

stories from female students
at sbcc stories from female
students **LISTENING** at sbcc
stories from female students
at sbcc stories **TO** from female
students at sbcc stories from
female students **WOMEN** at
sbcc stories from female



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Our experiences in our own words
(plus cool quotes and poetry)

A note from the editor:

I identify as a woman, and I find that people sometimes say things to me in a way they would not around men or the general public. People have a lot to say when they assume that someone is going to hear them out, when they won't be shamed. When I recently started asking people I knew if they had witnessed harassment or inappropriate behavior at Santa Barbara City College, I became very surprised at the things that women told me. I've collected some of those here, so that other people can hear these young women as I do.

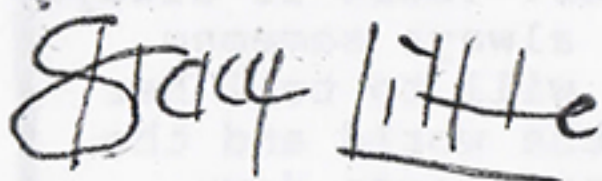
I don't think these stories reflect anything unique about our college; I expect that women's experiences are similar to those on any other college campus in this society. But what a society it can sometimes be—a friend recently told me about how one of her friends, a young woman, had been raped, and found naked and unconscious in the restroom of her workplace. Yet those who found her decided against notifying the authorities, as she could not afford medical assistance, and it was believed that the person who did it was a friend of the business, and an important employee at the business next door.

Sometimes experiences can teach us that this is how the world works. Women at college are constantly learning both inside and outside the classroom. Alongside preparing us for careers or further education, community college teaches us about who we are, what we deserve, what our place in the world is, and how we can expect to be treated. Sometimes, women learn that our feelings are generally discounted. Sometimes, we learn that our reactions to being assaulted are overreactions, not to be taken seriously. Sometimes, we learn that some people cannot be held accountable. Sometimes, we learn to treat harassment as an unchangeable aspect of the world, and to think it is our private job to evade or endure it. And we carry these lessons into the wider world, with the reality that most of us will be harassed or assaulted, or both, in our lives after leaving SBCC. And what will our experience tell us is appropriate to do when we find a woman hurt and alone on a bathroom floor?

So I want to ask everyone reading this 'zine to consider what a special place SBCC holds in the development of young adults, many of whom spend more than two years in this environment, and who are learning formative lessons about how to get by in the rest of their lives. All of us who interact with these young people have a unique opportunity to encourage women to believe they can claim and defend their dignity in spite of the usual dicta of society.

I think that many people, especially men, underestimate their power to be a positive influence on young women not just by not being creeps, but by showing empathy through speech. It matters so much when a male teacher names women who have contributed to their area of study, or when someone can witness a woman's tears without suggesting she needs to fix her thinking, or when someone makes the effort to point out that sexism exists, that it affects both women and men, with often disastrous results for women.

My empathy for the following women is largely based on my unremarkable ability to know my own experiences and feelings. My empathy can only be further developed through listening to people who are unlike me. But if you are unused to hearing about the following types of experiences, I encourage you to read attentively, and consider what it means for you to have listened to these women.

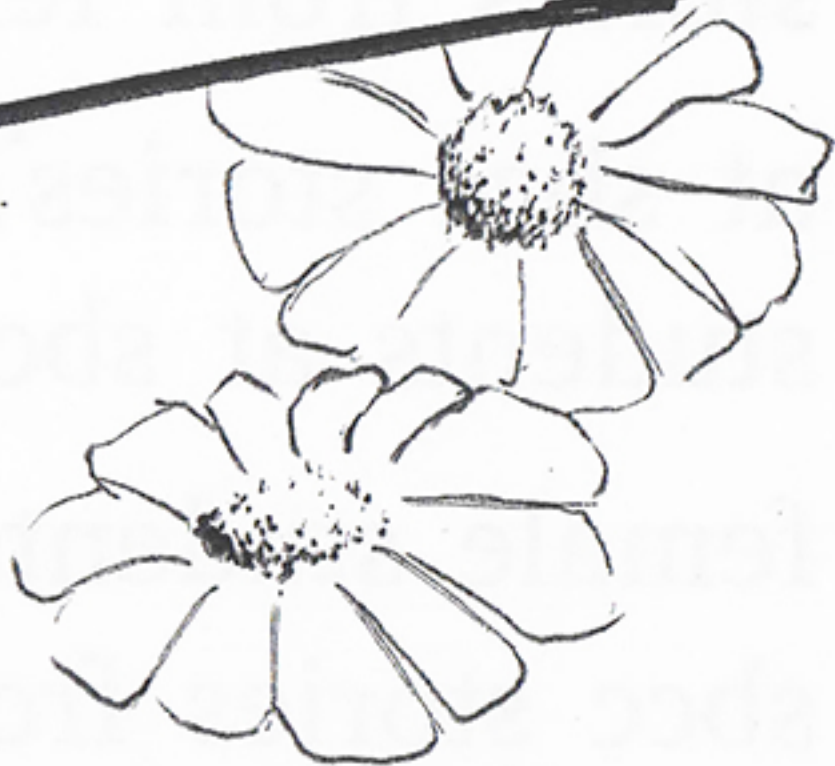


Stacy Little

with the help of members from Student Turnout Against Negligence and Discrimination

“My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. But for every real word spoken, for every attempt I had ever made to speak those truths for which I am still seeking, I had made contact with other women while we examined the words to fit a world in which we all believed, bridging our differences. And it was the concern and caring of all those women which gave me strength...”

—Audre Lorde



Student A: “So I had a roommate work for [a staff member] and she said he was really inappropriate towards the girls, only [hires girls for certain positions], and—”

Student B: “Only cute girls.”

A: “Yeah, only cute girls... and started advertising his apartment, like a room up for grabs to students, but he gave the girls a lower price than the guys when he was talking about it.”

B: “Girls’ rent was \$300 and boys’ like \$600.”

A: “Yeah, it was like double. And then he always offered the girls rides home, which is a little weird.”

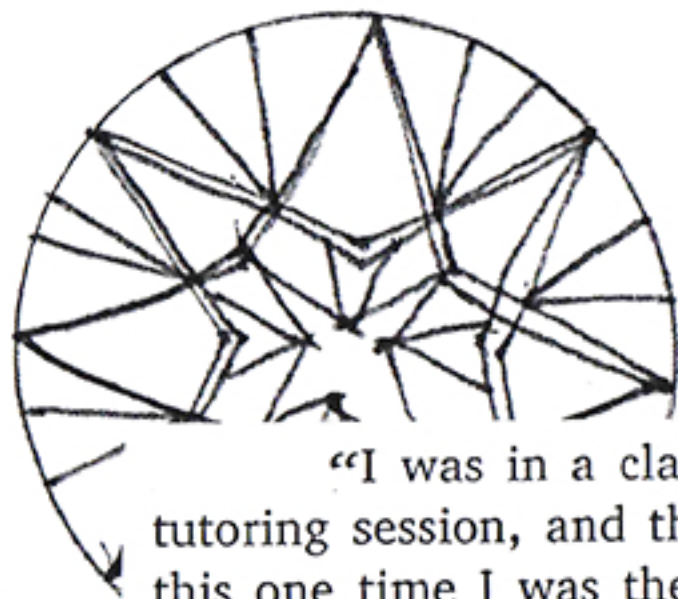
B: “And for spring break he offered them to go to Mexico with him.”

A: “Really?”

B: “Yeah! You didn’t know that?”

A: “Damn, I feel like I might have heard of that, but I don’t know.”

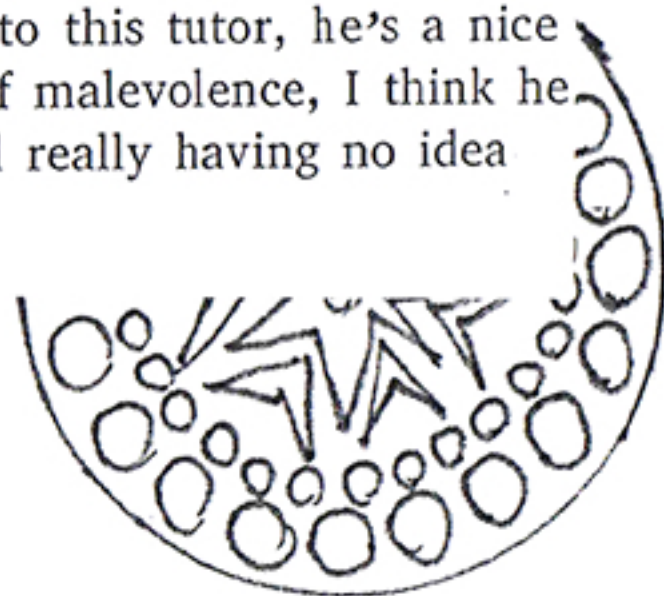
B: “Yeah... I already talked with some people... We talked with some people to stop that but they told us, they literally told us that they are not doing anything to him because [of his position on campus], so he is untouchable.”

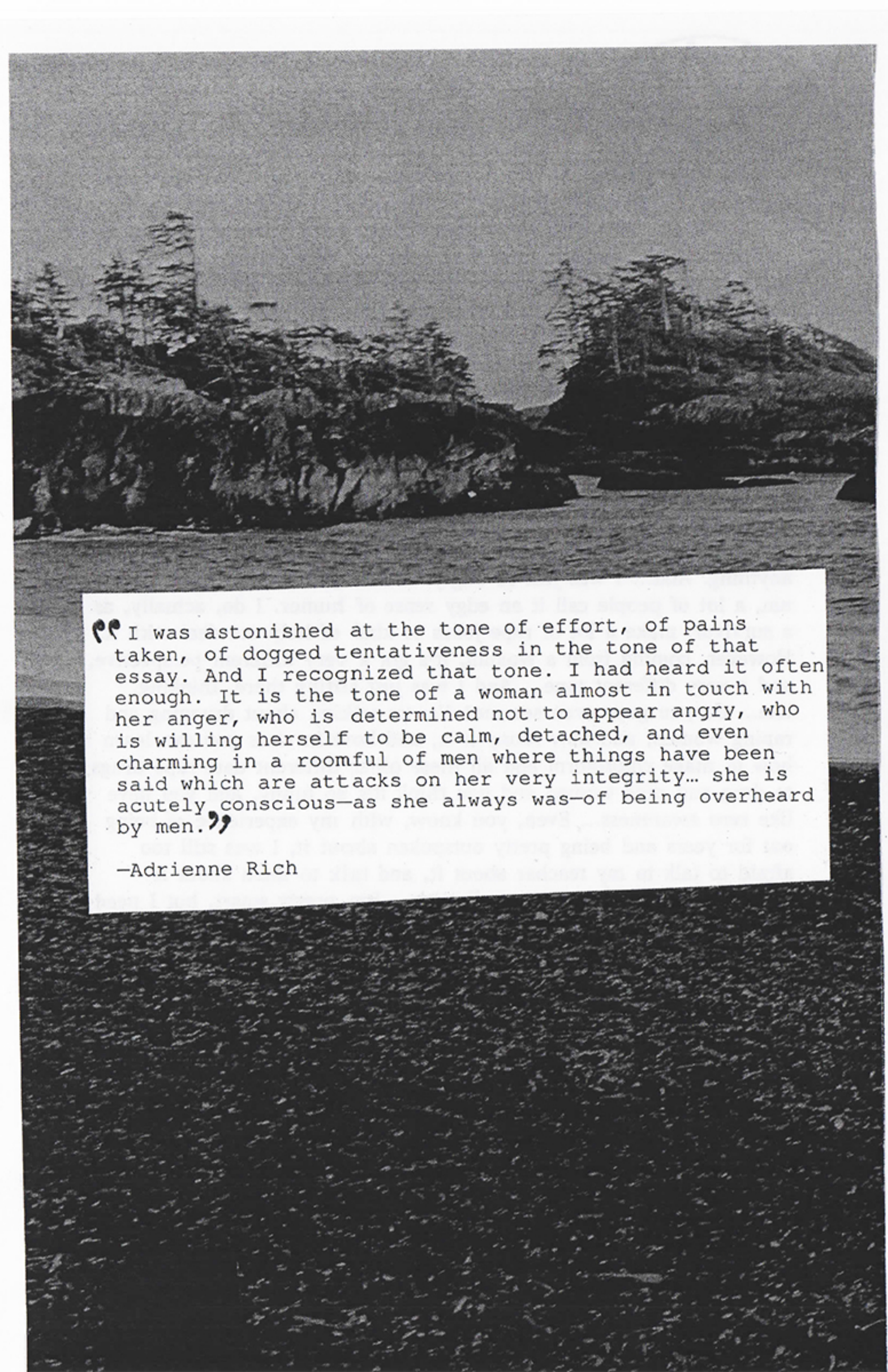


"I was in a class, it was one of the hard sciences... I was at a tutoring session, and the tutor was a man... very young... like 20... this one time I was there, I was the only woman at the table, and there was maybe one or two other men from my class there, and then a few other people from another one of his classes that he always chatted with. And, um, the class they were talking about, it was some kind of chemistry, where they were learning how to make things, they started talking about making chloroform and raping women, as a joke.

"And I was sitting there, surrounded by men... a survivor who has been drugged and raped, and sexually assaulted many times by boyfriends, ex-boyfriends, teachers, doctors, strangers. Like, you name it, I have been sexually assaulted by that type of man. Police officers, anything. And... I was just so angry. And I, you know, I have a very, um, a lot of people call it an edgy sense of humor. I do, actually, as a survivor, make a lot of rape jokes to kind of help me deal with it. However, coming from a woman, it's got a very different perspective, and a very different tone... And I was just sitting there, thinking, like... do you guys even see me? You're talking about drugging and raping women, and how funny it is, and how in class you can learn how to make chloroform and all these other different date rape drugs to drug and rape women and you think it's so funny, and you have like zero awareness... Even, you know, with my experience of being out for years and being pretty outspoken about it, I was still too afraid to talk to my teacher about it, and talk to them about it because I was afraid of the retribution... I'm pretty smart, but I need a tutor, and if I speak out about this, I'm going to lose a tutor, and that's going to cause me to do poorly.

"And so there was this kind of double punishment happening, this punishment of hearing these men joke about raping women, and then this punishment of thinking, I have to sit here and listen. Like, I can't do anything about it, I have no options here... I was really angry... I still think about it, and I still talk to this tutor, he's a nice guy, you know, I don't think he did it out of malevolence, I think he just did it out of growing up as a man... and really having no idea what the world is actually like for women."



A black and white photograph of a coastal scene. In the foreground, there is a dark, pebbly beach. In the middle ground, a sandy beach leads to a rocky shoreline. Several large, dark rocks are scattered along the water's edge. Behind the rocks, there are several tall, thin trees, possibly pines or cypresses, growing on a slight rise. The sky is a uniform, light gray, suggesting an overcast day. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

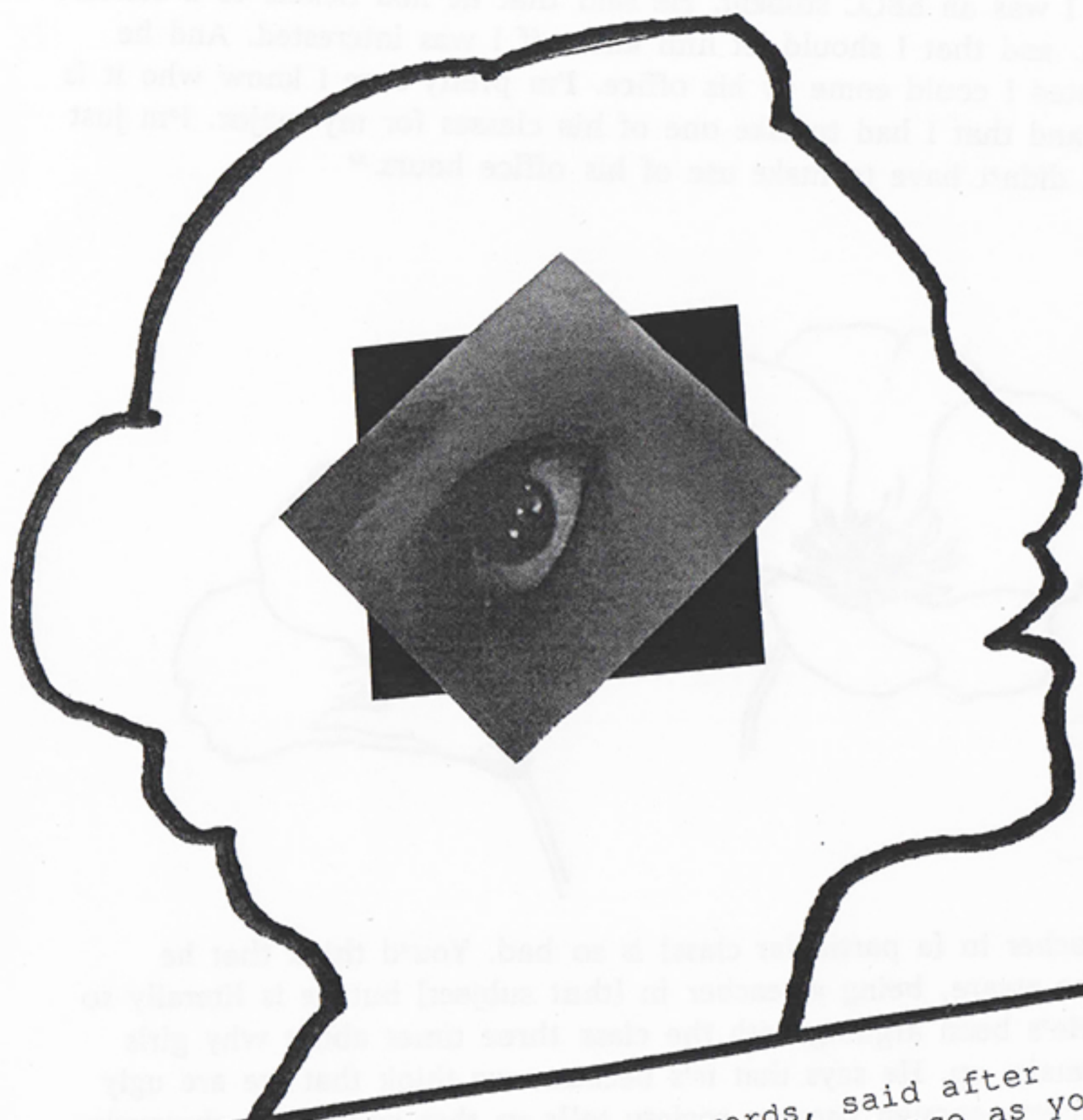
“I was astonished at the tone of effort, of pains taken, of dogged tentativeness in the tone of that essay. And I recognized that tone. I had heard it often enough. It is the tone of a woman almost in touch with her anger, who is determined not to appear angry, who is willing herself to be calm, detached, and even charming in a roomful of men where things have been said which are attacks on her very integrity... she is acutely conscious—as she always was—of being overheard by men.”

—Adrienne Rich

"I once received a message on an online dating site from someone who identified himself as a teacher in a specific department at SBCC. I said I was an SBCC student. He said that he had tickets to a concert in L.A. and that I should let him know if I was interested. And he suggested I could come by his office. I'm pretty sure I know who it is now, and that I had to take one of his classes for my major. I'm just glad I didn't have to make use of his office hours."



"My teacher in [a particular class] is so bad. You'd think that he would be aware, being a teacher in [that subject] but he is literally so sexist. He's been arguing with the class three times about why girls put on make up. He says that it's because we think that we are ugly or not pretty enough because society tells us that and that's obviously not what [it] is about. And even though 30 girls are arguing that it's not the reason why we put on make up, if we do, he's still arguing back. I was so excited to take this class and learn more about a subject that I'm already so interested in and really enjoy, and he destroyed that. Every time I go out of class I'm so exhausted by his sexism and narcissism that I don't even want to go anymore. He also said that it will never be equal between men and women and he literally interrupts every girl in the class that speaks, but not the guys. He is like reinforcing the oppression of women in a class where students should feel safe talking about it. I was so tired at trying to explain and argue against him that I just stopped after a while, but yeah it's just exhausting now and I'm so happy that this class is over. The students of this school should not have to go to [that class] to be put down by another white, narcissistic, 50-something-year-old man that doesn't have any interest in learning from his students or show them respect that we deserve. Why isn't this class given to someone that has knowledge in the oppression of women? Perhaps a woman?"



“Pauline, who is sparing with words, said after clearing her throat, ‘Offer your experience as your truth.’ There was a short silence. When we started talking again, we didn’t talk objectively, and we didn’t fight. We went back to feeling our way into ideas, using the whole intellect not half of it, talking with one another, which involves listening. We tried to offer our experience to one another. Not claiming something: offering something.”

“How, after all, can one experience deny, negate, disprove, another experience? Even if I’ve had a lot more of it, your experience is your truth. How can one being prove another being wrong? Even if you’re a lot younger and smarter than me, my being is my truth. I can offer it; you don’t have to take it.”

—Ursula K. Le Guin

“So I was like, kinda seeing this guy, kind of not really. Anyways, um, one night he ended up raping me, and I reported it... I had a meeting with [the Title IX coordinators]. It was obviously difficult... I had, I think, three meetings with them before they had enough information to actually investigate, because I just didn't really want to talk about it, it was really hard to talk about. So then they talked to this guy and they investigated it a little more and they suspended him for, I wanna say, a week or two, while they were doing the investigation... They sent me a letter and it basically said, okay, Title IX has concluded there's enough evidence to say that there was sexual misconduct, and so I read that letter and I was like, okay, good, somethings gonna happen, right? I also let them know, you know, I don't feel safe on campus when he's here, I can't focus. Like, I see him all the time... He was also on [a school athletic] team, and so was I. I quit [that sport] because of that. So, yeah, in the end, kinda nothing ended up happening. They kinda just gave him a warning. And they made him take this class [on consent], but it was only a one-time thing, and to me that like didn't do anything to make me feel any better or more safe... I'm glad he had to take the class, but for me, just like one class and giving him a warning, that's, like, not—that's nothing, you know? And to me, that—it gives me the message that like, sure, it was wrong, but it doesn't matter that much.

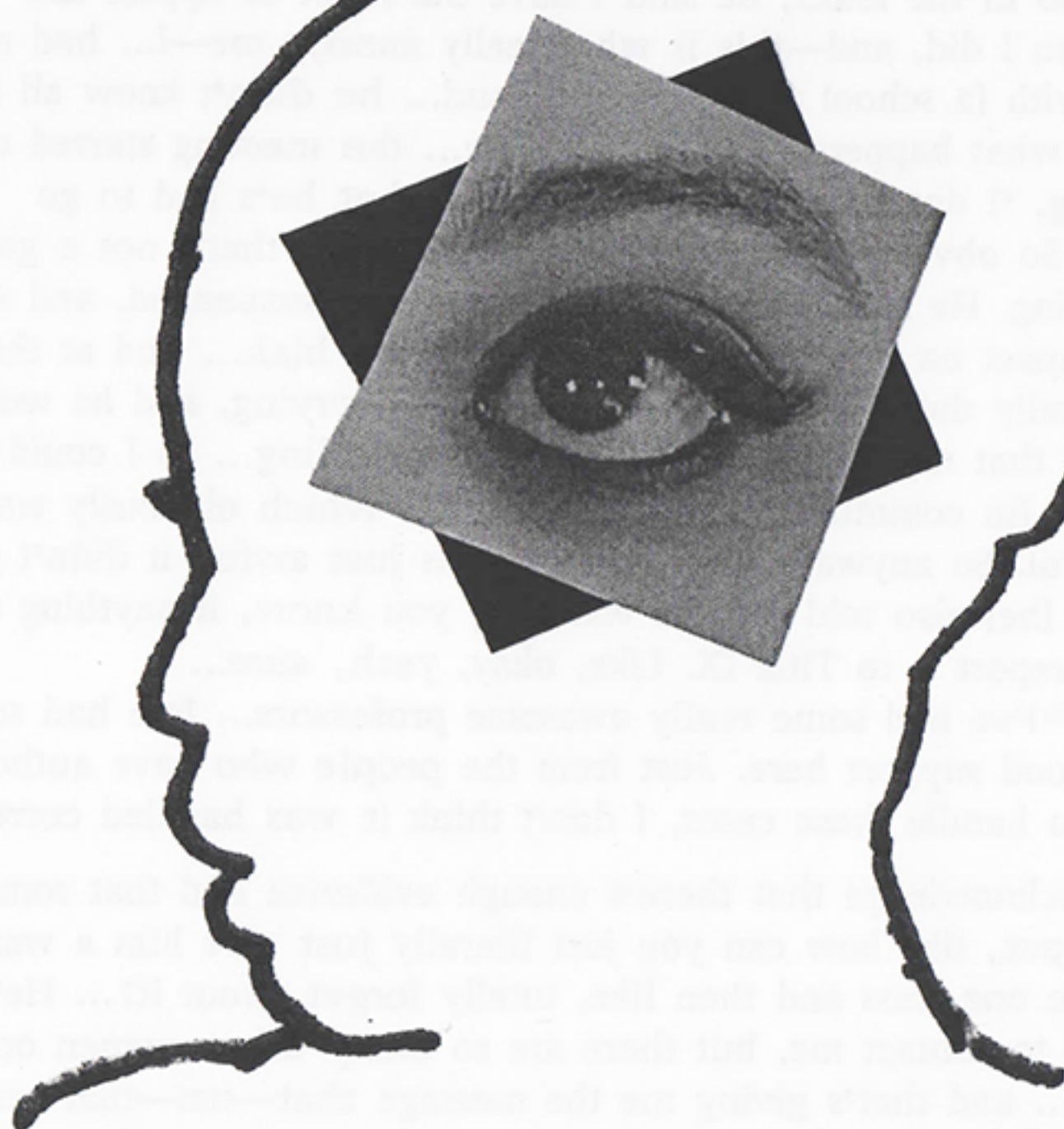
“So in the letter, he said I have the right to appeal the decision, so I did, and—this is what really annoys me—I... had a meeting with [a school administrator], and... he didn't know all the details of what happened but he was like... the meeting started off by him saying, ‘I don't think you understand what he's had to go through.’ So obviously that's like infuriating, and that's not a good start to a meeting. He said, like, yeah... he was like suspended, and that has a huge impact on his education, and blah blah blah... And at that point I like literally didn't really care, I just started crying, and he went on to tell me that maybe I should, like, get counseling... so I could be more clear [in communicating with others]... which obviously was also very hurtful. So anyways, that meeting was just awful, it didn't go well, and [he] also told me, he was like, you know, if anything else happens, report it to Title IX. Like, okay, yeah, *sure*...


“I've had some really awesome professors... I've had some really good support here. Just from the people who have authority and who handle these cases, I don't think it was handled correctly...

If you acknowledge that there's enough evidence and that something did happen, like how can you just literally just give him a warning and take one class and then like, totally forget about it?... He's not allowed to contact me, but there are so many other women on this campus... and that's giving me the message that—um—that sexual assault isn't... like, it's a problem but it didn't matter that much, you know? And it also makes me afraid because that also gives him the message that what he did was okay.”

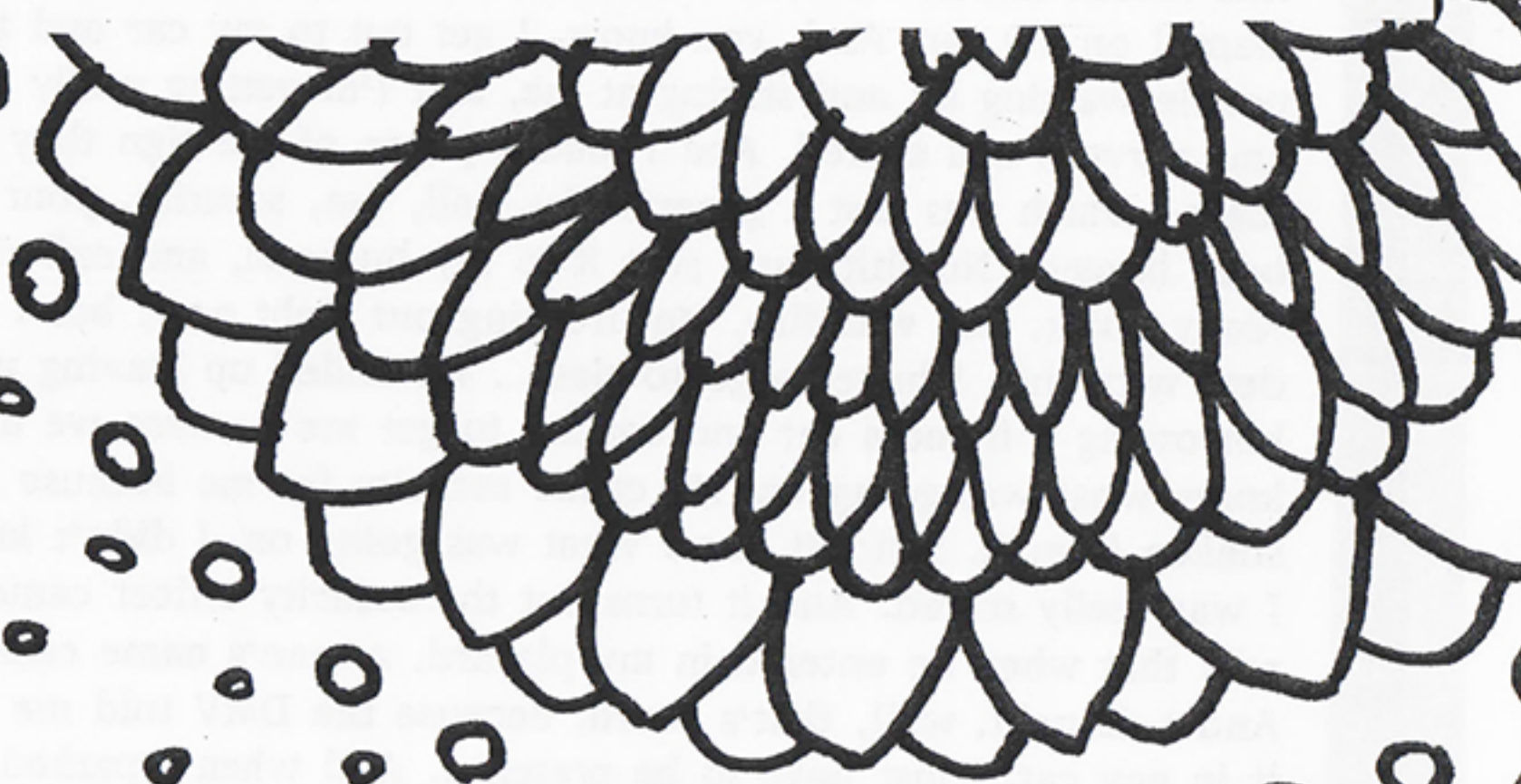
pp We are left with questions. If we are willing only to call out abusers to scapegoat and isolate them, what progress have we made toward healing for the survivor- and even the abuser? If we press charges, and enter the criminal justice system to seek redress, and an abuser is incarcerated, how does this address the harm done on a human-to-human level? And how are we complicit if we stand by without questioning any of the methods currently in favor when dealing with the avalanche of accusations occurring in a retributive, rather than restorative, system?"

-Wendy C. Ortiz





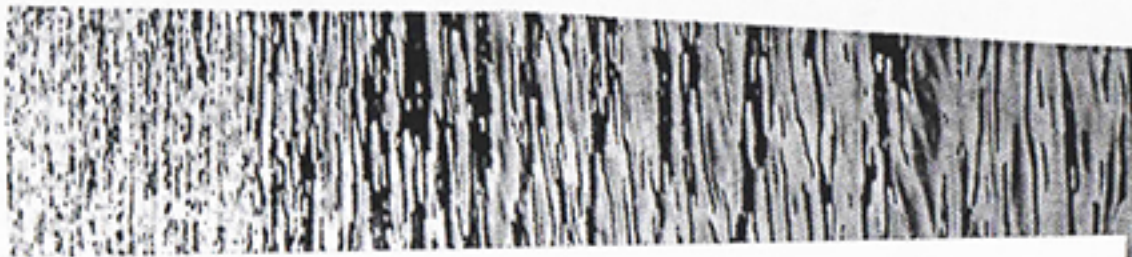
"I had an English class in which my friend, who is a woman, asked to leave to go to the nurse. My professor insisted someone walk her and picked a man in class to walk her to the nurse's office. As they were leaving our classroom he shouted, 'you're welcome' to the guy he sent with her."



"I was on a [multiple-day school trip] and a guy the department invited to come with us, I guess you'd call him a guest lecturer, started sleeping with one of the younger students while on the trip. It was really uncomfortable because everyone knew he was married and had children. He would also openly check out other women on the trip and he did weird things towards me, like try to give me answers to quizzes or get me to ride in the van he was in charge of. He hasn't been invited back since but he hasn't been held accountable either. Nobody even acknowledged the incident, and it was a really shitty position for all the students to be put in."

"I have an invisible physical disability called epidermolysis bullosa simplex. It's a genetic disorder in which my skin is sensitive to friction and heat... I regularly wear leggings because jeans can give me blisters... I grew up with a lot of shame around it... last year I [revealed the disability publicly] for the first time. I went to a dermatologist, I got all the paperwork done, I got a parking placard so that I can actually get around, I went to DSPS and got all that done... at the beginning of the semester, I was in the medical parking right over by the WCC building. I had my placard up, and it was my second semester using the placard. I'd had no problems before. And I had fifteen minutes between classes... and there was a boot [a wheel clamp] on my car. And, you know, I get out to my car and there's people walking by and staring at me, and I'm getting really anxious and nervous and scared. And I took a photo of the sign they put on there—which was just a generic like, call, um, security, your car has been booted! No shit—and sent it to my husband, and called him really quick, and was like, I'm freaking out right now, but I can't deal with this, I have to go to class... He ended up leaving work, borrowing a friend's car and coming to get me because we didn't know what was going on. He called security for me because I was so shaken from it. I didn't know what was going on, I didn't know why, I was really scared. And it turns out the security officer came and he said that when he entered in my placard, a man's name came up. And I thought, well, that's weird, because the DMV told me I can use it in any car, I just have to be present... And when I parked, I didn't see any security around... So, I was just thinking, like, how did you know... I wasn't a man? ...


"So about a week later, a friend of mine, a classmate, called me and told me that she was chatting with the security on their break and they mentioned that they had a watch list of people with disability placards, and I was on their watch list. Security's made of primarily men, and they had a description of my car, my license plate number, and a physical description of me. And they were circulating this around security and watching me on campus, basically. But instead of doing the legal thing and asking to see my paperwork, they decided to wait until I wasn't around to boot my car. Because they booted my car I wasn't able to go to my therapy appointment, because I can't physically go long distances. And I was really triggered by this idea of being on a watch list, being watched and



followed, because of my multiple, multiple, multiple experiences of sexual assault and harassment... and I began having anxiety attacks every time I came to school, every time I parked...

"I met with [an administrative faculty member]... and I told him what was going on. And he repeatedly got my story wrong, he wasn't listening, he was looking out the window as I was speaking. I'd ask him to read back, or say back what he heard, and it was wrong, and I had to correct him over and over again. And then I started to explain to him why this was such an issue for me, why being on a watch list was so terrifying for me as a woman. And I said, you know, I have PTSD, I have depression, I have panic disorder, and I was trying to explain to him that this was from sexual assault... But he rolled his eyes, cut me off... and just sent me an email saying... you're not on a watch list anymore so you don't have to be scared. And I said, well that's not really the problem here. The problem is that there is a watch list that I don't know about, the problem is that security is monitoring disabled people without speaking to DSPS, the problem is that security saw me, a young woman who doesn't fit their picture of a disabled person.

"And, you know, I don't have the greatest self-esteem but I recognize that I'm fairly physically attractive and disabled people in our culture aren't allowed to be attractive. And women aren't given that credit. So I realized that this was why I was on the watch list, was because I was a woman who didn't fit the bill... Before that, I was an A student, and now I'm getting D's... And I repeatedly told him I was afraid to come to school, and his response was, "well, you're here now, aren't you?" And I was so taken aback by that statement, that I just, I didn't even know how to respond, I didn't know how to tell him, I'm here now but I haven't been in the past, every time I come here I have a panic attack and I have to take medication. My psychiatrist has upped my anti-anxiety medication due to this specific experience, which has made it difficult to function in life. And I was just completely dismissed... This happens frequently to physically disabled students: they regularly will boot their cars without checking their paperwork because they enter in the number wrong, or because of a misunderstanding... they should be waiting at the car and asking for our paperwork, not booting our car, not humiliating us, not targeting us..."



And now, the great American poet June Jordan's "Poem about My Rights"

Even tonight and I need to take a walk and clear
my head about this poem about why I can't
go out without changing my clothes my shoes
my body posture my gender identity my age
my status as a woman alone in the evening/
alone on the streets/alone not being the point/
the point being that I can't do what I want
to do with my own body because I am the wrong
sex the wrong age the wrong skin and
suppose it was not here in the city but down on the beach/
or far into the woods and I wanted to go
there by myself thinking about God/or thinking
about children or thinking about the world/all of it
disclosed by the stars and the silence:
I could not go and I could not think and I could not
stay there
alone
as I need to be
alone because I can't do what I want to do with my own
body and
who in the hell set things up
like this
and in France they say if the guy penetrates
but does not ejaculate then he did not rape me
and if after stabbing him if after screams if
after begging the bastard and if even after smashing
a hammer to his head if even after that if he
and his buddies fuck me after that
then I consented and there was
no rape because finally you understand finally
they fucked me over because I was wrong I was
wrong again to be me being me where I was/wrong
to be who I am
which is exactly like South Africa
penetrating into Namibia penetrating into
Angola and does that mean I mean how do you know if
Pretoria ejaculates what will the evidence look like the
proof of the monster jackboot ejaculation on Blackland

and if

after Namibia and if after Angola and if after Zimbabwe
and if after all of my kinsmen and women resist even to
self-immolation of the villages and if after that
we lose nevertheless what will the big boys say will they
claim my consent:

Do You Follow Me: We are the wrong people of
the wrong skin on the wrong continent and what
in the hell is everybody being reasonable about
and according to the Times this week
back in 1966 the C.I.A. decided that they had this problem
and the problem was a man named Nkrumah so they
killed him and before that it was Patrice Lumumba
and before that it was my father on the campus
of my Ivy League school and my father afraid
to walk into the cafeteria because he said he
was wrong the wrong age the wrong skin the wrong
gender identity and he was paying my tuition and
before that

it was my father saying I was wrong saying that
I should have been a boy because he wanted one/a
boy and that I should have been lighter skinned and
that I should have had straighter hair and that
I should not be so boy crazy but instead I should
just be one/a boy and before that

it was my mother pleading plastic surgery for
my nose and braces for my teeth and telling me
to let the books loose to let them loose in other
words

I am very familiar with the problems of the C.I.A.
and the problems of South Africa and the problems
of Exxon Corporation and the problems of white
America in general and the problems of the teachers
and the preachers and the F.B.I. and the social
workers and my particular Mom and Dad/I am very
familiar with the problems because the problems
turn out to be
me

I am the history of rape
I am the history of the rejection of who I am
I am the history of the terrorized incarceration of
myself
I am the history of battery assault and limitless
armies against whatever I want to do with my mind
and my body and my soul and
whether it's about walking out at night
or whether it's about the love that I feel or
whether it's about the sanctity of my vagina or
the sanctity of my national boundaries
or the sanctity of my leaders or the sanctity
of each and every desire
that I know from my personal and idiosyncratic
and indisputably single and singular heart
I have been raped
be-
cause I have been wrong the wrong sex the wrong age
the wrong skin the wrong nose the wrong hair the
wrong need the wrong dream the wrong geographic
the wrong sartorial I
I have been the meaning of rape
I have been the problem everyone seeks to
eliminate by forced
penetration with or without the evidence of slime and/
but let this be unmistakable this poem
is not consent I do not consent
to my mother to my father to the teachers to
the F.B.I. to South Africa to Bedford-Stuy
to Park Avenue to American Airlines to the hardon
idlers on the corners to the sneaky creeps in
cars
I am not wrong: Wrong is not my name
My name is my own my own my own
and I can't tell you who the hell set things up like this
but I can tell you that from now on my resistance
my simple and daily and nightly self-determination
may very well cost you your life

from *The Collected Poems of June Jordan* (2005)

Some resources and readings for students:

Title IX office at SBCC: www.sbccc.edu/titleix

Definitions of sexual assault, rape, and force from the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network: www.rainn.org/articles/sexual-assault

Services available at STESA (formerly the Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center): sbstesa.org/services

"7 Things Victims Of Sexual Misconduct Are Sick And Tired Of Hearing" by Suzannah Weiss: www.bustle.com/articles/65654-7-things-victims-of-sexual-misconduct-are-sick-and-tired-of-hearing

"9 Ways to Be Accountable When You've Been Abusive" by Kai Cheng Thom: everydayfeminism.com/2016/02/be-accountable-when-abusive

"Birth of a Nation and Rape Culture: What Does Liberation Look Like" by Robert Jones: thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/we-are-a-part-of-a-rapist-nation

"Creating a consent culture means holding ourselves accountable for perpetuating trauma" by Ashleigh Shackelford: www.forharriet.com/2016/02/building-consent-culture-means-holding.html

"Take Your Time: 10 Things to Say to Someone Who Has Anxiety" by Gillian Brown: thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/10-things-to-say-to-someone-who-has-anxiety



“In the beginning was the word. Before that was silence, and silence surrounds spoken words, still, as whiteness surrounds the words on paper. There is always something unsaid and yet to be said, always someone struggling to find the words and the will to tell her story. Every day each of us invents the world and the self who meets that world, opens up or closes down space for others within that. Silence is forever being broken, and then like waves lapping over the footprints, the sandcastles and washed-up shells and seaweed, silence rises again.”

—Rebecca Solnit