



A LETTER FROM *our editor*

Dear Readers,

Thank you for being here. This is such an interesting, layered issue and I am so pleased to highlight the diverse work of these writers and artists. We strive to center the voices of the most marginalized and oppressed – the words of experiences we rarely get to read, the dance steps of people rarely given the chance to dance for an audience. These works are the heart of our magazine, and we are honored to share them with you.

In this issue you will read the powerful victim statement by an anonymous writer. This survivor's grief over the loss of her life before the rape and the uncertainty of how to feel rooted in present life feels like a never-ending nightmare. The sexual assault leaves a victim completely homeless within the body, as explained to the judge, "Everyday doesn't just feel like coexisting next to a memorial of her; it feels more as if although she is gone, she is still tethered to my insides, and everyday that passes I feel her shrinking and withering away into nothing...my own existence and my new realities haunt me." I felt my body ache as I read the statement, wishing with my whole body to lend the survivor some of mine until the search for home comes to fruition.

Please also check out *Mi Cuerpo es Mi Historia* (My Body is My Story), an incredible nonprofit organization based in Colombia. We have featured two videos of their work, one of which is a dance that incorporates the personal stories of violence shared in art therapy workshops. Their mission is to use art therapy to help heal the most vulnerable to violence in their community – adolescent females.

Much of the art in the magazine features work by artist Serafina Feldman. Rich colors and shapes, many of which are in the form of the female body are inspiring. A jutting of the hip, a playful heart on the backside of the female form. Within pain, one can find a reclaiming of the body with celebration and joy. Feldman believes "art is not just a form, but a dialogue with one's inner self."

Certainly, the writers and artists featured in this issue are extraordinary in their ability to use art to dialogue with their inner selves to process their sexual trauma and unimaginable pain, no matter their backgrounds or experiences. I love that we can include new emerging artists who are just starting to feel the power their writing and art brings them. That is where the healing begins. Seasoned and previously published submitters show us that the dialogue never ends - healing is a journey where truths reveal themselves in different ways over and over again. I hope no matter who you are and what you have been through you know that you too can be an artist. Write something down today or doodle or move your body to how you feel inside. We cannot wait to see you when you are ready.

Love,
Anita