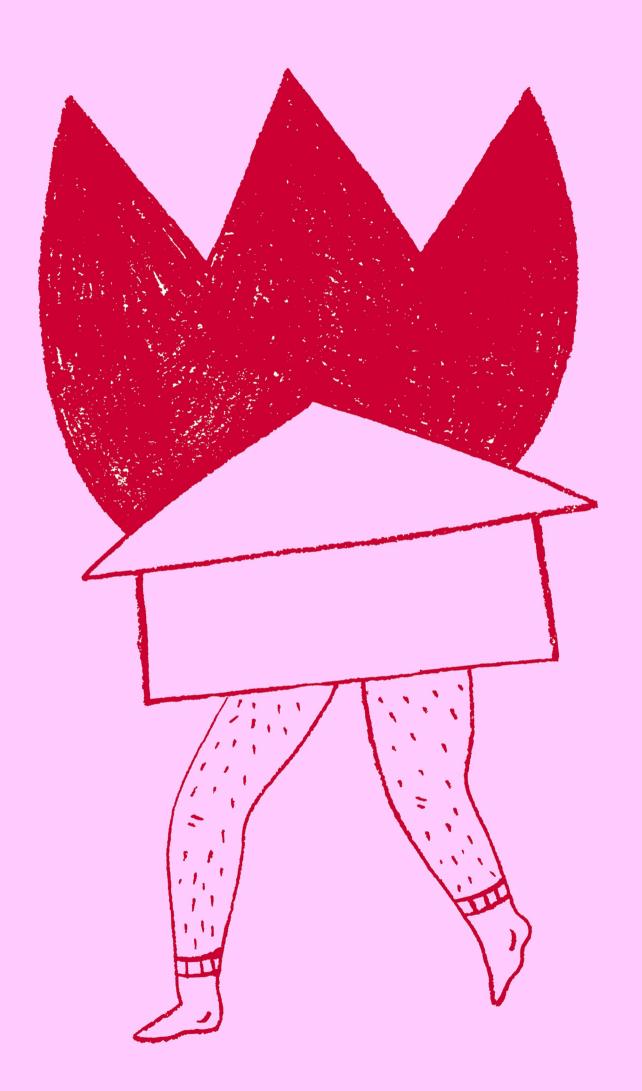




Dear Friend,

The world is ending today. And I'm sure I've told you before, but I need to make sure you remember: I love you. I have loved you for a long time, and for short periods too; in sickness, in health, in underpaid customer service jobs, in times of abundant brunch money, at 1am behind the bar, and over 2pm calls discussing heartbreak. There are times we've hurt each other, times we did not approve, but I still love you and hope you love me too.



INTRODUCTION

Condolences is a workshop/intervention/performance. As we become more and more anxious, waking up at odd hours about strange fears, we invite you to a space to share your thoughts, feelings, anxieties and stories, as we grapple with the end of the world as we know it.

Brings your joys, bring your sorrows. Your solutions, your grief, your what-ifs and why-nots. Bring your friends, your lovers. Invite your enemies too, if you can get a hold of them.

Sharing both our GRAND PLANS and small hopes, this workshop will culminate in a letter, to anyone (or everyone, or no one) about the end of the world, and whatever you'd like to say about it. These will be compiled into a small document, meant for sharing, either anonymously, or with a pen-name (or not).

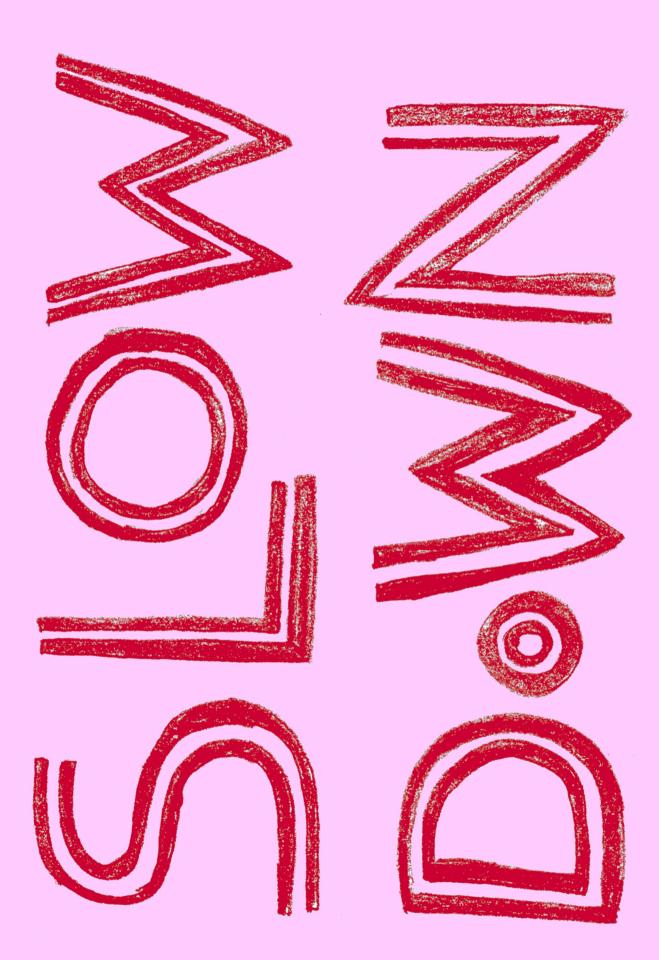
Inspired, very deeply, by conversations with close friends. And informed by many (many) panic attacks.

A note: Initially planned for a pre-pandemic timeline, this workshop has since been rearranged. This written guide is for you if you are interested in doing the workshop by yourself, at home, or with friends. You can send your letter for compilation to condolences.zine@gmail.com.

I've written this pretty colloquially. Which means, I've written it the way I speak. So this guide is more like a zine, and less like a book. As I write this, I'm using the knowledge I currently have and practice (sometimes imperfectly). It may or may not line up with your own ways of knowing. It's also possible that my future self thinks differently or acquires better ways to think about change, grief, anxiety, etc. Which is to say: Use this as you see fit, as a resource. + Trust yourself.

OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Understanding & unpacking
 - > The End of the World as a narrative.
 - > Our emotional responses to it.
 - > Our personal relationship to it.
- ☐ Using Letter Writing to
 - > Explore The End of The World.
 - > Support social change/ imagine futures.
- ☐ Compile letters into a zine.
 - > If interested, please email your letter to
 - << condolences.zine@gmail.com >>



GROUNDING

** Disclaimer, I don't have formal training in meditation or mindfulness. These are grounding techniques that I've picked up as an AnxiousPerson™. Please engage with this at your own level of comfort.

Like any workshop, or activity, we have to make space in our brains and bodies to process new information. Now if we were spending time together in a room, or over the internet, you'd have to do this as you adjust to the atmosphere. In this workshop, we'd be doing some of these movement exercises in person.

Mindfulness is the practice of tuning ourselves to our bodies and emotions. These are breathing & movement exercises. I find them helpful in making ourselves more attuned to the present, but it is absolutely optional. Feel free to engage with this at a level comfortable for you.

> BREATHING

Take a deep breath in. Hold it for 1, 2, 3. Then exhale slowly.

Take a deep breath, counting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7.

Hold for 1 2 3 4 5 6 7.

Exhale, over 1 2 3 4 5 6 7.

Repeat until you feel calm and ready to move on.

There are other techniques around breathing, but this is the one I am most familiar with. After about 30 seconds of repeating this breathing pattern, your body and mind slows down so you are more present and less reactive.

I learnt this specifically to help with panic attacks. You may already know this technique, or know something that works better. Feel free to use that instead. The goal here is to achieve a sense of clarity and awareness.

> SENSORY

Notice the world around you.

What do you see in front of you?
What is beside you?
What colours do you notice?
Can you hear any sounds?
Can you smell any smells?
Can you taste anything?
What are the textures you can feel?

This section is titled grounding. Noticing the things around you, by engaging as many sensations as you can, is one of the most common techniques to ground yourself.

Some senses to engage with: Sight, Touch, Sound, Smell, Taste.

> STRETCH

Warm up stretches.

Lift your arms to shoulder height. Extend them forwards, stretching for as long as you can.

Bring them down, and repeat a few more times.

Raise your arms to the sky, and then bring them down to touch your toes.

Do some jumping jacks.

Repeat for as long as you need.

What I'm trying to say is:

Move your body! Dance if you're feeling it! Shake things, put your legs/arms up down and around. Have fun!

Take a moment to exist in your body and feel the magic of movement, however that manifests for you. Even if you're sitting and stretching your arms, or just moving your head in time with music, take the time to be with your body.



NARRATIVE

A Narrative is a story.

In this workshop, we are working with stories. Your stories, your experiences + stories from the wider world. Stories are powerful. They contain histories, futures, and the possibilities beyond our present situations.

Whether you know it or not, you're in a story right now. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, the things you do and say, the things you experience - they are your story. You are writing your narrative everyday.

The End of the World is a story too. It's a story we imagine. It's part of the media we consume, whether as part of religious texts, movies and tv shows, comics, etc. It's also a story we sometimes feel is unfolding: from natural disasters like fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, to violence like police brutality, racism, misogyny and sexual assault, to life-threatening policies, virus outbreaks and global warming microwaving the planet. Or heartbreak. That works too.

So.

In this section, we're trying to suss out what the end of the world means for you. What kind of story (or stories) are you in, and who do you want to reach out to & why.

Take the time to get to know yourself.

The next couple of pages are arranged in Q&A form. There is space for you to answer the questions. Explore as needed.

Let's begin.

On Your Story: What do you call yourself? What do your days look like? What do you hope for? What do you long for? What brings you joy?

What is your story?

Any particular highlights? In the story you tell about yourself, what role do you play? Are you an archetype? A symbol? An idea? > If not to yourself, to other people? Is there a villain in your story? > Is there a hero? Who are the background characters?

On Your Relationship to Other People:
What communities are you a part of?
Who do you consider community?
Who considers you community?
What is community for you?
Have you experienced love?
Have you experienced loss?

Do you ever feel anxious?
> What about?

Where do you keep your grief?
> Notice your body and where it holds tension.

How would you like to be held?
> How would you like to be cared for?

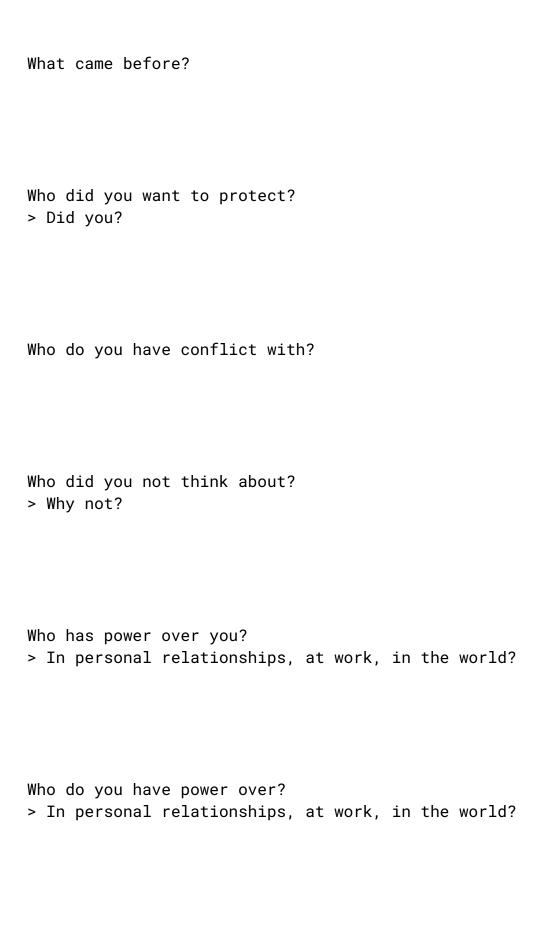
Do you care for other people? > How do you care for other people?

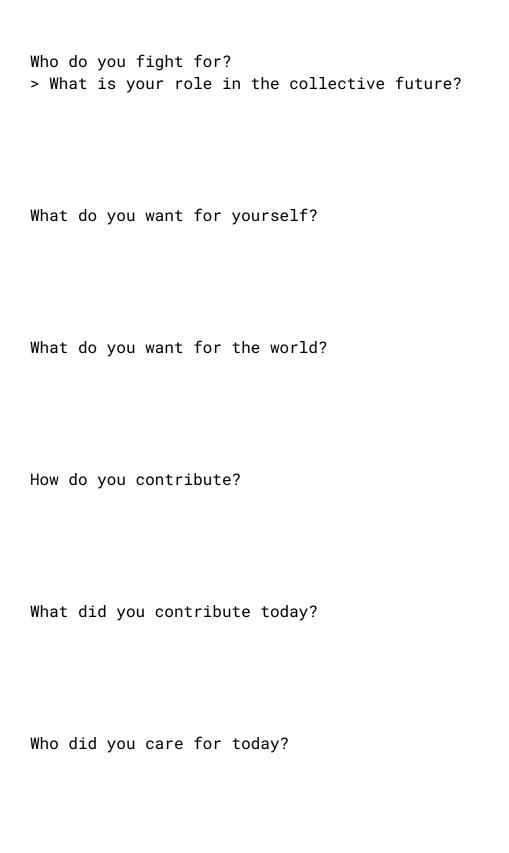
Who do you long to hold close?



On The End of The World:
Share a story.
Share a story someone else tells about you.
Share a story you tell about someone you know well.
Share a story about a stranger you've never met.
Share a story you learnt on the news.
Share a story you tell yourself.

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Is your world ending?
> In your reality, does it feel like the world is ending? How?
What does it feel like?
> Sight/ Smell/ Touch/ Taste/ Sound/ Emotion
Is it personal? Is it social? Is it both, or beyond?
Is this how you imagined it?
> In the movie of your life, how did the world end?
What happens after?
```





Take a minute. Take several.

Eat something. Drink Water. Breathe.

If you have excess energy, dance it out, move your body.

Ground yourself.

That was amazing.

Thank you for sharing yourself.

The questions are to guide reflection. I don't know what you learnt, but I hope it was helpful for you.

Some of your answers may feel positive, some might feel negative. That is ok. We were just taking stock.

You're still writing your story. Your answers may look different tomorrow. Have faith in yourself.

In the next part, we will get to letter writing.

The reflections from this section will be helpful for personal letter writing. It will also be a good starting point to figure out what you might want to explore/support through social letter writing.

Good Luck! You can do it!



LETTERS

Letters tend to be written communications from one person to another. You write down the things you want to say, put it inside an envelope with a destination address and stamps, and send it away at the post office. At the other end, the postal service carries your letter over, the person you wrote to receives it, reads it, and possibly responds to you in a letter sent back your way. Although, E-mails are more common these days.

A Letter looks roughly like this:

Salutation [Name of Recipient]

Body

Sign Off
[Name of Sender]

A Salutation is a greeting that addresses the person we are sending the letter to. A traditional salutation would be 'Dear...'. It is also increasingly common to start a letter with 'Hi...' or 'Hello...'. Depending on who you are writing to & why, you can also get specific or creative with this.

The Body of a letter is where you say all the things you wanted to say. A lot of letters follow an essay format, using a three paragraph structure: small introduction, a larger in-depth explanation of what they really want to say, and a conclusion. This can be a useful formula. However, this is not a classroom. So feel free to use as many or as few paragraphs as you like.

A Sign Off tends to be the last thing you say before ending your letter, parting words. 'Yours Faithfully...' is a traditional sign off. More common ones in use these days are 'Thank you...', 'Best...', etc. Depending on your tone, you can get creative with this part too.

An overview of the activities presented in this section:

Personal Letter Writing

- ☐ Write a letter exploring a particular relationship between two entities.
 - > What do you want to say?
 - > What feelings are you interested in exploring?

Social Letter Writing

- ☐ Find, Edit & Send a template email on an issue of our choice.
- ☐ Write your own letter & send it.
 - > How to write your own letter?
 - > What do you want to say?
 - > Who do you send it to?

Take your time. Write as many or as few letters as you like.

With your permission, I would love to add your letter(s) to a compilation zine/publication. If you are interested, please send a copy of your letter (text, scan or photograph) to condolences.zine@gmail.com.

PERSONAL

By Personal Letter Writing, I mean letter writing which uses an informal tone.

Like my writing here, you may choose to write the way you speak, or text. You may even add drawings or images. In personal letters, there is no shortage of ways to be creative in your communication.

Similar to journaling, we are going to engage in self reflection. Instead of talking to ourselves, we're going to be reflecting on our relationship with another person. This person may be someone you miss being around, someone you would like to connect or reconnect with.

Depending on what kind of personal relationship you are interested in exploring, you can also write to non-humans, i.e. a plant, animal, the land, an entity, a feeling, a certain community, an object.

You may also choose to write from the perspective of someone who is not you. For example, you may pretend to write from the perspective of your mother talking to your sibling, or from your plants to your pet, or your kitchen sink to you, etc. You could even write to yourself.

Explore the relationship between things. Express thoughts and feelings surrounding the end of the world as you know it. Figure out what the end of the world means to you. Is it the breakdown of civil rights and the conflict between people and policy? Is it a meteorite about to crash into your home? Is it a viral epidemic that changes how you interact with the world around you?

This is a place to reflect and distill your relationship to the people & places in your life. Sit with yourself and your feelings. This guide is a document. Take your time and go at your own pace. You do not need to send them anywhere or show

them if you don't want to. Write as many or as few letters as you need.

Before you start, there are three things to consider:

□ Who are you writing to & who are you writing as?
> What is your role in this story?

☐ What do you want to say to them?

□ What feeling do you want to leave them with?
> OR is there an action you want them to take?

Make your feelings clear. Reflection and writing is a process of finding clarity. Whether you are lightly interested in exploring a relationship, or trying to say the things that you didn't have a chance to say before - this is where you figure out your feelings and put them into words.

If words are difficult, draw or colour or make a meme or take a picture. Or both.

Some prompts:

- ☐ If you had 24 hours to spend before the end of the world, who would you spend it with?
 - > What would you say or do with this person?

- ☐ Is there an experience/relationship that's been on your mind?
 - > Unpack it. Write the other person/people/place a letter.

- lacksquare Is there something left unsaid?
 - > Say what you haven't.

- ☐ Is there someone in your life you wish you spent more time with? Maybe you live far away, or your schedules don't line up, or maybe the relationship is difficult.
 - > Let them know you are thinking of them.

- ☐ Is there an issue in the world (social, environmental, etc) that makes you want to do something, write a letter to someone (real or imagined) that is affected.
 - > Do your research. Who is affected by the stories we hear about? What do you know about the incident and the various communities and relationships surrounding it?

You may choose to send your letters to a real recipient. However, in cases you don't know the person you are writing to, or if the letter-writing is a way for you to process & understand your own feelings, I would recommend not sending it. Write it for yourself instead. You can still share to the compilation zine.

Do not send unsolicited mail. Which is to say, you can still write it, but do not send it.

If you are really interested in sending mail to someone, but not sure who, you might want to look up pen pal programs.

Take a beat.

Write your letter!

Refer back to the Narrative section if you need to.

SOCIAL

By Social Letter Writing, I mean letter writing which uses a more formal tone.

Here, you are writing to an 'official' place, like a person holding a government office, or a department that is part of a large office/corporation. I'm going to go through the steps around expressing ourselves to those in power, to enact social change in policy making decisions.

Depending on what you are interested in, you may want to explore how to use these techniques in the 'official' circles around you, whether that is at work, as part of an association, etc.

The Personal is Political, i.e. Our personal actions and convictions have socio-political impacts, whether we are aware of them or not. Since we are the writers of our own stories, in the wider world, we collaboratively write collective futures.

So with that said, let's start talking about writing for social change. Some of this applies to all kinds of formal letters everywhere, other things may be Canada or Ontario, Canada specific.

Do your own research if you are unsure.

Assuming you are new to this, start with a manageable task.

Ask yourself, what do you care about at this very moment?

Then look for an email template.

You can search the internet for templates using something like 'the issue you are addressing + template', for example 'migrant farm workers + template'. Sometimes they are floating around through relevant advocacy groups on their platforms over social media or their websites.

Often templates will also have a list of possible recipients attached. Add 3-5 sentences of your own words to the email before sending. This will help the template email bypass filters that may be on at the recipient's email address.

Once you send an email, you will often get back automated emails from the offices of the people you sent it to. Sometimes, you may not get a real email back, other times you might. If you want, you can always follow up your initial template email with a more personalized one and see if you get a different response.

To level up, you can also rewrite the information presented in the template in your own words. If it's based on a specific incident or set of incidents, focus on the story. Use it to pin down the bigger ask of policy changes.

Let's say something happened to your friend, your neighbor or yourself. Or maybe you saw something on the news that made you want changes in policy/laws. You want to write to someone in government to take a certain action.

Keep the story in mind. Build your letter around the impact of the story, on you, on the wider community. Make your ask clear.

Take	stock:
•	What are you feeling?
٥	Is your feeling rooted in a real life story or example? > What is the story?
-	<pre>How would you like someone in office to respond to it? > What action do you want them to take?</pre>
	> Is there a feeling you want to leave them with?

☐ Who are the specifi	.c people you	want to send	d it to?
☐ What are their emai	.l addresses?		
☐ Who are you writing > Are you a constit > Alternatively, ar > What is your role	uent of the e you a cust	omer of the p	
You don't always have to			

bounds of the person's office/official powers), you can choose

not to mention this.

Often, in terms of intention, it's important for us to know who we see ourselves as. A concerned citizen? A community member? Are you worried you or your loved ones might experience a similar story? An ally? It's helpful to know so we can unpack our own privilege & proximity to the situation + educate ourselves further.

A quick overview of which parts of the government do what. This list is not exhaustive, i.e. it only gives you a rough outline. There are three levels of Canadian government.

Find the governing body relevant to your letter:

☐ Federal

- > The Prime Minister (PM)
- > Senate, appointed by the PM or Governor General
- > House of Commons, Elected Ministers of Parliament (MP)
- > Oversees international relations, national defence, nation-wide infrastructure (railways, pipelines, telephones, etc), nation-wide Indigenous relations, criminal law + have jurisdiction over all provinces.

☐ Provincial

- > 13 provinces & territories
- > Oversees direct taxes, hospitals, prisons, education, relationships with Indigenous communities, marriage, property & civil rights.
- > has jurisdiction over all municipalities within their geographical bounds.

■ Municipalities

- > Municipalities are local governments.
- > There are sometimes more than one level of municipal jurisdiction, for example the Region vs, the City. The jurisdiction is geographical.
- > Municipalities are responsible for property taxes, local relationships with Indigenous communities, city planning & development, transit, social services, housing, etc.

Each level of government passes bills (laws) in their respective jurisdiction (geographical area over which they have power).

You can find bills in the process of becoming law by searching for 'level of government + bill'.

For example, Federal Government Canada bills.

FYI, It'll take you here: https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/, or another great resource, https://openparliament.ca/bills/.

Bills larger jurisdictions pass tend to be applicable to all smaller jurisdictions.

In some cases, smaller jurisdictions can still push back on larger jurisdictions. This is usually through dialogue via official channels or invoking an emergency.

To find the relevant offices or email addresses for your letter, you need to know:

- ☐ What jurisdiction/location are you advocating for?
- ☐ Is there a relevant bill to be referenced?
- ☐ If yes, which level of government (federal, provincial or municipal) is responsible for it?

Usually there will be multiple people you'll want to reach out to.

Some helpful sentence structures to start with:

I demand that... I ask that... I am appalled that... I am angry that... It is disturbing that... It's incredibly disrespectful that... I stand with...

These are sentence structures that I use. I find them effective at communicating my feelings & re-iterating the story. Once I've

done that, I explicitly ask for a certain policy change. Back it up with news reports or statistics if you have them.

Here's a quick example:

Hello

The Covid-19 pandemic continues and there are still no appropriate regulations for migrant farm workers. I am appalled at the response of the provincial government in choosing to ignore the people who harvest our food.

I demand that farm workers who are sick or showing symptoms of Covid-19 not be working, and instead resting & receiving treatment, covered by the government of Canada. Their living arrangements should meet the same sanitary standards, amenities and space requirements for living that we would expect for Canadian citizens. Additionally, while these incidents are under investigation, ban the deportation of farm workers. It is being used to coerce them into unsafe conditions.

People have died. By letting employers get away with this, you are responsible for these deaths.

Please investigate this!

As a citizen living in Ontario, I ask you to uphold basic human decency. I stand with the Canadian Council for refugees in demanding access to services and enforcements of rights.

Thank you Tee Your letter may look different than mine. That's ok. We all have different words we use and different tones of voice.

Make sure to describe the situation (story) as well as you can. Search for resources while letter writing to help you add relevant information.

Mine were <u>Canadian Council for Refugees</u> & this <u>Financial Post</u> <u>article</u>. You can also include your references in the letter.

Ok. Write that letter!

You ARE the change you want to see in the world.

Letter writing is an action. And I am so glad to have you here with me, writing them. But we have to practice the qualities that we want to see more of in the world. So practice. Practice uplifting Black folks, Indigenous folks, Trans folks, Disabled folks, Homeless folks, Sex-worker folks, Immigrant folks. Centre them as much as you centre yourself, if not more.

Your words and actions write your story. Write the story you wanted to read.



A note on Indigenous Communities:

The relationship between Indigenous reserves/territories & the relevant government agency may be different than what is written in history textbooks or seen in the media/the list in the previous section of this document.

Indigenous communities are sovereign to themselves, but the ongoing colonization of this land & its resources means that things are often in conflict. There are historical treaties recognizing the sovereignty, land & rights of Indigenous peoples, but government + institutional policies & practice often disregard their own treaties. In effect, the government of Canada often goes back on its word and trespasses on Native Land. Through the use of the armed forces and other military and political resources (like laws, passed down from European colonizers), the rights of Indigenous folks are constantly violated + this is not only history, but an ongoing reality in present day Canada.

As an immigrant settler, I would encourage you to learn about the relationship between the land you live & work on + the Indigenous communities that land traditionally belongs to. As settlers, whether as recent immigrants, refugees, or as part of the historical colonization & genocide of Indigenous peoples, we are occupying their territory.

Land Acknowledgements are common at most events these days, and I have done several myself. However, they are just words. Go to pow wows, vigils, protests that support Indigenous communities. Visit Indigenous events around you (if visitors are welcome). Learn about the Oka Crisis, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, & reparations. Love & respect them fiercely. This land, currently called Canada, belongs to them.

If you are writing in support of Indigenous initiatives, take their lead. If you are interested in referencing their history & culture, reach out to Indigenous cultural centres. As it has been passed on to me: **Nothing about them, without them.**



JOURNAL

Take a moment.

Or several moments.

Take deep breaths. Drink water. Eat.

Go somewhere & come back.

0k!

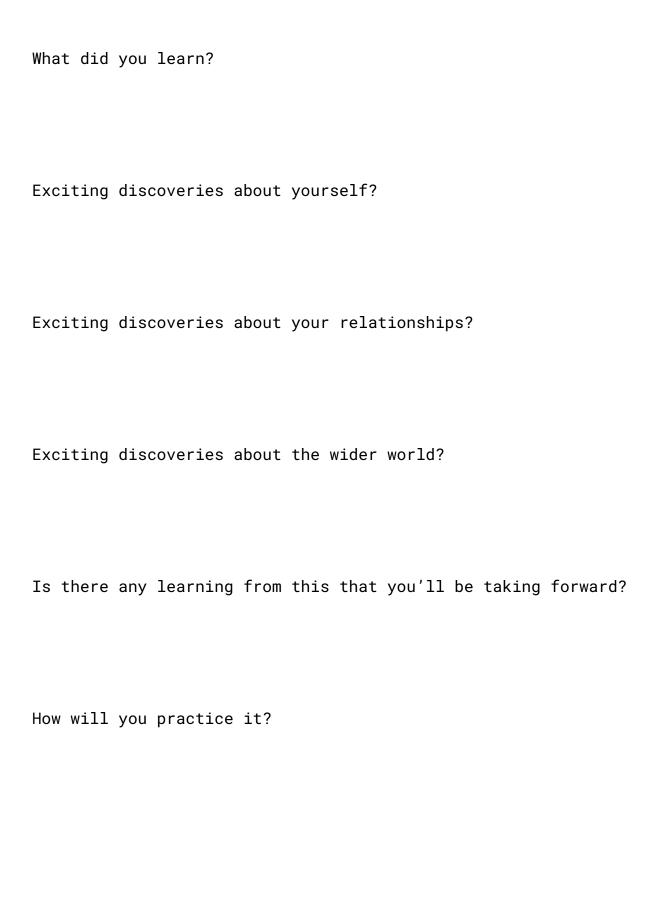
In this section, I wanted to give you room to decompress before you went back to face your world.

That was a lot of information & activity.

How are you?

Was this helpful?

What was useful?



How will you be writing the story of the future?

Who are you in love with today?

I found a note to myself. I think I wrote it specifically to add in here, so here it is. It said,

In the absence of a witness, you hold yourself and heal your self.

In the absence of other people, I hope this guide did positive things for you. And now that you're nearing the end, I hope you take care of yourself + find ways to make a positive impact in the world around you.

We will get through this together.

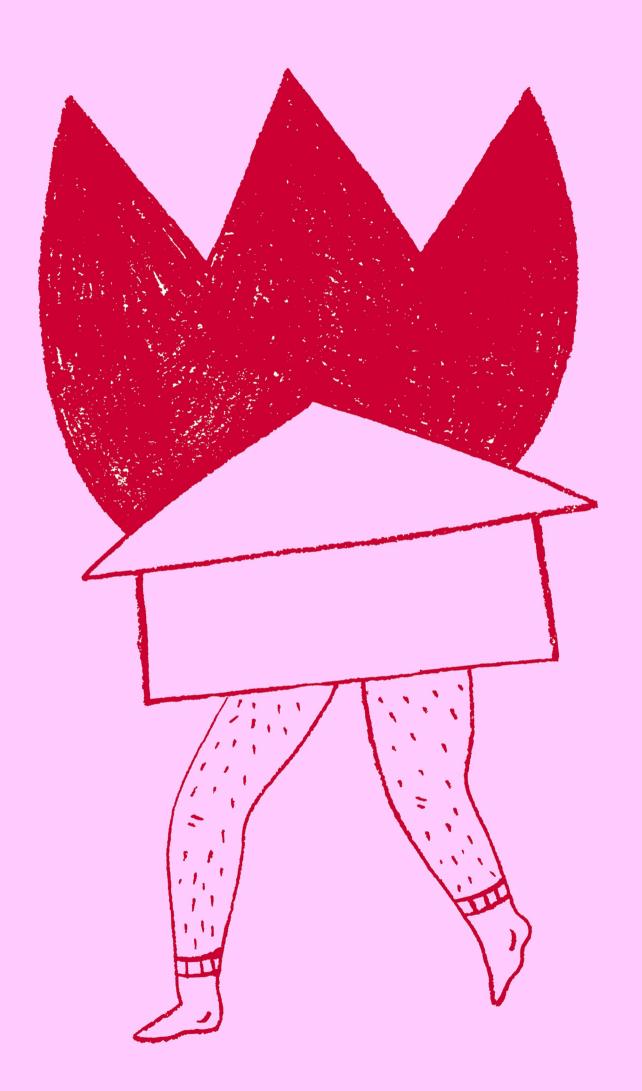
(We sort of have to)

If you'd like to share your letters, please send them to condolences.zine@gmail.com.

As per the original intent of this project, I would love to compile the letters into a publication. Also, feel free to send any feedback or comments you have. + Get some rest today!!

I wish you lots of fresh fruit and sunlight.

Talk soon!



IN CONCLUSION

My friend and I started a tradition, by accident. At first it was poems. We sat in a bar and took turns picking and reading poems out loud to each other. Then we sent each other clips of us reading something or the other. And eventually we wrote each other letters. Sometimes over emails, sometimes over messages. We live in different cities, so it's harder to have things in common sometimes. This keeps us close, keeps us grounded.

When I express myself, anxiety has a habit of escaping first. It starts with little imperfections and doubts, but snowballs roughly to the same place: And then the world ends. A catastrophe of unknown origin & proportion.

My friend had a neat way of putting things in perspective. 'Yes, but we'll get through it together'.

The sentiment made its way into my world, my work as an artist, as someone studying chronic heartbreak*. And led me here.

I wanted to know what other people thought. About anxiety, about the future, about the end of the world. Do you tell yourself the same story? Do you imagine what you'd do? Do you find comfort in your relationships? & what are we doing? What do you do? What do I do? Can we change this feeling of anxiety? Can we change the conditions that feed it? & how?

The truth is, I want to believe that we will, in fact, get through it together. And for me, this is part of how I can be of use.

I wanted to say, thank you for being here. Thank you for reading, for taking the time. I hope this was helpful.

I hope this is useful to someone.

This was supposed to be a reflection on our personal lives and stories. It is now much more.

I researched and wrote a lot over a period of two weeks. It is surreal to have done this. But I don't know if everything here will be accurate when you read this, or if I secretly found and wrote down incorrect information. If this turns out to be the case, I sincerely hope you will let me know so I can update it.

This book? zine? publication? Guide.

This guide is dedicated to my friend P. We texted this morning which was very nice. We're hoping to spend time together soon.

Sorry there aren't more drawings.

- + Thank you to Hamilton Artists' Inc & Abedar Kamgari for your support & feedback respectively.
- + Miigwetch to the Six Nations of the Grand River, who are stewards of the land in Kitchener-Waterloo, as part of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty.
- + Also, to my family for driving me to get timmies coffee & my partner for checking in on me and also for comfort. And my bedroom, for being extra cute while I avoided laundry and piled up dirty dishes.
- + Everyone that lent an ear while I developed this workshop.
 Thank You.

Mentioning my blessings while I can. Durga Durga.

You can send your completed letter(s) to condolences.zine@gmail.com.

The actual workshop dates are slated for July 23 & 30, 2020. Please keep an eye out on social media for updates.

With love & terror, Tee



CHRONIC HEARTBREAK

The stories I tell are Bitter-Sweet n Sour. These stories belong to us all.

Taken from personal and communal anecdotes, I find playfulness in stories of both joy and sorrow, and all affect in-between. Interested in community, care, vulnerability and friendship, my work is about sharing and finding space for ourselves together.

Living under an unsustainable system hurts. I have found that the only appropriate response to our current ways of living is heartbreak. It is a chronic condition, fuelled by an anxious, over-worked, exhausted population. I am part of this population, as are you. Finding humour in our stories is an act of resistance, of defiance. It is an act of hope.

Heartbreak takes time, and love, and patience. We can give each other that.

And these stories, I can give to you.

< Artist Statement, 2019 - present >

BIO

Tee is an interdisciplinary artist and illustrator. They mostly draw things. In addition, they often work in social practice, performance, zines, facilitation, etc. They want to be a storyteller, and they want to be helpful. A DIY dabbler, you can find them on instagram @lukitstee.

Website under construction: https://tee-kundu-xnel.format.com/

< Email: teekundu@gmail.com >

