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A statement from the artist and selected resume
Tiara Begs From The Internet

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Articles written by tiara (some were paid for)
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Ello: goodbye privacy (ello is a san francisco based social network predicated on an imagined intense hatred of facebook)

# Intro

I found this subject on what is ostensibly a jobseekers facebook group. This was what I found from her official website and the links on it. Tags: Bad Poetry, Identity Politics, Harry Potter, Progressive Subcultural Avenues, Burlesque Dancer

For reference, here is something she wrote a few short years ago when she was pretty normal. Something about san francisco must have changed her.

Recommended that you decide on the pronunciation of hyperlinks in advance, because I preserved every one.

## lim·i·nal

ˈliməNl/

*adjective*
*technical*
adjective: **liminal**
**1**.
of or relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.
**2**.
occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.
**3**
an adjective to put where none are needed, esp. in the case of liberal-progressive weirdo bullshit

http://creatrixtiara.com/#artist-statement

# Artists Statement: IN BRIEF

Consider the unicorn: made up of parts that don't usually go together, mythical, yet so beloved that people will go to all lengths to make it exist.
Now consider the platypus: made up of parts that don't usually go together, real, yet so confounding that for many years even scientists could not believe they existed.
I am the platypus – and my life's work has been to create spaces so that other platypus and anyone else that traverses flux, the liminal, the in-between can find themselves reflected, represented, counted. My work explores the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and other identity axes claimed by or imposed on each other.

**THE REST OF THE STORY**

I turned to writing as a child to try and make sense of being the Other, ostracized because I didn't neatly belong in any category. The writing carried me through my life of transience and reinventions – including my current foray into interdisciplinary art, based on burlesque and performance while playing with other forms, satirizing and challenging stereotypes made about my body, my background, my being. In between I have worked with media, alternative education, and social justice – and I envision myself constantly changing and shifting.

My various incarnations and shifts have allowed me to build diverse networks of vibrant resources and people – connections that I love sharing with each other. My fairy-godmother skills have made people famous, sparked careers, and made the improbable happen. I enjoy delving deep into research while also being as practically involved as possible.

For me it's all about building experiences: whether through a performance, a community project, a blog, or just by existing in the world and making my existence known – and through this I have been a beacon for others looking for that same acceptance and recognition.

http://creatrixtiara.com/#biography

**Interests:** Performance art, writing, music, immersive experiences, Alternate Reality Games, transmedia, technology, new media, digital media, video, creativity, creative sexuality, feminism, anti-racism, queer issues, gender, race, culture, travel, intersectionality, social justice, magic, volunteering, art, performance, ideas, creative philanthropy, relationships, polyamoury, relationship anarchy, identity, the Internet, social media, cross-cultural communication, sex-positivity, activism, anti-slut-shaming, circus, burlesque, improv, stage work, singing, reading, glitter, media, television, radio, community cultural development

**Skills:** Project management, administration, research, stage management, event management, production assistance, media production (TV, radio, Web, print), editing, visioning, strategic planning, networking, cross-cultural communication, idea generation, writing (creative and professional), advocacy, presenting, youth work, education, leadership, creative design

http://creatrixtiara.com/#productions-performances-creative-endeavours

*Selected Works*

- **Suicide's Requiem** - 2013-2014, a dance-theater production with Eclipse Dance Theater exploring personal experiences of survivors of suicide (those who have attempted/committed suicide, their loved ones, mental health professionals) paired with a rock rendition of Mozart's Requiem in D Minor. The production also incorporates director Samantha Blanchard's Developmental Dance Theater Technique, her own blend of Alexander movement and vocal techniques, developmental movement patterns, and performer-driven composition based on the developmental patterns that infants go through from birth to walking
- **SICK** - a artistic collective tackling the joint identities of gender variance and chronic illness. The first showing in May 2013 involves a visual arts/interactive installation exploring liminality and being "boxed in".
- **Polyester Girl Army** - for **Altered Barbie** 2012, tackling femmephobia via the lyrical rebuttal of *Polyester Girl*, a song by Australian band Regurgitator (which is about owning a blow-up doll; the poem is from the doll's perspective). There were plans to convert this into a cabaret in 2013.
- **The Best** - a project with **Contact Inc** (Brisbane) and **Mammalian Diving Reflex** (Toronto), exploring issues faced by young people with disabilities and health concerns dealing with love and relationships. Weekly explorations and creative development transformed into the "Best Party Ever", taking into account all our access needs - such as free non-alcoholic beverages, personal support, and time-out zones. I got to be the Pre-Prepared Friend, making use of my (occasionally offputting) loud personality to good use by providing audience support and comic relief. Mid 2012.
- **Anatomy of a Burlesque Dancer** - part tribute to Annie Sprinkle's *Anatomy of a Pin-Up*, part response to demands made by burlesque industry & society to change one's looks and actions to conform to a sellable "attractive" norm. Some of the statements made in the voiceover are statements I and other performers (usually of some sort of minority) have received personally.

- **Dip Me** - an installation performance piece where people are invited to paint my body with sweet toppings and eat them off me if desired. A physicalisation of the saying "Dip me in honey and throw me to the lesbians" - and not surprisingly a hit with queer audiences.
- **The Woman Who Loved To Make Vaginas Happy** **-** the moment that started it all! Part of *The Vagina Monologues* (Brisbane 2009), I play a queer dominatrix talking about her experiences with orgasms and female clientele.

# Chapter 2, wherein Tiara begs for money. Found on http://www.patreon.com/creatrixtiara

# HEYO!

I'm **Creatrix Tiara**, an interdisciplinary artist, media maker, activist, and producer interested in exploring liminality: the state of in-between, transgressing borders and transforming perceptions. A lot of my work deals with the politics and personal issues relating to identity and belonging - from **slam** **poetry** and **essays** to **burlesque** **numbers** and the **occasional** **video**. Sometimes when I feel a little silly **I pretend to be Barbie** or **write about the Potterverse set in Bangladesh**.

I have also spoken publicly on issues such as **representations of the marginalised in sexuality** and **the power of giving people a chance**. My work has been published in progressive subcultural avenues such as **The Scavenger**, **Racialicious**, and **Autostraddle**.

I create because I often do not see myself or my stories represented in the cultures around me, whether mainstream or alternative. I've found that one of the best ways to **be reflected** is to **be the reflection**. Through my work I have been blessed to be able to connect with other people who see & hear me and think "oh, that's me too!" - and together we build community and create more mirrors for each other.

# Whatcha Making?

Your support of my Patreon campaign will allow me to continue my creative production work on the above issues and explore new avenues of media and creativity, including but not limited to:

- **Written work across genres - particularly essays, short fiction, and poetry**

- **Performance work - from burlesque to theater pieces to site-specific performance art**
- **Online video - vlogging and short films**
- **Music and other audio experiments**

You will also be enabling me to participate in and produce more community and cultural development projects, especially since they are often unpaid labors of love - and you'll be able to be a part of the process every step of the way!

# How Does This Work?

When you pledge to me on Patreon, you will be charged for **your chosen amount per creative project**. This can be as low as $1, or as high as...well Patreon doesn't really say, and I doubt it's infinity, but you could try. You will be billed for your patronage per month.

So for example, if you pledged $1 per project and I create 5 projects that month, by the end of the month you will be charged $5 to support me. If you pledge $5 per project and I got super productive by releasing 10 projects, you get charged $50. Easy!

You can also set a **monthly cap** on your patronage - the maximum you're willing to pay to me per month. So if you pledge, say, $1 per project with a cap of $5, and I make 6 projects, you only will get charged $5 - and if I make only 4, you just pay $4. Fair and square!

In return for your patronage, you get **exclusive access to content** - usually before I release it to the wider world. There may be other perks too - we'll figure it out once I get the hang of the Patreon thing.

Patreon hasn't worked out how to do one-offs or additional donations just yet, but if you'd like to do just that then get in touch with me and we'll sort something out.

Patreon takes **international credit cards** and also **Paypal**!

Thanks for your support, feel free to contact me whenever, and see you soon!

For more about me:
**Official Website** + **The Loop** + **Vimeo** + **Tumblr** + **Twitter** + **Facebook** + **LinkedIn** + **Soundcloud** +*BONUS* **LiveJournal** (it’s boring but i found it)

# Her poetry

I highly suggest when you do have to cut content that you keep at least 5 of these poems, because every single one is a complete trainwreck. Italic text is text about the poem by the author.

# Altered Barbie - Polyester Girl Army

*Why is it that a song denigrating Barbie types is more popular than a song where Barbie speaks for herself?*

All you want me to say is nothing at all
All you wanted me to do
was stare at the wall
while you glom over my body
each part just a plaything to you
shiny and new
While staring at the wall
you blowing me up to blow you
I formulated plans.
I analysed your hypnosis
charming chanting credibility
substantiating your not-so-subtle misogyny
indie rock sensibility
makes one's view more respectable,
I notice.
of course you would know better
you're cool and cynical
biting bitter while waxing lyrical
you're the Man
I'm just a blonde bimbo girl
earnest and banal
even though we are both in fantasy worlds
and you wouldn't know what to do
if the fantasy wasn't centered around

you.
and while you were lost in
your self-serving fantasy
I rallied together
the Polyester Girl Army.
Sparkly and sharp
like titanium stilettos
Bubbly and potent
like 200 proof champagne
Bubblegum femmes
our sweetness can kill
you wouldn't know what hit you
when we bend on our knees
and trip you over.
From the backwoods
to the backstage
Going rogue with bright red rouge and burning rage
Perky tits and ass bringin' it back back back
Winding them up for a massive attack
Deflating your ego, letting loose your hot air
If you bought into the patriarchy
well Buyer Beware
Take this truck and shove it
Feel the glamour and pain
Burning this dollhouse down down down
Till we explode - BOOM!
Your attitude's more ugly than any of our stains
Want to return us to the factory?
Don't bother
It's not us that need repairs.
The Polyester Girl Army
50 plus years of being dismissed
as shallow fluff
Now we're here to call your bluff
- are you prepared?
our hollow limbs are stronger
than your hollow boasting.
our makeup is thicker
than your skin.

our false eyelashes are more real
than your false consciousness.

# My Gender

## my gender.

My gender isn't really mine to determine
My gender is more a job description than a role
My gender is largely dependent on whoever has to deal with me
My gender is more about who I am not than who I am
My gender can only ever exist as a social de-construct
My gender is only an issue because everyone else makes it an issue
My gender greatly prefers to let it all hang out rather than bind it all in
My gender wants to get rid of the hormones that sink me into despair once a month like clockwork lunacy
My gender scoffs at the idea of "submissive Asians" because have you seen my mum and aunts?! Even the quiet ones will kick your ass
My gender has far less skincare products or designer clothes than my dad
My gender asked Lush HQ if they would consider opening a branch in Malaysia because my dad fell in love with the henna blocks he uses to dye his moustache (they said no)
My gender clinged to the honorific Mx at age 14
My gender was way more comfortable with ambiguity as a teenager compared to my sexuality- and now it's flipped around
My gender was walking around my aunt's apartment complex in Dhaka in a khameez top and jeans when a 5-year-old asked me: "tumi akta chele na akta mei?" (are you a boy or a girl?)
My gender gets me assigned to the Foreigner contingent at my cousin's wedding to a French guy
My gender is sorely tempted to come out on my family-safe Facebook profile if it wasn't so futile
My gender shows too much cleavage for my mum's comfort no matter what I wear
My gender is "losing my dignity" by "exposing myself to strange men" (try strange *women*, mum)
My gender connected to Chatroulette and the first comment was "oh, just some random Black guy"

My gender showed up at an event in a hat with playing cards- and then showed up on twitter as “so there is this guy here who’s dressed as a magician…he looks good!”
My gender gets really bothered by being called “he” even when wearing a men’s shirt, a moustache, and a playing-card hat
My gender gets femmespiration from Darren Hayes and Joan Jett
My gender is not likely to be in a Saint Harridans suit or a rockabilly dress with skull hairbows
My gender prefers the Alternative Lifestyle Haircut to feminine long hair, but resents the unspoken requirement to look queer enough
My gender goes neutral around straight cis guys but makes me want to be a lady around dapper gentlequeers
My gender floats between a super femme girlfriend and a soft butch lover
My gender feels pressured to be queer enough to prove my sexual orientation
My gender, like my name and religion and ethnicity and sexuality and politics and nationality, is wrong
My gender is femme by default and yet not at all feminine
My gender cannot conform but is not particularly unusual
My gender feels are irrelevant once I leave the Bay Area
My gender is forcibly fluid
My gender’s only consistent quality is Foreign
My gender gets a failing grade despite my extra credit
My gender is fucked
My gender is fucked over
My gender is Fuck You
My gender is F.

# Culture Fuck - Hey Dude

*This is in response to Jamie Dewolff's poetry from "Under My Big Top", which was essentially:*
*1. My girlfriend is a Disney party princess! I RULE*
*2. My girlfriend thinks she's fat. I disagree. I RULE*
*3. My girlfriend is my sub! I RULE*
*a.k.a. White Straight Cis Guy Making Himself The Hero of Every Story Fuck That Shit.*

HEY DUDE!

You think you're such a Big Man
waiting home for me so you could
bend me over the dining room table
pull my sparkling ballgown up
to spank my fat ass raw?
I have had to deal with worse brats than you
Screaming children interrogating me about my lack of wings
The birthday girl in tears because her nemesis is wearing the exact same dress
Everyone's mum and dad and stepmum and stepdad and mum's girlfriend and dad's special friend
tucked away in a separate room
clutching mimosas and pearls
While I bear sole witness to their wishes on candles blown for another year
of only ever learning about Princesses
not as custodians of diplomacy, grace, and power
but holding on to someday their prince will come
as if that's all they are good for
as if that's all I am good for
You good for nothing!
crowing about being the King of the Jungle
think you've got more swagger than Shere Khan
more braggadocio than Gaston and Christian Grey combined
- do you read?
Do you read the rage of the revolutionaries
rebelling against the damage of your unchecked privilege?
Do you read the thoughtful critique of your controversy
or do you reject responses with
"This is ART, you cannot censor me!"
You say you want a conversation
All I hear is a monologue in chorus
You want a piece of me?
Bitch, so does EVERYBODY
She's too big now she's too thin
Too girly too butch too ugly too pretty too too too
it's too much, we cannot win!
Your deflection doesn't answer my question
Not when you still maintain the separation
between 'beautiful' and 'fat'
as though they cannot interact

Well here is my BEAUTIFUL FAT ASS
so take that!
all you seem to see is a landmark for your
whiplash flogger hand marks
You seem to think being the Top has all the luck
well hasn't anybody ever told you
the BOTTOM runs the FUCK!
I may be shameless in my submission
Compared to you I'm fuckin' brave
Would you have the courage to endure pain
alchemical transform it into pleasure
Or would you cower like a little baby
Because someone dared tell you behave
- working with three year olds is a bliss
compared this
At least they take scrapes and scars in stride
You're too scared to let the cat-o-nine-tails on your behind
Hey DUDE!
Behind every Big Man
and in front and on the sides and all around
are Women and the Genderfucks
with even bigger souls
and spirits and energy and courage
We don't need your approval
We don't need your validation
We just need you to recognise
and get out of our damn way.
So while I spend all my time in 88-horsepower metal carriages
desperately praying for fairy godmothers to grant me with tips
to support YOUR unmarked, pristine, pampered fat ass
think about your claims of power
and reconsider whether it is yours to bequest
as if you're doing me a favour
or if it's for you to relinquish
to its most appropriate owner

# Culture Fuck - Rekhti -

*I was reading a book about queer culture in South Asian history and came across an article about rekhti, supposedly poetry about women's love for each other written by men. I was rather dubious, but when information is really low on the ground you take what you can get!*

Sweetheart
come over to my place tonight
I have made you a roast dinner
yeah I know
since when?
get this
I was reading some article
it claimed that back in the day
the lesbians in our culture
would split wishbones
to find out who was the ‘butch’ and the ‘femme’
or the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’
isn’t that wild?
they are claiming this from
long-lost poetry
written by men
about women’s loves
they are claiming this poetry
is so scandalous
that the only published archives are in Italy
and asking officials redirects you to pornography!
I’m not sure I believe it
only 2 people in the world seem to care
and one of them is an outsider
but we are outsiders too, I guess
no one to document our history
or care that we were worth archiving
not even footnotes in complicated
nationalistic edit wars
we weren’t a concept worth marking off

as existing
oh well
come to my dinner
and after you are well-fed with
three forms of curry
saffron rice
potatoes peas spinach
I will take the wishbone from the roast
and let you have the longer end
so that I could smother you with feelings
and gravy
take up space with overbearing care
raw chillies and onion
drown you in milky rose syrup
and love

## canary

the canary is screaming her lungs out.
she does not sing that often.
not even a squeak.
she's been told that her eyes pick up signs that weren't there
she reads anything into everything
her nose so blocked up by the constant smog
that she can't tell one scent from another
when everything seems like danger
nothing does
The few times she gets a screech out
has been like an echo that takes a long time
to reply
the danger does not make itself apparent
until long after the workers have left the mines
but had left behind
some hope
in this new mine the canary is suffocating
but maybe it's the canary's failing?
the workers claim to have found
light at the end of the tunnel

they seem so delighted with the possibility
the canary does not want to take
that rare ray of sunshine away
maybe the canary is only scared
of being forgotten.
maybe the canary would be left behind in the mines
if she dares make a sound
maybe the canary feels that if the workers did find that light
they would kill the canary
because who wants a fearmonger
who can only see darkness
when others see sun?
the canary struggles to breathe through the
dense thick darkness
she tries to claw through the rockfall
with her meager limbs
she wants to fly out and bring the workers with her
but she can barely even lift herself
tiny hints are left, small little chirps
that feel like tight squeezes to the canary's chest
she struggles to say anything
but the workers keep mining
and the canary does not want to
block them from the light.
the workers hit a wall
there is no light.
none of the light that the canary couldn't see anyway.
the workers fall, tired
disappointed at hard work gone nowhere
the workers claim that it is simply bad luck
maybe there was going to be light
but it is night-time now
and we don't know when the sun would rise again.
the canary wants to yell that there never was any light.
there were just mirages and traps
she's seen this before
she has read maps and reports and patterns
the mine was an illusion
the light non-existent

there was not going to be any sun
at least not in this mine
she looks for those maps and reports and patterns
and find a few leads
that seem to confirm her suspicions
but she knows that in this darkness
the miners cannot see anything
she doesn't know if they ever will come around.
the canary gets the blame
for still believing the mine was a trap
for not joining in the workers' sadness
for not being able to believe
that there is a light.
maybe this is yet another echo,
thinks the canary
maybe the reply will not come
for a long time
or maybe ever
or maybe any sound is futile
even if the canary did manage to scream
even if the canary made a big ruckus
the workers would have kept on anyway
reassuring her that it will all be ok
they have taken all the safety precautions
they know what they are doing
- even when the floor of the mines are crumbling
and even when the walls keep shifting
and even when all of this seems like yet another
trap
the canary can scream her lungs out till she chokes
but she cannot stop the workers
from mining
from hoping
from choosing their hurt
and really, which hurts less?
losing the light
or learning that there never was any light at all?
the canary wants to scream her lungs out
but she can only scream quietly

the workers cannot hear her
they are too deep in the darkness
to feel anything else
or hear anything else
not even the canary's sweet songs
will move them
the canary is screaming her lungs out
but only to herself
her lungs crushed in.

## monster.

I identify more strongly
with the monsters and villians
in every story
the ones that did wrong.
the ones that hurt.
the ones that destroy.
It's the only way anything makes sense.
If I was being shunned
as though prompted like instinct -
If my reputation precedes
my knowledge about it -
If I change how I act over and over
but still reach the insanely same consequence -
surely it's me.
They say it takes two to tango
but there's always someone who takes the lead
and I don't know if I'm the one tripping over
my dancer's feet
or if I'm the one with the foot propped out
am I not learning?
have I taken in the wrong lesson?
life is not an aesop's fable
with the moral of the story clearly outlined
the lesson only comes weeks months years later
after I have set off bridge fires
by trying to shine lights

only smoke signals to lecture me
- maybe
When people tell me
‘You are a good person’
I shudder.
You don’t know the harm I have caused.
You don’t know about the pain.
My damage is not malicious nor deliberate
- which just makes it even worse
Good intentions do not dampen Hell’s heat.
sometimes I wish I could disappear.
Not die - that makes people mournful.
But disappear from memory and nostalgia
My existence but a blur
Injury cured before infliction
no one will miss me
there is no one to miss.
maybe I could be a yeti
or bigfoot. or nessie
mythical, rare, hard to pin down
sightings always in suspicion
then I can retreat to the comfort of disbelief
knowing that the only extent of my danger
is largely imaginary.

## i do not want to be your girlfriend.

I do not want to be your girlfriend.
I want to be the bearer of your concerns
the resting place of your heart
the receiver of your wisdom
the laughter of your jokes
the embrace of your comfort
the sparkle in your eye
the copilot on your journey
the softness of your touch
the smile upon your lips
the hands around your hips

the beauty in your spirit
the charm within your soul
the giver of your attention
the curiousity in your adventures
the melt in your kisses
the intertwining of your fingers
the stars in your galaxy
the dreamer of your wishes
the companion by your side
the muse for your art
the art for your inspiration
the gravity for your situation
the lightness of your freedom
the music in your words
the thoughts in your contemplation
the one who loves.
a love amongst love
so plentiful
and free
I want others to know your delights
as much as you want me to know them too
I want your light to span universes
be one of many that can’t stop grinning
minds that touch the world unshackled
kicking up the ground so we can dance
a chorus in magic in sweet melody
one of many
many in one.
where simple words do not suffice
and terminologies cannot encompass
the variety we share with each other.
where terms bring upon unwanted conditions
and subsumes what makes us brilliant
reduces us to only the shadow
instead of the bright.
I do not want to be your girlfriend.
You are way too wonderful for that.

I highly suggest finishing with this piece of poetry in a round robin slam-off. It's a series of 30 fragments, and it's something else.

## of everyone i've ever kissed

(i won't be surprised if I missed one or two)

**1.**
maybe you win on technicality
but i don't think
a card game
really counts

**2.**
even after i plundered your heart
and left a hole
i feel you are still the only one
who loves me
unconditionally

**3.**
we were each other's firsts,
in a way
sorry it wasn't as magical
as we'd like

**4.**
why did you not tell me sooner?
we could have saved some time
- though perhaps it wasn't worth
the wait

**5.**
i wanted to be your experiment
but you disappeared
before i had the courage to ask
for what scares me

**6.**
i knew my performance was
divinely inspired

but i didn’t expect for it
to turn you over to our side
**7.**
‘oh shit i am a lesbian’
is a rather awkward statement to make
while lying on my boyfriend’s lap
after beating him
to you
**8.**
online charm and chemistry
does not always transfer
when real-world chemicals
interfere
**9.**
you tasted like glitter and grit
i wished your booth
had offered other services
**10.**
who knew that intellectual fascinations
could one day lead
to physical satisfaction?
**11.**
people kept claiming
that i was going to be exploited
but these were the best working conditions
i’ve had in a while
**12.**
while you talked about
office vacuum cleaners exploding
the devices between us
made us explode too
**13.**
so much for your
highbrow marxist ways
when you’d choose a slap on your body
to a slap to my dignity
**14.**
the first time i walked in
to see you

straddling him
i cracked up
- fucking *finally*
**15.**
gym rat
speaks like a lolcat
i wonder where you're at
**16.**
i gave up my hurt to you
but you wouldn't indulge me
in my wish for rose thorns
**17.**
only two people
know about you
good thing you are paid
to keep secrets
**18.**
look
i cannot be made responsible
for the troubles of your metamours
**19.**
you say i see you
sometimes you see me
and i see love
but sometimes i feel like
you see right past me
**20.**
your heart was as wrapped in barbed wire
as the subject of your poetry
i am only sorry
i could not leave carnations in
your wmds
**21.**
apparently we drew an audience
i rather wished we could
have taken things
off-stage
**22.**
good thing you've already had

your birthday
i don’t want to get the website in trouble
**23.**
when i said you could
bump into me any time
i really did mean it
photos don’t do justice to you
**24.**
the resemblance is uncanny
and things could have been disturbing
but you gave me what i needed
when i thought i never could
again
**25.**
i hear you deconstruct and reengineer
pleasure and fun
let me be your test subject
**26.**
i was mostly drawn to you
because i saw how much you were drawn
to me
i hope you don’t mind being
my ego boost
**27.**
your kindness holds more magic
than the hats
of your trade
**i.**
i am not counting you
i refuse to let you
be my only experience
of what you could have been
**ii.**
i wish i could count you
but it took me so long
to be able to listen to that song
with your name again
**iii.**
if you had been

my one and only
i think i would never want
anyone else

This is prose. I think there's a theme of needles in common between each one of these vignettes, or something.

## sharp.

*inspired by something told to me by my MFA advisor.*

I

**I refused to complete the sewing section of my assignment on principle.**
It was the Living Skills class in Form 3 in my all-girls school. The assignment was a multi-part project: putting together a tissue box (that lit up when you pulled a sheet out) and mock-registering a business to sell them. The project brought together a number of syllabus sections for this subject: electronics, carpentry, business, textiles.
My growing teenage feminist fervour strongly rejected any attempts at forced femininity – which ended up with me rejecting all sorts of femininity whatsoever. Had this been a co-educational school I may have had the option to learn draftsmanship, or plumbing, or something else. Sewing would be optional. Not mandatory because we were 'girls'. No way was I going to make a patchwork quilt cover for a ridiculous tchotchke.
Many of my classmates opted out too – some, perhaps, more out of laziness than out of political consciousness. Our mothers ended up doing our work for us: so much for being feminist, when you don't even take responsibility for your own work.
Many years later I discover t-shirt surgery, cosplay, burlesque, performance art. I have so many ideas for costuming and attire, but not enough skill to pull them off. I have grown to embrace femme, having managed to recognize that devaluing femininity is just as anti-feminist and patriarchal as forced femininity, finding myself femme by default thanks to the influence of my mother and aunts. I wonder if their sewing skills are genetic and if I just have a recessive gene.

II

**The first time I could recall being injected was when I was 7, dealing with food poisoning from a bad carton of orange juice.**
I drank it at Zia Airport in Dhaka, puked all the way through the flight to Singapore, and was driven across the causeway to hospital as soon as we landed.
As soon as we reached the hospital I was put in ER and was jabbed right in the middle of my buttock. I think it was the left one. I also think my scream could be heard for miles.
I wish this was the only time I have had to deal with injections, but sadly it became a common theme growing up. Whenever I get blood tests done I ask to hold one of the

teddy bears knitted by volunteers for the Red Cross. I sing out loud so I don't have to feel the piercing.

The first time I had acupuncture was the day a potential lover cruelly told me she wanted nothing to do with me as I had ruined her life for a mistake committed many months ago, a mistake I thought we had long cleared up. I felt that the only way to atone for my sins was to put myself through the most terrifying treatment I could think of.
The acupuncturist noticed me fretting and placed a needle right between my eyes, the top of the bridge of my nose.
"This is for you to calm down."
⁗

**My ex-domme really wanted a pincushion.**
She had been charmed by a demonstration at a play party she brought me to, our 'second date'. Someone was creating epic patterns of ribbon through punctured sections of their submissive's back, the needles still sticking through. I dared not look; I could feel every piercing on my own back, possibly more than the submissive felt for herself.
That night I hesitantly followed my ex-domme to her house so that she could unleash her favourite toys on me. Tied up on a chair while lashing me with canes, telling me to choose between 1 and 5 while leather straps and cat-o-nine-tails tore across my skin. The night ends with delicious scratches on my back, an act that usually leaves me happy and melty - but her nails were so sharp that it felt like being cut up with glass shards.
I breathed through it all because I was smitten by her rockstar poise and arrogant confidence and wanted that for myself. I was willing to do anything for her, even if it was more her wish than mine.
Willing to do anything - except be her pincushion. Hard limit. Severe hard limit. I broke a lot of my limits for her, but not this. Not ever.
I asked her once to whip me with a bouquet of thorny roses. She never did. She dumped me instead.
⁗⁗

**When I was a kid my cousins and I were really into temporary tattoos.**
Cheap packets from the dollar store, cut them up and place them on your skin with water, lasts for a few days. We snuck them under our school uniforms and showed them off to classmates as the teachers scrutinized our not-supposed-to-be-plucked eyebrows and not-supposed-to-be-dyed hair and not-supposed-to-be-disobedient selves.
I have been toying with the idea of a permanent tattoo for a while but did not fancy the delivery mechanism. I have been told that tattoo needles feel more like scratching than piercing. I like scratching. Maybe it won't be as bad.

My dream tattoo is a full-body epic: a vine of roses crawling from the top of my right foot, up the leg and around my belly, full bloom on my back, curled around one breast before ending at the nape of my neck. That last part was suggested to me by a potential lover, the day before I had half of the design carefully painted on me with henna. She threw me away before I had the chance to show it to her, never wanting to see me again.
I wonder, if I had the henna roses drawn on permanently, if she would come back to me.
\\\\\
**My MFA advisor tells me I'm sharp.**
She doesn't think that my work is necessarily political or satirical, words I used to describe myself. She says she is struggling with the exact term, but that she keeps circling back to 'sharp'. Sharp.
Sharp like needles, threading through disparate pieces that shouldn't really go together, but somehow grow into a fascinating patchwork quilt.
Sharp like the fervour of feminist medicine prescribed to combat the poisons of misconceptions and pigeonholes.
Sharp like precise jabs and lashes just where it hurts, just enough for the pain to register simultaneously as pleasure, a confusing heady mix.
Sharp like the etches that subsume you into a trance and leave you permanently marked with art.
Sharp.
I am afraid of sharp. I don't know if I can dish out what I have taken. I don't know what is easier: piercing right between the eyes with penetrating insight, or sewing myself up.
I have a major phobia of needles.
I need the teddy bear.
Or a bouquet of roses.
Sharp.

## Art as Language

When I tell people about being an artist, or that I am working on an MFA, the first question I receive is "what sort of art do you do?". Usually this means "what is your medium?", and often their elaboration reveals their limited ideas about what art entails: "Painting? Drawing? Watercolours or acrylics?". Even other artists and art-savvy people focus on the medium, as though that is the only way I am meant to identify: "I am a performance artist" or "I am a writer".
To me, that feels like the wrong question to ask. To me, stating the mediums I use does not convey much about my artistic practice. To me, it's just as vague as asking me

which languages I speak, and assuming that says anything about what I say with that language, as though I only communicate with that one language.
Then again, much like how people don't tend to expect my use of multiple artforms, they don't often expect me to be multilingual either.
From a very young age I have been fluent in more than one language, and am also very proficient in various regional creoles, such as Singlish (Singaporean English) and Manglish (Malaysian English). Growing up in multicultural societies where English is not the sole  primary language, but whose importance as an international business language was emphasized, meant that most of us often code-switched while communicating. In the same conversation, often the same sentence, I would braid in English, Malay, Bengali, sometimes a smattering of words from various Chinese or Indian languages, and often Singlish or Manglish slang words - and be perfectly understood. The mix of languages became a larger super-language for me, one that I felt best communicating in.

Like languages, there are a couple of forms I am more fluent in, forms that I tend to gravitate to instinctively and hence have more experience with. I have been a life-long writer, and recently embraced my love of the stage through performance art. And, like languages, there are a few forms that I do not know much about, some which I am rather self-conscious and not confident in. I feel much the same way about Bengali (my family's mother tongue) as I do about painting or drawing - people expect me to know more than I actually do and often comment on my lack of skill to the point of making me reluctant to make use of those languages and forms.
However, to restrict me to just one form is like forcing me to choose only one language forever. Some prompts require this, and usually the prompt also tells me the requested content, creating useful artistic boundaries - e.g. submissions for themed poetry readings, or acts for a burlesque cabaret. The main purpose of my artistic practice, though, is to express myself the best way I know how - which almost always involve more than one form, code-switching like I do with language. I've performed my poetry submission in costume and character; I've incorporated spoken word into my burlesque acts.

The pertinent question for me and my artistic practice is not "what forms do you work with?". It's "what are you trying to say, and what's the best way to say them?". And sometimes the best word for what I want to say is in a language unusual to me.

Selections from her Essay found at
https://medium.com/@creatrixtiara/the-liminal-survivor-61d4e3f24504.

This party was going to be my first sex party ever, but more to the point it was going to be my first attempt at sex with women.
I had known I was some flavour of queer since I was about sixteen, when I fell head over heels with my best friend (and then spent ages trying to explain it away as mere “admiration”), but never had an opportunity to explore it. Some years ago I met my first boyfriend, Panda, who was my first kiss and first anything to do with sex really. He was - still is - an amazing man with a kind heart and a lot of patience and compassion; the sort of person I could see myself getting married to. Yet I didn’t want him to be my only experience with sex and relationships. Katy Perry’s *I Kissed A Girl* was playing everywhere in Brisbane, and the fact that I had never kissed a girl but deeply wanted to started to get to me.
Should I throw away a beautiful relationship for sexual experimentation? Who’s to say that kissing a girl - or proceeding further - would actually be as good as I imagined? Maybe it was all hype. Maybe it doesn’t matter. Maybe sex is not as important as love.
I temporarily separated from Panda while I sorted out my emotional overwhelm. I learnt that a friend is attempting an open relationship with her boyfriend at the time. While reconciling with Panda I ask him if he would be up for the idea. He seemed supportive, so we gave it a shot.

It was through my online persona that I heard about a playspace not far from where I live - one of the only places in the city that hosts sex parties. An upcoming one was going to be women’s only. Hey, here’s my chance to explore this sex-with-women business and see if it matches the hype.
My blog post for that persona that day stated my curiousity and excitement about the event.
It was to be her last.

I arrived at DesiQ the next morning still shattered from the evening before. The first person who noticed my dour mood was the partner of one of the organisers. When she asked me why I was feeling down, I told her about the screening last night - how there was a film that made fun of a serious topic and how it had deeply triggered me. I did not get into the specifics of the film but I tried to convey just how hurtful it was.

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I spent most of the party observing the other attendees fucking each other, in duos or groups. I tentatively joined in for one group but not for long. I had no idea where to start

or who to even approach - and it wasn't like anyone was going out of their way to approach me.
Towards the end of the night I decided to gather up my courage and ask someone for play. I had been interested in this one particular woman, mostly due to her cross-leather outfit. She introduced me to her friend, who ravished me with gusto.
So much gusto, in fact, that she pretty much ignored my pleas for caution and pacing. I tried to get her to take things slow and easy, to respect my limits. She told me she was going to use me as her sex toy - and forced too-big-for-me dildos on me. I didn't know whether to be more forcefully resistant or to give in.
At the end of the night, while waiting for a taxi, myself and a couple of the attendees note how challenging my session had been. I found out that the other woman had been full-out drunk. I was asked if I was OK; I think I muttered a 'I'm fine'.
It was in the taxi home that the events of the last few hours finally hit me. I return home, to the apartment Panda and I were sharing, and notice myself melting on the floor as if I was out of my body.
"I think I was just raped."

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Panda and I had tentatively talked about getting engaged before my move to the Bay Area - largely for visa reasons - and it was getting to the point where people were asking when, not if, we were getting married. I was partly excited about the idea - but also terrified that I was going to get trapped in the role of Good Heterosexual Wife, living a double life. I knew Panda would have supported me anyway, but his support wasn't enough for me to be comfortable.
About a month after I arrived in the Bay Area, I met Nightingale and quickly fell in love. The night we hooked up for the first time was also the night that Panda finally hooked up with the person who gave me my 'Oh Shit' moment; virtual high-fives were shared. A day later Nightingale and I decided to be girlfriends…which gave me anxiety about what it meant to be a 'girlfriend'. I had to come to the agonising realisation that I really could not be Panda's girlfriend anymore. I don't know if it was the sexual orientation or the distance that finally did me in.
A few weeks later I broke the news to Panda. He told me that he had known for some time that the relationship would have to change, but did not want to be the first to pull the plug. We still wanted to be close to each other…just not in the same ways we were for the last six years.

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I emailed the organisers of the sex party to complain, via my persona.
The organiser told me: "you seemed like you were having fun."
I left behind all accounts associated with the persona and never return.

(About a year later I performed at a party where a dominatrix with a name nearly matching my persona's was giving people free paddlings. Her idea of consent was questionable, coercing participants to take off their underwear whether or not they wanted it. I wrote to the event organisers with my concerns; I never received acknowledgement or reply.)

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My initial reaction to being raped was to find more women to fuck.
It wasn't a reaction I could find any relatability for. Most other rape resources assume reactive celibacy: sex is now tainted and triggering! How can you ever want sex again? I felt like I was doing survivorship wrong, that if I was still horny - and extremely so, though not really towards Panda - then I must have not really been raped. I was hungry and greedy and just wouldn't admit that I was having fun.
But I was determined to not let this be my only experience of sex with women. I still wanted to know if kissing a girl was all that great.

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I am vast and contain multitudes. And a lot of these multitudes contrast and clash with each other.
A South Asian migrant child of migrants, raised Muslim but spiritually ambiguous, queer and non-monogamous, shameless and undignified and hairy and brown and lumpy but still willing to put herself out there raw and vulnerable and open.
My liminal state means that I end up finding allies in the unlikeliest of places and face frustration with people who are supposed to be affiliated with me. A straight cis white guy and a white trans* woman. A movement decried for being too White-centric. A family from a culture that frowns on sexual deviance. A conservative radio station. They're not supposed to be on my side, but they are and I appreciate their presence.
I also am deeply grateful for the allies that I do have that are in my communities: other attendees at DesiQ, other SlutWalk organisers and participants from non-White backgrounds and countries, other survivors of same-sex sexual assault. But it gets tiring to try and explain and justify myself over and over again, just because I don't quite fit anyone's convenient narrative.
I find support where I can get it, no matter who they are affiliated with. I take into consideration critiques and problems and drawbacks. I don't assume automatic best interest: I let them prove themselves to me. When you are an unusual case, you need to build unusual support systems.
Perhaps floating in the in-between will allow everyone involved to let healing grow.
(p.s. kissing a girl is totally worth it.)

http://shafiq28.tumblr.com/ The Harry Potter copyright Infringement department of this girl's bullshit media empire.



"You're a Shafiq's daughter!" said my mother. That didn't mean anything to me...until now.

ayesha shafiq. twenty-eight. third-fourth-however many culture kid. trying to figure out my background and my future.

***

fictional character based on the harry potter universe, particularly the sacred twenty-eight. mostly posting headcanons about a bangladeshi magical potterverse world. sort of rp - may be open to rp'ing with you upon discussion.

# what's your story?]

**ic:**
I'm Ayesha, freshly twenty-eight and out of university - perfect time for a quarter-life crisis. I went to Hogwarts but did not spend long in the British magical world - I never quite felt like I belonged there.
I never quite felt like I belonged anywhere, to be honest. My parents migrated from Bangladesh long before I was born, but moved around a lot - pretty common story with my family tree. Everywhere I go, Magical or Muggle, I am treated as a foreigner first: "Where are you from?" is my most hated question. Yet even in my own family I am an outsider: the 'interesting' child, nominally theirs, strange mutant fruit.
When my mother continually told me growing up that I was a 'Shafiq's daughter', I thought she was being daft - *of course* I was a Shafiq's daughter, Shafiq is my *dad* after all, why does she need to remind me? So that I don't act too Western, too foreign, so that I don't forget my family?

Then one day as I was sorting through family documents I discovered a list of the Sacred Twenty-Eight - and saw ‘Shafiq’ right there, amongst other familiar names like Malfoy, Weasley, and Abbott. I started asking my mother about it, and she (probably having waited *her entire life* for me to even *ask*) started sharing the history of Shafiq, its cultural and magical heritage, its story.
This is me attempting to rediscover my cultural and magical heritage. My story. Where do I belong?

A shining example of creatrix tiara’s skill at crowdsourcing.

Hi guys.
I’m so glad so many of you are reading this project, because its something very dear to me and the fact that there are people reading this motivates me to go deeper into this and not shove this project to the side.
Bless you all.
BUT
I’m applying to universities for my MA and that takes time. Unfortunately, I foolishly let real life take a backseat to this blog and now one of the courses I really wanted is Limited Availability now.
In short.
I would really, REALLY appreciate it if you guys could pitch in and submit any pictures you might find which you think could work on this blog. I end up spending about four or five hours at a go finding blog entry appropriate pics and then another hour or so editing them so they look good. In proportion, it usually takes me about an hour to write and edit a post so that its ready to go. The more pics I get, the quicker I can upload, the more you guys get to read. So…
Themes that will be turning up sooner or later:
- Slaves: ok this is URGENT. I need pics of slaves in slave ships - they could be paintings or screencaps, but high quality, high resolution stuff.
- Mughal art & colonial Bengal era photos/pics etc.
- ooo photos from post-war britain, preferably of immigrants from South Asia and the Carribean.
- Celts: red haired ones preferably. + points if they’re painted in blue.
- Scottish clansmen: erm. yeah. Battle scenes esp?
- Saxons: farmers, battles, bonus points if you can find something to do with the Night of the Long Knives. Or like people being butchered at a dinner table. (No, the Red Wedding is too obvious a reference sorry.)
- Hogwarts House motifs: um. Minimalist, preferably. Also if you can get actual pics of animals/people which look nice/fit the pic quality or themes used so far = great.

- 1920s era dudes in a dudeclub. A bit like the Drones club from P G Wodehouse. I have some art for this already, but I like to have a stock to choose from. Tweed+suckerseer suits also work.
- things which could pass for Azkaban. Gloomy stuff.

All submissions should have a source link and I will credit your sumissions at the end of each post. <3

I will be posting, don't fear, but I would dearly appreciate the help since I'm a bit swamped at the moment.

<3

BONUS POINTS: IF YOU WANNA READ A LOT MORE POTTERVERSE BULLSHIT

# [other potterverse headcanons and worldbuilding]

**ooc:**

This project was partially inspired by other fans writing extensive headcanon and worldbuilding projects around the Potterverse. Here are some that I've found; please share yours with me.

**Fiction and Ficlets:**

Lives and Lies of Wizards - gorgeous short illustrated stories of different elements of the Potterverse. One of the biggest inspirations for Shafiq 28.

Amortentia Fashion - pictures of various Potterverse fashions, sometimes accompanied with short fic. See also Wizard Fashion.

The Monster Blog of Monsters - creatures and animals from the Potterverse, an extension of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*

Roman Holiday / Jewel of the Nile / Last Tango in Paris - I read this story ages ago and its description of a Turkish hammam made me a spa bunny. Great exploration on magical cultures in Egypt, Turkey, various other places.

Marissa and the Wizards - Set in a magical school in Brazil, from the point of view of a Muggle-born orphan witch from the slums. What I especially liked about this story is the exploration of class discrimination, as well as the incorporation of native/indigenous cultures and stories.
Dept of Magical Education - pictures rather than writing, but beautiful artwork that you could see being used in magical schools

**Writers and Tumblrs With Nifty Headcanons:**

petrichorlore and thecompleteillustrated have been working on the story of a Muslim in Hogwarts, which also served as partial inspiration for Shafiq Twenty-Eight
teaparties has been writing some interesting headcanon-y material about Desi magic - they're not specifically Potterverse but make for great background information
punkdraco creates elegant and creative photosets to accompany Potterverse headcanon, such as next-generation Potterverse, HP Rule 63 (genderbent) and responses to HP memes
essayofthoughts contributes a lot to Potterverse headcanon blogs and has a fantastic imagination