connected to the house's wifi network, which we also share. I took a step back to try to think about how the internet knows my status in the first place. All the digital cookies I've shared with zillions of sites, and which I at one

point I tried to control, only to give up when I realized how much easier my life is when the internet knows who I am.

Somewhere between the internet’s mistake (it’s confusion between me and my mother) and it’s completely correct knowledge of my status, I felt the murk of a connectivity I know little about.

It’s hardly the first time I’ve been weirded out by targeted advertising. Sometimes, they were things I had looked for on e-commerce sites. Sometimes they were adjacent items — leather sandals instead of cloth. Sometimes they were ads for things I hadn’t looked for, and that fit my lifestyle a little too-close for comfort, to the point that I knew they knew something about me. Most often they were things I had already purchased — an add for a computer cable I had bought the week before. Like the Biktarvy ad, these ads made me laugh at the strange mashups of completely accurate knowledge about me and the key pieces of information they got wrong (already bought vs. still looking, me or my mom).

I sat with frightening versions of this that are touching on our present and increasingly possible as potential futures. Do we use this kind of data to target terrorists? I think we do. Do we use this kind of data to classify immigrants? I’m not sure. In prison sentencing? Something like it. For actual healthcare delivery, insurance eligibility? I think not yet, but maybe only barely. For credit, insurance, and hiring? We already do.

Titles on my reading list for HIV and **anti-capitalist doulas** that want to stay alive to these new forms of contact, connection, and transmission:

- ¶ Cathy O’Neil, **Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy.**
- ¶ Ruha Benjamin, **Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code.**
- ¶ Virginia Eubanks, **Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor.**
- ¶ Safiya Noble, **Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism.**
- ¶ Meredith Broussard, **Artificial Unintelligence: How Computers Misunderstand the World.**

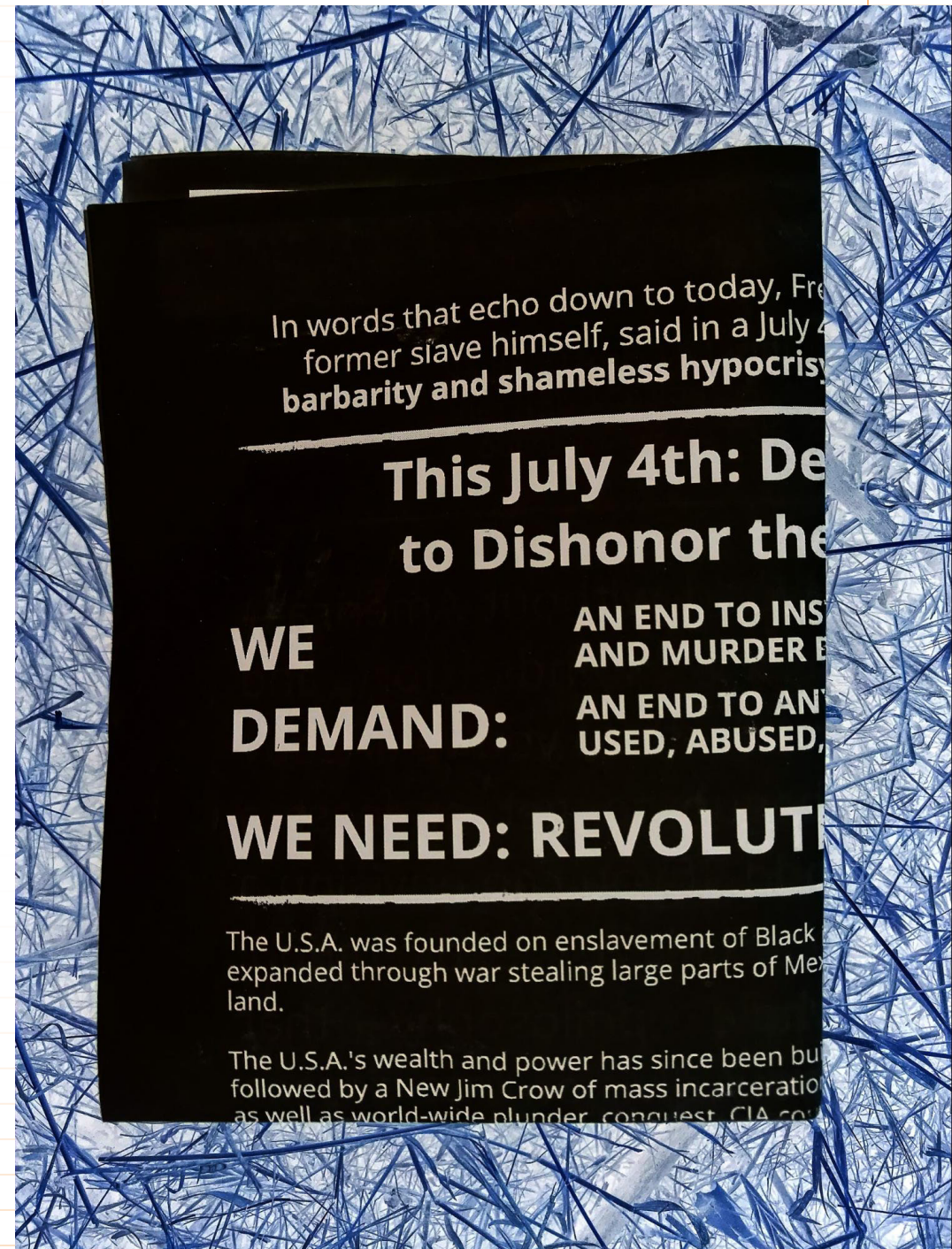


23.

# LINGERING

**PATO HEBERT**  
@VOLANDITO

“Untitled” from the **Linging** series, 2020



24.

# DOU • LA DO • WITH WHAT DOES AN UPRISING DOU•LA DO?

**SUR RODNEY (SUR)**

Ask questions — Listen — Confirm — Respond

**Dou•la Do with Fear?** We are social animals. We hold a desire to be among each other as part of our tribal instinct. So much of our living depends on our being together. Clustering together among members of our tribe. Feeling stronger, healthier, more alive. We are asked to physically distance and isolate. Live and work remotely, for now. For some the separation unbearable and/or unsustainable, worse than death. Too many are dying sharing air space without wearing a mask. Compromising rights to life - distance and masks our savior. What would your loved ones do? **What Does a Dou•la Do With Rage?** Breathe. **With Burnout?** Float in water. Rest on a sea of pillows. Sleep. Feeling protected or uncomfortable with physical distancing. To die alone? With company? Can we live among others and feel protected? How is physical distancing possible in your lived-in environment? What deters you from wearing a mask? **Dou•la Do with Anti-Black Racism?** We wore masks at BLM protests. Many were stained with blood. And, yes, we've been here before. At some point in my never-ending writing assignments, I interrupt my flow to write about relationships. Living with viruses, death, fear, care, and sex. I felt it imperative for reasons I'll never fully understand. Some of it expressed on social media. **What Does a Horny Dou•la Do?** My concern began with considering unmasked joggers jogging along a river park pathway. Some joggers having my Jean Genet rising admiring the beauty of his long muscled torso bravely running in public, without wearing a mask? How could such beauty, identified as a public health hazard, be saved from fear, death, and caring? **Would a Hungry Dou•la Do what a hungry person does? What does an Anti-Capitalist Dou•la Do?** Repurpose, Recycle, Reuse. Our collective grief Dou•la grows flowers.

Place flower petal(s) here

Along a measure of time: where are we? We've been here before in our living together for however long? Learning what not to do and feel safe, and protected. Let us Dou•la Do with that.



25.

# WHAT DOES A DOULA DO WITH BURNOUT?

TAMARA OYOLA SANTIAGO



**El burnout es rabia. Siento coraje, y como diría mi Abuela Lola, una soberbia. Por las luchas infinitas por equidad e igualdad, de ver a Puerto Rico arder por corrupción interna y colonialismo salvaje, por vivir bajo un capitalismo arraigado en el individualismo y la caridad. Pero el resultado no es parálisis. Es un coño potente y movilizante, una soberbia digna y valiente.**

**En medio de la pandemia, empecé a sembrar. No es ordenado. Como una china, tiro las pepas en un tiesto. Igual con calabaza, pimientos, pedazos de malanga coco y yautía, y semillas de parcha. Hasta pepas de quenepa de mi patria sembré. En un envase de café Bustelo hay cebollines, un canto de zanahoria y semillas de geranio. Es un revolú ansioso, determinado y útil.**

**Se cayó el escrín de la ventana de la cocina y lo he dejado postrado contra el marco. Le he dado permiso a la naturaleza a que entre a mi hogar. Es permiso a que en medio de este momento haya descontrol pero con propósito. Quiero un jardín sin frenesí que refleje mi interior.**

My burnout is rage. I feel anger, and like my grandmother Lola used to say, the anger is dignified and righteous. For the never-ending struggles for equity and equality, of watching Puerto Rico burn due to internal corruption and savage colonialism, for living under capitalism rooted in individualism and charity. But this does not translate into paralysis. Rather, this is a moving, potent, fierce rage.

In the middle of the pandemic, I started to garden. It is not orderly. I eat an orange, I throw the seeds into a pot. Same with pumpkin, mini sweet peppers, pieces of taro and yautia, and passion fruit seeds. I even planted quenepe from the motherland. In an empty Bustelo coffee I have scallions, a carrot top and geranium seeds. It's an anxious, determined and intentional mess.

The screen of the kitchen window fell and I have left it leaning on the frame. I have given permission to nature to enter my home. Permission that in this moment, growth is uncontrolled and purposeful. I want a freeing, frenzied garden that reflects my interior.



26.

# CONNECTING AMID AN UPRISING

**THEODORE (TED) KERR**  
TEDKERR.CLUB

## ONE

Demonstrations are “rehearsals for revolution.”

Angela Davis quotes John Berger in a conversation with Ava DuVernay in an article for Vanity Fair that my friend Brody Brown recommends. The connections here are many: influence, queers talking to queers, social change, friendship, legacies, visual culture, and so much more.

## TWO

At first I only allowed myself out of the house to buy things, or exercise. Then, I added protest. Demonstrating for revolution became a sanctioned activity in my mind. It was worth the risks, I thought, but also, it fed me. Not only being at marches, and feeling the energy of other people, but also seeing the artifacts of our efforts. The murals, posters, signs, and installations were as nourishing as flesh.



CONNECTING AMID AN UPRISING



WHAT DOES AN UPRISING DOULA DO?





**THREE**

I have a new friend who went on a few dates with guys he met at protests. He thought—not unwisely—that if a dude was showing up for Black life, then they would have a strong foundation from which to build as possible sex partners if not boyfriends. But alas, he struck out. The dudes were either a lot less progressive than the signs they carried, or had personality traits that my friend didn't like.

I also tried dating. I met one guy at a bike shop, another online. At some point I would talk about my “political activities,” which is to say my life. How they reacted impacted my desire. The hornier they were for uprising, the more I was willing to do to show us a good time.

Me and my friend would talk about our dates at protests, in between chants, at the mouth of subway stations after marching across a bridge, or via text while sharing info about whose Cash App we should donate to. It was funny yet totally appropriate I think to catch up while demonstrating. As much as we are rehearsing for a revolution, we are also world building along the way.

**FOUR**

Overheard:

Person 1: “Wait, what? Angela Davis is gay?”

Person 2: “Dude. How many times do I have to remind you of this very basic fact?”



27.

# DOULA AS AN ABOLITIONIST PRACTICE

WHAT WOULD AN HIV DOULA DO?  
HIVDOULA.WORK

Excerpt from **WITH SOCIAL / WORK**, hosted by **What Would an HIV Doula Do?** and **Columbia Journal of Literary Criticism** on Thursday, April 26, 2018, featuring speakers **Sam Richardson, Charlotte Heyrman + Efrain “Frankie” Rodriguez**, and **Gaines Blasdel**; moderated by **Theodore (ted) Kerr**.

**Ted** Yeah. As much as we think we're there to doula for a person, maybe we're actually also doula-ing the system, which is a term that came to us through Jessica Danforth, who does a lot of work up in Canadian correctional facilities, especially with women who are pregnant. They would request a doula and she would go in and everyone thought that Jessica was there to help the women with their birth. But really she was there to tell the guards to take the handcuff off the person giving birth. She had to doula the system to do her job. And it seems like others can relate to that.

**Charlotte** I have to admit that this is hard to hear. I’m very resistant to this idea. I think partially because in my work and in clinic and as a budding public defender, this idea of doula-ing the system feels like making it work better. Of course, I want the healthcare system to work better, but I have trouble picturing a system of incarceration that works better. It’s like putting lipstick on a pig.

**Ted** I see the carceral system as temporary. The system I think we are actually doula-ing is justice.

Another way of saying this is, in the conversations we had before this panel, I got a sense from all of you of your politics about abolition and I got the idea that this panel would be a safe space for abolition. And in that it seemed clear to me that abolition is the role of the doula. Like often when someone says to someone, “I believe in no prisons,” or “I believe in a world without police,” they are met with a question like, “Well, what are you going to do when X HORRIBLE THINGS HAPPENS TO SOMEONE YOU LOVE?” And for me, and maybe for us, I think a doula is the beginning of answering that question for people. A doula is someone who holds space in time of transition, holds space in the process of justice.



# COLOPHON

What Does an Uprising Doula Do? zine grew out of the exhibition **Metanoia: Transformation Through AIDS Archives and Activism**, organized by ONE Archives Foundation and The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center New York; and curated by Katherine Cheairs, Alexandra Juhasz, Theodore (ted) Kerr, and Jawanza Williams for What Would an HIV Doula Do? (WWHIVDD).

This zine project is supported by ONE Archives Foundation as part of the exhibition **Metanoia: Transformation Through AIDS Archives and Activism**. What Would an HIV Doula Do? is a community of people joined in response to the ongoing AIDS Crisis. We understand a doula as someone who holds space during times of transition. We understand HIV as a series of transitions that begins long before being tested or getting a diagnosis, and continues after treatment. We know that since no one gets HIV alone, no one should have to deal with HIV alone. We doula ourselves, each other, institutions and culture. Foundational to our process is asking questions.

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This document was created by people living on  
Lenape, Ohlone and Tongva land.

**RISING**

**UP**

**DOULA**

