

'i love myself.'
the
quietest.
simplest.
most
powerful.
revolution.
ever.

— ism

Poetry Is Not a Luxury*

THE QUALITY OF LIGHT by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are – until the poem – nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt. That distillation of experience from which true poetry springs births thought as dream births concept, as feeling births idea, as knowledge births (precedes) understanding.

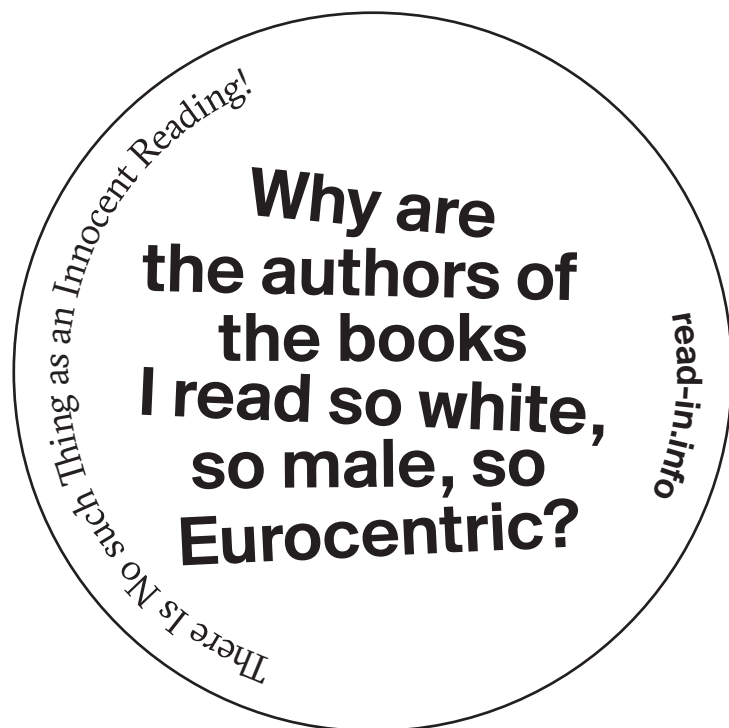
As we learn to bear the intimacy of scrutiny and to flourish within it, as we learn to use the products of that scrutiny for power within our living, those fears which rule our lives and form our silences begin to lose their control over us.

For each of us as women, there is a dark place within, where hidden and growing our true spirit rises, “beautiful/and tough as chestnut/stanchions against (y)our nightmare of weakness/”** and of impotence.

These places of possibility within ourselves are dark because they are ancient and hidden; they have survived and grown strong through that darkness. Within these deep places, each

* First published in *Chrysalis: A Magazine of Female Culture*, no. 3 (1977).

** From “Black Mother Woman,” first published in *From A Land Where Other People Live* (Broadside Press, Detroit, 1973), and collected in *Chosen Poems: Old and New* (W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1982) p. 53.



Perhaps you've seen this question on a silver sticker somewhere. It has been a question during Read-in's artistic search in the context of the project *Zero Footprint Campus*.

White men have told us we are of the feminist types*. We are also organizers. And make no mistake, because we are smart.

Read-in has tried to unlearn the bookshelves of the Utrecht University Library. In September 2016, members of our collective plunged into the Utrecht University Library asking questions about the number of female authors of color and female non-western authors that are represented in the catalogue of the UU library.

* Ingmar Heytze, Dagboek zonder dagen podcast, <https://vimeo.com/216627622>

Unlearning my Library Forum

Organized by Aphra's Book Club, New Urban Collective & Read-in

As one and many, we are searching for something else. We challenge the patriarchal, racist, imperialist and capitalist institutional habits that are the status quo in this world. We are aware of the dynamics that in- or exclude certain stories and voices from this University's knowledge economy. So we know to tell our own stories, make our own archives and connect to build something we see only in our dreams.

Today we gather at a free space outside the university buildings to learn from each other and reach out to others who want to listen and share. During the Forum, Aphra's Book Club, New Urban Collective and Read-in will create a safe place for people of color to express and show their talents, findings and opinions.

For once in the Utrecht University we will not submit to being the token, but the main act - the writers, the speakers, the performers, the producers, and the chefs.

Program of the day

12:45 - 13:30

Opening and introductions, hosted by Ying Que from Read-in

13:30 - 14:30

Conversation: *Aphra's Book Club* invites Nhung Dam, hosted by Ayden Dijkstra
Workshop: *Bookshelf_Research*, hosted by Laura Pardo and Annette Krauss from Read-in

15:00 - 17:00

Panel: *#BlackArchivism, hoe maken wij geschiedenis?*, hosted by Jessica de Abreu from New Urban Collective with Simone Zeefuik, Levison Gijsbertha Maurice San A Yong

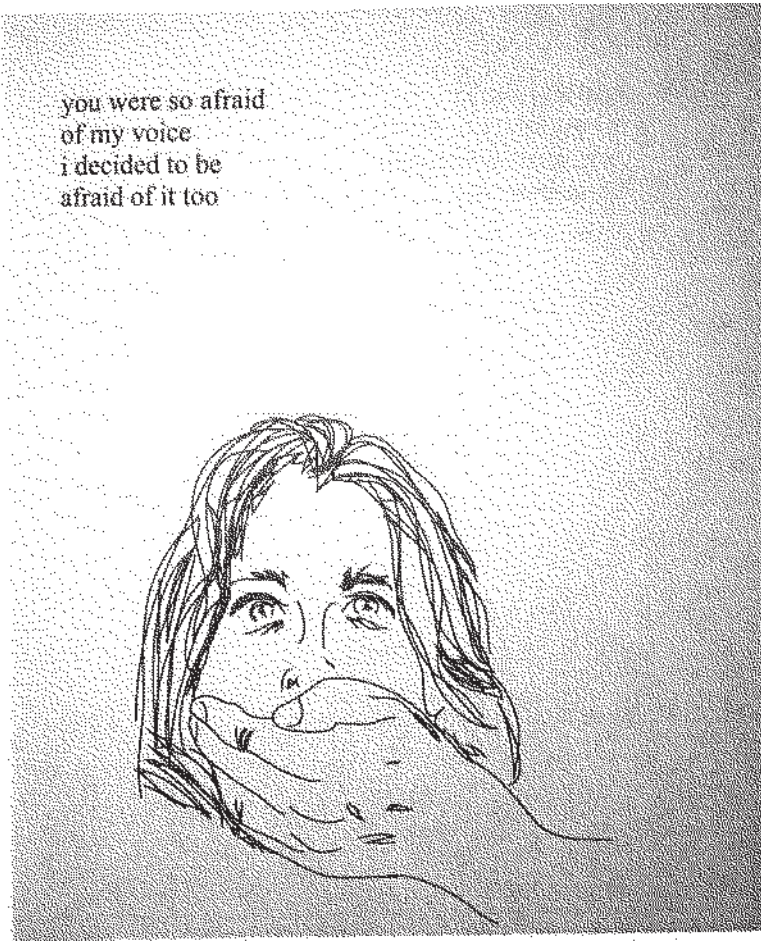
19:00 - 22:00

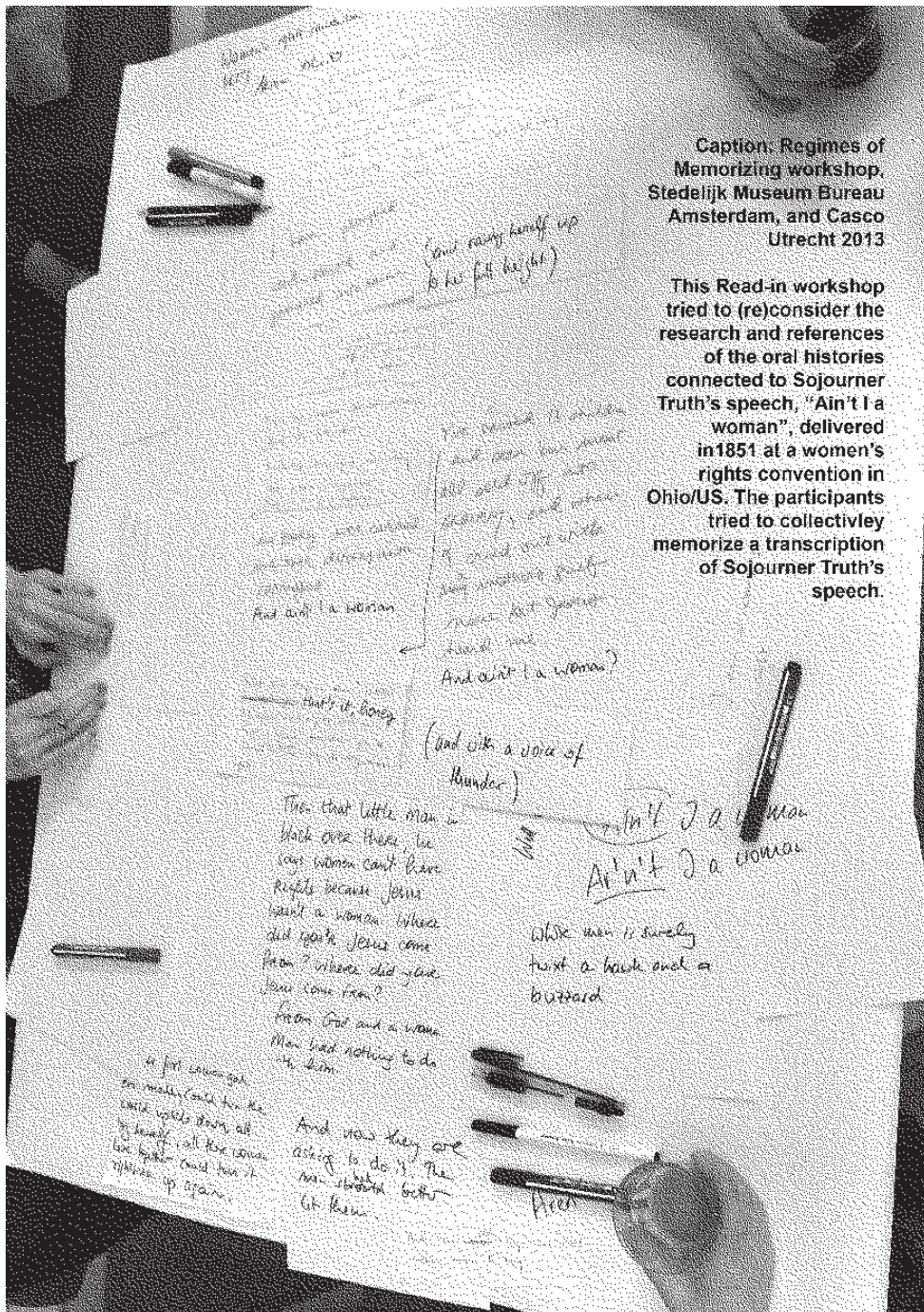
Why must everything be so boring?, hosted by Sayonara Stutgard
Talent Night with music, spoken word & storytelling

Aphra's Book Club invites Nhung Dam

Organized by Aphra's Book Club

Half a year ago, Sayonara started Aphra's Book Club. After four pleasant English editions, it's time to return to her mother's tongue. For this special Dutch edition, Sayonara invited writer, actress and theatre maker Nhung Dam. Nhung Dam made her debut this year with *Duizend vaders* (Thousand fathers). It will be extra fun if you've read the book in advance, so that you can actively participate. But it's totally okay if you're there just to listen to Nhung Dam's interesting stories and the provoking questions of the Book Club-members. Sayonara knows for sure that after an hour, you'll leave with *Duizend vaders*.





Caption: Regimes of Memorizing workshop, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, and Casco Utrecht 2013

This Read-in workshop tried to (re)consider the research and references of the oral histories connected to Sojourner Truth's speech, "Ain't I a woman", delivered in 1851 at a women's rights convention in Ohio/US. The participants tried to collectively memorize a transcription of Sojourner Truth's speech.

Books are divided into ...

Bookshelf_research hosted by Read-in

Read-in members Laura Pardo and Annette Krauss invite you along for an analogue bookshelf_research* in the space of the Uithof University Library, Utrecht, while introducing *Feminist Search Tool*** which Read-in has developed for the project *Unlearning My Library* in the context of the Zero Footprint Campus.

***Feminist Search Tool*

The *Feminist Search Tool** is a digital interface that invites users to explore different ways of engaging with the records of the Utrecht University Library, putting forth the question:

Why are the authors of the books I read so white, so male, so Eurocentric?

It has been developed by Read-in in collaboration with Hackers & Designers (James Bryan Graves, Anja Groten) in the context of the project *Unlearning My Library*. Similar to the analogue Bookshelf Research, both function as an awareness-raising tool to stir conversations about the inclusion and exclusion mechanisms that are inherent to our current Western knowledge economy. To this end, the *Feminist Search Tool* invites us all to reflect about our own search inquiries, and how the latter may be directed by our own biases and omissions. More broadly, it raises the question about the different decisions taken that influence our searches: Who is taking responsibility for which part of the search process: we, the users, the researcher, the library, the algorithm, ect.? And how does this influence our search result?

Using the term *Feminist Search Tool*, it is important to shortly comment on our understanding of the term feminism, to

provide a context, in which to read the Feminist Search Tool. Our commitment to and understanding of feminism is an intersectional one. The let's do *Diversity Report of the University of Amsterdam Diversity Commission* eloquently summarizes what intersectionality is about, by introducing it as

“a perspective that allows us to see how various forms of discrimination cannot be seen as separate, but need to be understood in relation to each other. Being a woman influences how someone experiences being white; being LGBT and from a working-class background means one encounters different situations than a white middle-class gay man. Practicing intersectionality means that we avoid the tendency to separate the axes of difference that shape society, institutions and ourselves.” (p.10)

*Analogue bookshelf_research:

The practice of the analogue bookshelf_research consists of a quantitative exercise that Read-in performs in certain private or public libraries and bookshelves. We count books and texts according to categories such as gender, nationality, type of authorship, publishing regions, materiality, etc . These analogue countings result in numerical breakdowns or different book arrangements on shelves that may hint to particular systems of inclusions and omissions. The bookshelf_research is a means to study how the books and texts that we read and bookshelves that surround us are interwoven with the fabric of our thoughts, our everyday life, and our histories. Moreover the bookshelf_research can be considered as a tool/practice to reveal some priorities and borders that inhabit our bookshelves and library practices.

Previous collaborations on and around analogue bookshelf research include private bookshelves from Read-in members, the Grand Domestic Revolution Library, the specific library of one of Read-in's long term collaborators Casco, Art Institute, and the 'Lektürebibliothek', a school library of the Oranienschule Wiesbaden. The *Unlearning My Library* project in the context of *Zero Footprint Campus* has been the first time for Read-in to go digital with the bookshelf research.

#BlackArchivism, how do we make history?

Organized by New Urban Collective

Archives have the potential to make or break history. Without critical reflection, certain perspectives may dominate and marginalize other histories, or neglect them, like the history of slavery and colonialism. Historical archives symbolize the collective memory of a community and/or nation. But who judges, selects or gathers these stories that form the archive and how are they understood? Archives tell which stories, standpoints and perspectives we own, but also which collections we miss. Which histories will we as society remember, and which can we forget?



BLACK ARCHIVISM is a term originated in UK by black people who saw the importance to document and inventorise the past again themselves in order to create new visions within history writing. Black Archivism explains that archiving can become a political deed when history is marginalized or (un)consciously forgotten.

During this part of the program The Black Archives will pay attention to #BlackArchivism: the influence of archives on the black community and how we can improve community building/organizing. The main question is: how do we make history?

We'll engage with the following questions:

How do archives possess the power to marginalize histories and perspectives and even exclude them? What is the influence of archives on the black community in their daily life? How can we become writers again of history and through that, of our future?

Simone Zeefuik will speak about the black community's archiving through social media, hashtags and online presence. She will focus on digital archiving and what the internet can mean for many black realities.

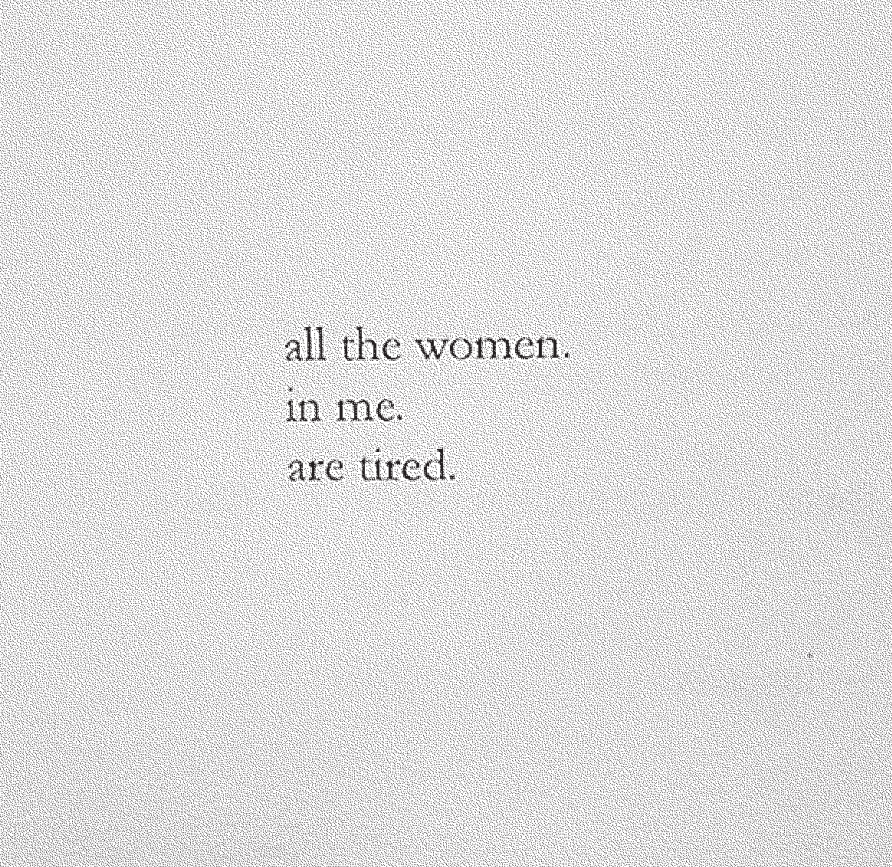
Levison Gijssbertha will speak from his experience with community building in black communities and The Black Archives about the impact of historical archives on different communities in our society.

Maurice San A Yong will speak about writing history within the black community and will share his experiences about visiting and researching historical archives in the Netherlands.

Why must everything be so boring?

Organized by Sayonara Stutgard

Tonight we want to show you that sharing stories doesn't have to be boring. Prepare for an evening filled with storytelling, spoken word, music and sharp talks. Have a seat on one of the tribunes or plop down on our field and let yourself be overwhelmed by all that talent on the stage.



all the women.
in me.
are tired.

BIOGRAPHIES

APHRA'S BOOK CLUB INVITES NHUNG DAM

NHUNG DAM (1984) went to the Amsterdamse Toneelschool after her study psychology. She's an actress and a theatermaker. She wrote various plays, which were translated to German and English.

Nhung Dam describes in a magical-realistic manner how a Vietnamese family tries to survive in a remote village at the edge of the world. As boatrefugees, a northern cargo boat took them from the water and placed them in a for them unknown icy cold country. When the father leaves one day unannounced, the Chinese mafia haunts down the left behind family. The eleven year old daughter gets stuck between the total desperation of her mother and the madness of an environment full of strangers. The only thing she has in a world full of whores, toothpastesellers and gambling addicts is her wild imagination.



AYDEN DIJKSTRA (1990) was born in raised in Utrecht, graduated in 2013 from the education Writing for Performance at the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht. Since then he hossels as a freelance textwriter, reviewer and writing tutor. He's regularly invited to discuss on a dramaturgical level about text, beers and life.



Bookshelf_Research with Read-in

Read-in is a self-organized collective since 2010 that experiments with the political, material, and physical implications of collective reading and the situatedness of any kind of reading activity. Recurring investigations include the legacy of feminist reading groups, reading aloud, the infectiousness of words, library and bookshelf research, reading (in) films, collective memorizing, (un-)disciplinary pedagogies and listening intonationally. Check the website for more information: www.read-in.info

Svenja Engels, Annette Krauss, Laura Pardo and Ying Que, Utrecht-based Read-in members worked on the project **Unlearning My Library**.

#BLACKARCHIVISM, HOW DO WE MAKE HISTORY?

SIMONE ZEEFUIK is a writer and organizer. She's a prominent twitterer in the Black Twittarhena and initiated the hashtags #DecolonizeTheMuseum, #RewriteTheInstitute and #BlackNL

LEVISION GIJSBERTHA is a part of the Unify Movement where he uses his knowledge and skills to contribute to the black movement. He believes in and stands for collective practice/operation and tries to reach that by using the principle of the Unify movement: Reconnect, Build and Grow

MAURICE SAN A YONG is a history student and a researcher.

Yolo Akili

A Message from the Universe :

Remember : Oppression thrives off isolation. Connection is the only thing that can save you.

Remember : Oppression thrives on superficiality. Honesty about your struggles is key to your liberation.

Remember : Your story can help save someone's life. Your silence contributes to someone else's struggle. Speak so we all can be free. Love so we all can be liberated. The moment is now. We need you.



sometimes the night wakes in
the middle of me.
and
I can do nothing
but
become
the
moon.

WHY MUST EVERYTHING BE SO BORING?

19:00 - 22:00

The artists below are everything but boring.

Pravini

Singer/songwriter Pravini surprises with her warm charisma and her tough live performance. Together with her own band, Pravini mixes soul with hiphop, rock and the musical sounds of South America and India. A special combination that feels natural because of her Surinamese and East-Indian background. Pravini's energetic performance and her band's versatility make sure the audience cannot sit still.



Tirsa With

Tirsa With is a 19 year old, Surinamese-Dutch student at the Amsterdam University College. Next to her studies she's a member of the activist organisation University of Colour, moderator of The Feminist Club Amsterdam and part of various diversity committees in her university. She writes mostly as a form of self-care, which results in personal, melancholic and socially critical poetry.



Yaël van der Wouden

Yael van der Wouden is a writer, storyteller and a 3-in-the-morning-shit-talker. She currently holds an RMA in Comparative Literature and specialises in stories of memory and identity. She would like to pet all the dogs, would rather be too hot than too cold and is trying to start as well as finish a collection of short stories about monsters. She is the proud mother of 11 living plants.



Susu Amina

Susu Amina started writing nine years ago and will publish a bundel, called 're:fugees' as a reaction to the refugee debate under the initiative Concrete Blossom. Her mission: give her collection Spoken Word texts a life and introduce people to the 'Other'. She's performed at several well-known stages like Late Night Poetry Jam and iSpeak. Her works shed light on the journey she had to make with her family, how she grew up in the Netherlands and how she found her way here.



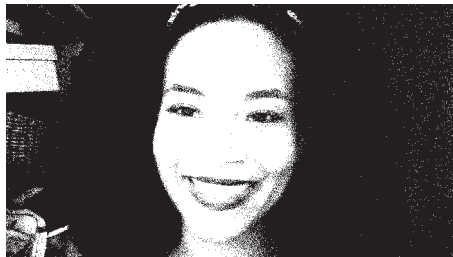
Cissy

Cissy is a singer and spoken word artist from Groningen who speaks in both the Dutch and the English language. Her themes are society, current events, identity and love, playing with words, double profoundness and direct language. As she's searching for the positive results of love and suffering, she presents her pain and joy on the stage with wordplay, rhythm, humor and warm vibes.



Benedicta

Benedicta is a Caribbean black girl, part of the Magical Black Girl Club, Feminist, Womanist and student sociology. She's new to the Spoken Word game. Benedicata debuted a few months ago during a poetry night of the University of Color. She turned out to be born for the stage.



Leon Zervos

Leon Zervos always takes bad pictures, finds it difficult to take it slow with alcohol, is the editor of BNN online, profits from other's lack of talent, makes #Angry and is always tired. But sometimes medium funny. In this case he'll do it with bad stories from the Internet.



Neusa Gomes

Neusa Gomes is not only a writer, but also a performer, writing teacher and lifecoach. Recently she was named Spoken Word Artist 2017 during the yearly TedX Rotterdam Event.



The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*

In becoming forcibly and essentially aware of my mortality, and of what I wished and wanted for my life, however short it might be, priorities and omissions became strongly etched in a merciless light, and what I most regretted were my silences. Of what had I *ever* been afraid? To question or to speak as I believed could have meant pain, or death. But we all hurt in so many different ways, all the time, and pain will either change or end. Death, on the other hand, is the final silence. And that might be coming quickly, now, without regard for whether I had ever spoken what needed to be said, or had only betrayed myself into small silences, while I planned someday to speak, or waited for someone else's words. And I began to recognize a source of power within myself that comes from the knowledge that while it is most desirable not to be afraid, learning to put fear into a perspective gave me great strength.

I HAVE COME to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect. I am standing here as a Black lesbian poet, and the meaning of all that waits upon the fact that I am still alive, and might not have been. Less than two months ago I was told by two doctors, one female and one male, that I would have to have breast surgery, and that there was a 60 to 80 percent chance that the tumor was malignant. Between that telling and the actual surgery, there was a three-week period of the agony of an involuntary reorganization of my entire life. The surgery was completed, and the growth was benign.

But within those three weeks, I was forced to look upon myself and my living with a harsh and urgent clarity that has left me still shaken but much stronger. This is a situation faced by many women, by some of you here today. Some of what I experienced during that time has helped elucidate for me much of what I feel concerning the transformation of silence into language and action.

* Paper delivered at the Modern Language Association's "Lesbian and Literature Panel,"

COLOFON

Read-in

www.read-in.info

www.facebook.com/readincollective

Aphra's Book Club

A book club of color

www.aphrasbookclub.com

www.facebook.com/aphrasbookclub

New Urban Collective

www.nucnet.nl

www.facebook.com/NewUrbanCollective

Artists

Benedicta, Cissy, Neusa Gomes, Khoulood, Pravini, Susu Amina, Tirsa With, Yaël van der Wouden en Leon Zervos

Speakers

Simone Zeefuik, Gijsbertha Levison, Maurice San A Yong

Hosts

Jessica de Abreu, Sayonara Stutgard, Read-in

Catering

Nisrine Chaer

Met dank aan

Casco, Savannah Bay, Anja Groten, Rabarber en Thomas van Driel

A woman who writes has power, and a woman with power is feared.
-Gloria E. Anzaldúa

"We believe the one who has power. He is the one who gets to write the story. So when you study history you must ask yourself, 'Whose story am I missing?', 'Whose voice was suppressed so that this voice could come forth? Once you have figured that out, you must find that story too. From there you get a clearer, yet still imperfect, picture.'
- Yaa Gyasi, Homegoing

"Life will break you. Nobody can protect you from that, and living alone won't either, for solitude will also break you with its yearning. You have to love. You have to feel. It is the reason you are here on earth. You are here to risk your heart. You are here to be swallowed up."
- Louise Erdrich, The Painted Drum

"It's hard to be told to lighten up because if you lighten up any more, you're going to float the fuck away."

- Roxane Gay, Bad Feminist: Essays

"Nowadays I know the true reason I read is to feel less alone, to make a connection with a consciousness other than my own."

- Zadie Smith, Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays

"Some people see scars, and it is wounding they remember. To me they are proof of the fact that there is healing."

- Linda Hogan, Solor Storms

Wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out.
-Gloria E. Anzaldúa

"I hid my deepest feelings so well I forgot where I placed them."
- Amy Ian, Saving Fish from Drowning

"...They cannot escape their history any more than you yourself can lose your shadow."

- Zadie Smith, White Teeth