



catalyst

An open access journal that highlights
creative works with an emphasis on the
prevention of violence.

Published by Prevention at the Intersections.

Volume I, Issue I

September 14, 2020

Mind, Body, & Gender

VOLUME I, ISSUE I

For the first issue of CATALYST, we accepted submissions that address the connections between the mind, body, and gender in our work to prevent violence and heal from community harm. We accepted submissions that focus on strategies to mend injustices from a variety of perspectives.

Our goal with the *Mind, Body, & Gender* issue is to bring light to issues that intersect with our collective experiences of ability, sexuality, citizenship, age, gender identity, relationship status, body image, and beyond. We recognize that the work to prevent violence is multi-faceted and we need critical voices in defining the framework for strategies to be developed.

"I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually."

— **James Baldwin**

"I really think the range of emotions and perceptions I have had access to as a black person and as a female person are greater than those of people who are neither... So it seems to me that my world did not shrink because I was a black female writer. It just got bigger."

— **Toni Morrison**



Volume I, Issue I

Editor

Crystallee Crain

Contributors

Kimberley Mullins
Dave Malone
Karen Sharpe
Juanita Kirtan
Caroline Knickmeier

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Editors Note

Crystallee Crain

To commemorate the inaugural issue of Catalyst, I'll introduce our theme – Mind, Body, & Gender. I chose this theme because I believe that the new ways of thinking about our experiences will come from our individual and collective expressions of the nuances face. Hence - our minds.

As subjugated people and those forced to live in managed systems our body, and subsequently, our genders are relegated and oftentimes unprotected. This leaves us with a diversity of knowledge on what happens to people everyday. These realities can be known at a greater rate when learned about through creative means.

The Catalyst series is designed to bring creativity to the field of violence prevention. Our mission is to deepen our understanding of one another while validating the truths we experience at the intersections.

Prevention at the Intersections is a decade long project facilitated to prevent community harm. Working across the country our team and partners know all too well the multiple layers of violence and the impact of harm on individuals and communities alike.

We need different and more creative solutions in order to bring about the most positive social change. We recognize that political and social change is directly linked to personal transformation. This happens when we allow for our full selves to be acknowledged and shown without fear with the full intent of greater understanding and unity.

I dedicate this issue to my beautiful family, hailing from Flint, Michigan. I dedicate this issue to my fellow survivors and to all people who know harm and oppression as a constant in life. We stand with you.

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We Begin in Wetness

Karen Sharpe

Karen Elizabeth Sharpe is a poet from Westminister, Massachusetts. Karen's work has appeared in a number of literary journals and she has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Karen is a poetry editor of the Worcester Review.

I knew my mother like this once:
 She was an ocean, drifting
 I was her erosion, her brimming.
 In her body's warm bowl of beginnings
 I was her dream-soaked awakening.

I was the strength of her shins
 the shifting tide of her thighs
 I shone like the silver moon reflecting
 in the basin of my mother's belly.

In her beginnings
 in her bowl of tangy brine
 I braved her heartbeat, her heart breath
 I whispered the song of her silent wanting
 I craved her talk, her rhythm
 I drank the liquor of her heat
 suckled on her trust, her mistrust
 recited her thousand names.

In the warm bowl of my mother's beginnings
 I was her sand glass, her cross staff
 her sextant, her lead line, her star chart
 I was a compass, her compass
 turning, turning, turning.

2 Lone

Caroline Knickmeier,
Visual Art



Caroline Knickmeier is an artist and writer working daily to create a life of making art and love. Her works explores the interconnection of all life on the planet and provides encouragement and hope for all who suffer. You can find more information about her at www.carolineknickmeier.com.

Biophilia

Caroline Knickmeier,
Visual Art



Biophilia (24 x 36, 2020) is a love and affinity for and among all living things.

The last thing I's gonna do is sit my ass down
 cause "*Jesus wept*"
 and my feet's can't carry me no-more
 the sky does not hunger for
 another black body
 laid out under her arms enough

mammas brown skin
 sinking into the concrete streets
 her heart an evening song broken

"the wound is where the light enters you"
 according to Rumi

I's got a vast sky hanging over me
 it altered after a young John in Selma done
 cause all that "*Good Trouble*"

He stepped across them agitated waters
 but that bridge can't hold us
 ain't no turning back comes too far
 no horse no billy clubs tear gas no fire hose pepper spray
 can stop us now

I done seen the other side
 Black Brown White Yellow
 Marching singing chanting
 stepping up & sitting down

I can't breathe

No Justice No Peace

Black Lives Matter

Freedom Now

The Last Thing

Juanita Kirton, Poetry

Dr. Juanita Kirton, MFA Goddard College. Poems published in several anthologies. Chapbook "*Letters To My Father*" publisher Finishing Line Press. Juanita participates with Women Reading Aloud, Women Who Write & International Women's Writing Guild.

4

High Hopes

Dave Malone, Poetry

We have high hopes for how
the human race never comes to an end.

And why? When we grew out of
Mother Earth, what extra gene seed

did she sow? Perhaps this one:
Survive at all costs.

But those early synapses didn't distinguish
between *you* or *I*, at least not yet.

Consider the Hawaiian policeman
on the great ridge of Pali

who saves a boy from jumping,
himself nearly pulled over the edge.

We have high hopes, you see.
We want the surface of Mars.

We want cloud cities above Venus.
We want the moons of Saturn.

He's got high apple pie

in the sky hopes . . .

Oops, there goes

another rubber tree plant.

—J. Van Heusen / S. Cahn

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Toilet Paper

Dave Malone, Poetry

[ˈtoɪlɪt ˌpɑːpər] *noun*

A thin soft sanitary
absorbent paper
usually in a roll
for bathroom use

As in: a product
I used to take
for granted
like walking
(easy with my
race classification of white
based on skin color
and facial morphology).

As in: during Covid,
I went eleven weeks
without a new supply
because my small town
gorged on TP

like strawberries
in July.

As in: that video,
real or not, where
a Trump-supporting
woman heaved loads
into her SUV
because she could.

As in: the white stuff
that seems drawn to shit.

“

We will know when we are loved in this world when the obstacles of inequity are removed so we can co-exist and thrive in the world with a culture of collective liberation.

Crystallee Crain

”

6 | First Trip To New York

Caroline Knickmeier,
Visual Art



First Trip to New York (8 x 10, oil on canvas, 2010) is about how emotions influence our experience. Emotions are what make us human; they are not something we need to hide. Emotions are connected to intuition and should be treated as valuable and with compassion.

7 Not Interested

Kimberley Mullins

K.E. Mullins is a Florida native. She began her writing career while in the Navy by venturing into poetry. Her first piece, “My One Last Cent,” was published in a literary journal, “Amistad” in 2007 at Howard University.

I was having my own protest at home.

Donned my black dress, fist in the air. It was March 1st and I was standing up for women’s rights. Thirty-one days to celebrate!

Why not start out with a bang? I paced back and forth from TV to couch. Beads of sweat were forming on my forehead after watching the Grammy’s.

To say I was moved was being modest, but I was fed up. Fed up with sexist men! Here it is three months into a volunteer gig with the kids and the coordinator can’t seem to address the fact; that I’m an educated black woman. Instead—he seems to think dropping subtle hints go unnoticed. If it wasn’t for the kids, I’d quit tomorrow.

But...I came up with a brilliant idea. Great mind at work. I ordered a hat last week. Yes, a hat, but not just any hat. My hat is awesome. All black with white lettering. It reads: ‘Not Interested’. Can’t wait till we meet in Starbucks tomorrow.

Gameday. I get here early, order my oatmeal and blonde roast. I see him out of the corner of my eye. He’s dressed in a pressed, cream colored shirt and complimentary tie to match, khaki slacks and caramel shoes.

Probably Stacy Adams. You know how they do. Snakes in sheep’s clothing. It seems these guys always smell good too or maybe he just splashed nearly the whole bottle on. I can smell it from here.

[turn page]

S.O.B.

Here he comes, waving and shit. Let's see how this goes. I'm taking a stance now, not ten years down the road. No pun intended.

"Well, hello there Shayla. It's so good to see you." Mr. Reficul says as he sits at my table. I purposely picked a table for four. A table for two would be too intimate.

"Hi. It's good to see you as well." *Mr. Reficul.*

He reaches out to touch my hand. I snatch it back. As he gains composure, he looks up at my cap. "What's that say?"

I'm glad people can't hear what my inner me is saying. *What the fuck does it look like? I think men just want to be entertained.* I refuse. So...I'll give him the look.

"Excuse me. What are you talking about?"

"Your ballcap." He points towards my head.

"Yes. I have one on. So...when will be the first day of the new program?"

[turn page]



He clears his throat and takes one last look at my cap. “Yeah, yeah....let me get out my paperwork.” As he places his portfolio holder on the table and shuffles through his stuff, I continue to finish my oatmeal. “You’re so focused. That’s what I like about you.”

“Yep...that’s the point of this meeting to set a date and time.”

As he pulls out a paper, he puts on the old people glasses, pushing them to the tip of his nose. He uses his finger to guide his eyes down to the middle of his paper. “Ok. It looks as if Tuesdays and Thursdays are free. Does that work for your schedule?”

I scroll through my phone’s calendar to make sure those days are free. “Yes, I’m available on those days. What time?”

When I look up, he’s staring at my breasts.

“What time?”

“Oh...afterschool. Around four or four thirty.” *Mr. Reficul*. “N-n-n-ice blo-o-u-use, by the way.”

“Four thirty is better for me,” I say, ignoring that last comment.

“So...do you have an agenda for the next few weeks?”

“I do.” I pull it out and hand it over to

him.

He nods. “Great, I like it.”

I have another copy in front of me. “As you can see, I’ve detailed each week. There is a different theme to improve their reading and writing skills.”

“Yes. I really like this.” He looks up.

“Do I need to complete a background check?”

He rubs his goatee. “You usually do, but I’ll take care of that.”

“Really? I have no problem completing it.”

He leans toward me. “You know how we do. I can take care of you and you do the same.”

“Excuse you?”

“Honey, there’s no need to worry about those little things. Are you married?”

Or seeing anyone?”

I frown. “What did you just ask me, Mr. Reficul?”

A nervous smile crosses his face. “I asked if you were married?”

“Ummm.... I’m not, but it sure does look as if you are or is that a ring from a Cracker Jack box on your finger?”

He laughs. “Yeah, I guess you can say that. But, she’s old. I need some young blood.”

“Huh...men!” I push back my chair. *Did he say his wife was old?—I’d say he has worms.* Who’s he to judge?

“What? Does that mean we can’t hang out?” He grabs my hand.

“Hey! Let go of my hand!” I yell.

“I could do wonders with those tits of yours,” he says as he stares at my breasts.

“What the fuck is wrong with you, man? You’re crossing the line!”

“I’m sorry. That slipped. My apologies.” Mr. Reficul said.

The young man at a nearby table looks around. Mr. Reficul releases my hand looks back at my cap.

“What is your problem?” I push back my chair. “Are we done here?”

“I would like to see you. Can we talk about this?”

My inner me is screaming, but he’s hit a nerve that’s not willing to come back.

I’m standing now. He’s grabbing the side of his face. There’s a palm print. I hear behind me, “Damn, she slapped the taste out of his mouth!” I look down at my hand. It’s red. Words are coming out of my mouth that I don’t realize.

“Can’t you read, Mr. Reficul? Or should I say Lucifer? I’m not interested!” My hand begins to sting.

“Bitch! Did you just slap me?” He jumps up and grabs his belongings. “You women are all the same.”

“I did, you chauvinist pig!” I scream at him as he rushes out the door.

There are cheers and laughter throughout the café. The dude nearby is streaming this incident live on YouTube. I sit back in my seat to catch my breath. The barista brings me over another blonde roast.

“This one’s on us.”

[end]

8 | Self Portrait



Caroline Knickmeier,
Visual Art

Self Portrait (Verity, Be True) (12 x 12 handmade paper, 1.5 x 1 silver pendant) is a wearable sculpture. Growing up I was forced to be silent, to be whatever an abusive parent wanted at any given time. Self Portrait is about being true to yourself, not being silent anymore, finding your own strength within, questioning everything, and above all it serves as encouragement to anyone suffering in silence. We are all interconnected. The work features a hand cast sterling silver pistol with my grandmother's diamond in the barrel. A ruby is set in the trigger guard. Handmade paper was made using local plants to produce natural red dye.

9

Them Girls

Crystallee Crain

unaware of,
and uninterested in the fact,
that this place was never made for bitches like you.

deeper with despair your gaze stains the sidewalks
you pretend to strut down.
the lies of your courteous wonder are seen.

why does she...
is her hair real?
how does she...

you stew quietly pining over my laugh,
is your husband looking my way.
you sit insecurely believing people are noticing your cup size.

this place is for the real.
the lines on our faces are gifts,
that show the shine of our grind.

please don't be so new,
and,
so afraid.

you spit in your own drink
every time,
you glare at our babies.

designed to be,
perfectly imperfect,
and clear.

i see the ways in which your envy builds,
its not my fault black don't crack.
and thank god for that drop,
because without my blackness,

id be flawed

Crystallee Crain is an activist academic and artist. She is a native of Flint, Michigan. Crystallee founded this journal to commemorate the 10 year anniversary of violence prevention efforts with Prevention at the Intersections. She founded the project in 2010.



www.acatalystjournal.org
www.preventionagenda.org

Catalyst is an online open access journal published by Prevention at the Intersections. Prevention at the Intersections works to create and maintain transformative solutions to violence and other forms of community harm.



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CATALYST

AN ONLINE JOURNAL

UPCOMING THEMES

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- Systems Change
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