SCSU AND UTSC WOMEN & TRANS* CENTRE
ARE PROUD TO PRESENT

VAGINA MONOLOGUES (TRANS* INCLUSIVE) // 2015 ZINE
because UTSC needs more transformative spaces where the voices of womyn & trans* folks are central & deliberate.

as womyn & trans* folks, the powers of our voices unsilenced & intentional break holes through physical, social & metaphysical walls. hole after hole we won’t stop until we dismantle these walls.

the Scarborough Campus Students’ Union in collaboration with the Women and Trans* Centre bring you: Vagina Monologues (Trans* Inclusive), performative and written spaces where womyn & trans* folks reclaim their narratives in a variety of creative expressions.

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# contributors

## WORDS

- **ferozan nasiri**
  - [05] POEM

- **priscilia tjandra**
  - [06] POEM

- **anonymous**
  - [07] PROSE

- **mitra fakhrashrafi**
  - [09] POEM

- **sabrine azraq**
  - [10] PROSE

- **minushi anne gomes**
  - [12/13] POEM

- **anikahmed**
  - [14] POEM

- **trina james**
  - [15] POEM

- **utsc women’s writing circle**
  - [16/17] POETRY COLLECTION

- **elizabeth mudenyo**
  - [18/19] POEM

## VISUALS

- **noor khan**
  - [06] COLLAGE

- **mitra fakhrashrafi**
  - [08] COLLAGE

- **sadaf ullah**

- **manjot bining**
  - [17] ILLUSTRATION

- **anikahmed**
  - [14] PHOTOGRAPH

- **sahar ullah**
  - [COVER ILLUSTRATION]
my skin is too brown
or sometimes too pale
my hair isn’t neat
i have to condition it three times in the shower
to get it to be silky like he likes it
the curls have to be
the kind without the frizz
my curves are too modest
my lips are full
by only when
they are shut
my eyes aren’t coloured or
full of colour
their cursed with a shine that reflects the world
so they see other women in me
those that they want to see
then realise it’s not fair to me
and walk out of doors that i no longer care to open or close
but who do we blame
the person who didn’t install the security system in their home
or the one who came in
uninvited
and claimed rights over lands that didn’t belong to them.

— nk

i lack self-expression because
they limited the forms i could use so
i don’t know any better
this is the extent of the chains
they have put on us
whose keys they have lost so
they can’t see why i am expressionless
and when the doctor asks me
to find a way to externalise the internal
i walk out the door
the system doesn’t have a prescription
for their illness
only a few of us are awake
enough to know that.

— nk

**Collage Series:**
(Untitled)
Noor Khan
infinite blue the eyes searched for
it was there
but not here
in the heart
where dark and light mixed
to create a space
for unexplored wounds to meet
“we need empathy”
she cried
to this familiar yet unfamiliar place
lacking the infinite blue the eyes searched for

– ferozan nasiri

are my words heavy or light?
i asked
when i run away from the lines on your face
the lines of his absence
marked by a silence not spoken
on stolen lands

“neither”
you said

– ferozan nasiri
It’s not uncommon to find a girl who has lived her entire life as the backdrop to men, cast aside (as an unimportant afterthought). Yet, the fight to get the rights we deserve revolves around tiptoeing around the fragile ego of people who clip our wings then tell us that flying isn’t dangerous.

We decay in a man’s shadow, always pit against one another as entertainment. Jokes center on the crazy one, the difficult one, the closed off one reluctant to share what’s wrong. And when we do, they ridicule us for demanding a modicum of respect.

We are constantly categorically selected, lumped into false dichotomies — “Fat or beautiful” “Pretty or faithful” “Strong or ladylike” Because this is much easier than recognizing that we are multifaceted human beings.

This is for the women who are unapologetic, complicated, fearless. For those with bruised knuckles—A consequence of continuous prayer to forget the language of harsh hands. Those who are still fighting and those who could not make it. Somewhere among the stars, God is weeping for the woman without a voice.

— Priscilia Tjandra
For the longest time as a kid up until my teenage year I went through a lot of shit. When I say that I mean self shit. I didn’t like myself. At all. It’s weird though because usually this happens to people who’s been bullied or had a rough childhood. I didn’t have that at all. I was known as one of the funny people. Actually I still am. When strangers met me before nobody would’ve thought that I was stuck in that negative position because I was literally always cracking jokes. But it’s only when you’re alone, reality hits you. Like I mentioned before I didn’t like myself at all. I was very negative about everything. Because I was the tallest girl in most of my classes in elementary school it was very uncomfortable because people always shouted comments like “you’re so tall” “you’re a giant” “do you play basketball”. All the time, I was still a kid and that shit made me really uncomfortable. As if I was some sort of alien from another planet. I hated it so much, I even picked up the habit of slouching cuz I felt like I was over towering everyone and to me that was just unattractive. Going back to being very negative about everything...I was a very anxious person and I feared a lot of things. Even til now but it has gotten way better. I never took risks and always assumed the worst out of everything. This ties into my relationship with guys. I always treated guys as if they were my homies because I just assumed that they only liked me that way and that’s the vibe that I got off of them so I just went with it. I always had that mentality that I would never get a boyfriend because who wants to be with a tall girl like me? I never recognized my worth.... With all the prayers, meditation, the therapy with my aunty and friends that I hold really close to my heart and believe it or not instagram and tumblr quotes I got introduced to soul searching. Soul searching was DEFINITELY not something easy to deal with because it doesn’t drastically happen but with time it got better EVERY SINGLE DAY

What I learned about it is that IT IS OKAY TO TRIP. IT IS OKAY TO SLIP BECAUSE I AM HUMAN. I AM NOT PERFECT AT ALL AND I WILL NEVER BE because I am sinner just like EVERYBODY else. With God’s strength I had the ability to LOVE myself and my BEAUTIFUL height. I’m not gonna sit here and front and say I don’t have bad days cuz that would just be a fucking lie but as soon as realized that it’s starting to take over me and bring me back to how I was before I pick myself and tell myself that I REFUSE to go back to that dark place. I have learned to ACCEPT myself just the way I am because at the end of the day there will ALWAYS be someone out there who will find you ugly. And that is okay because you know what? At the end of the day if I think I’m good looking that is ALL that matters. As mentioned before fear is something I’m still struggling with but with God’s strength and my amazing friends support and push I’m learning to overcome it in most situations. Some people may read this and think this is all for show. No this is real shit that ALOT of people struggle with. Don’t ever think for a second if they’re always smiley and cracking jokes that they’re not struggling with the same shit. I encourage EVERYONE to promote this self-searching business and help the ones who are willing to be helped to be on that amazing level of loving themselves. It’s truly a beautiful thing and I can tell each and every single one of you that even though your girl didn’t find herself a man yet she is SO happy because she knows the right one is on its way. For now I’m gonna keep flourishing, I’m gonna keep spreading that love and positivity and most of all I’m gonna keep loving myself. Stay blessed.

– Anonymous
Collage Series:
For-the-Women-I-Was-Taught-Not-to-Remember
mitra fakhrashrafi
if i wrote a love letter
to the diaspora it would shatter
every word count undo
every border erase
every dictionary definition unravel
every noun/verb/adjective
and then it would unwrite itself
no colonial tongue was made to
describe or translate or sustain
the pain    trauma    love
that is lived with every
fractured    severed    healing diasporic breath

— mitra fakhrashrafi
fuck the system

– sabrine azraq
Illustration/Collage:
Like I Totally Luv Him
Sadaf Ullah
My Name is Minushi Anne Gomes and I’m hear to tell you that:

I’m complicated in a beautiful way.
Many People fear me, leave me, reject and mock me.

Does this hurt me—
    Yes.

But do I care—
    No.

I am complicated in a beautiful way.
I will smile looking this way and cry looking the other way.
I will say I don’t believe in make-up
but, wear eye-liner since it makes me feel confident.
I will call myself brave
but, the sweat on my palms will prove me wrong.
Now, don’t diagnose me as bi-polar...

No. No. No.
I am just beautifully complicated.

And if you haven’t figured out yet, I am a woman.
And the society out there tells me that women, have complicated bodies.
Well...
I store fat here which I am proud of,
I break down my uterus walls once a month and release think blood,

Hell, I can create and grow another human being inside of me!
And just for your information,
If you touch me on this side, I will get turned on...
but, if you touch me on the same spot on the other side,
I will slap the ‘-ish out of you since you just pissed me off!

I am beautifully complicated yet,

It’s true when they say that every beautiful thing has an ugly side to it.
Well you see:

I have heard men talk behind my back saying,
“Minushi Gomes? She is one girl with attitude and issues.”
And Kudos to the men who have told this to my face;
You are the men who woke me up to love my beautiful complicated ways.
Dear Men,
I’ll make you smile and I’ll care for you

but, the second you take me for granted
I will back away from you.
You will say I have an attitude

yet, I call it saving myself from the pain.

Ladies, we are all beautifully complicated.
It’s how we are made. Be proud of it.
I know it’s not easy to find a partner to love
when you are so complexed inside and out

but, if you embrace your complexities with pride,

you will then love yourself more.

And I promise you, I promise you right here right now

that you will come across someone who will look deep into your eyes

Your beautiful eye which act as the windows to your strong soul.

And as they stare into your soul,

they will understand why you are so beautifully complicated.

They will realize how every past pain made

you a bit more complicated.
They will take the time to gently remove the wall

you have built around your soul.
They will respect your complicated body

and handle it delicately yet, lovingly.

You are fragile yet, strong.
You are mysterious and exciting.

Your body is a miracle maker.

Your personality is unique yet, vibrant.

YOU my ladies, are beautifully complicated women!

Don’t be afraid to be bold. Don’t be afraid to speak-up.

Don’t be hard on yourself for the mistakes you made in the past.

Don’t be afraid to protect and use your body the way you want to.

And most of all, Don’t be afraid to be complicated

because that’s what makes you beautiful!

– Minushi Anne Gomes

– anikahmed
DEAR ______

For years I knew it was my fault
Coming in
My fault
Trusting you
My fault
It was always my fault

It was me who thought that you were my rock
My strength

I must have been wrong
How stupid could one person be
Naïve
And because of that this is all my fault

For years I felt hidden behind this shield
Preventing anyone from coming close
Hush you know you can’t let anyone known
They will label you that weak hoe
So instead I will sit in silence, all because it was my fault

For years I thought it was my fault
Coming there
Sitting with you
Trusting in you
My fault

Well, I thought it was all my fault
It took year to learn that it was never my fault
It took year for me to learn that I am no hoe nor weak
Years for me to understand that trust is something I give to you,

Not for you to take from me
It took years for me to understand that the power is mine to hold within my soul,
Not for you to take from me and throw away like fool’s gold

And today will mark the day I know it is not my fault
Though this shadow of my past will always be there
The fact that I know it is not my fault will brighten my furture

– Trina James
CIRCLE ONE:
Once upon a time, there was a moon in June. 
& every little bird sang perfectly in tune. 
The birds sang of peace and the birds sang of love. 
And then there appeared this magical dove. 
The dove did not sing. 
Rather it cried, weeping, aching tears dipped down the leaves. 
For as much as she sounded beautiful, the beauty of her beauty made her cry. 
For she deserved it not. 
Sad little birdie, won’t you please sing. 
She should be deserved as it comes to her nerve. 
Change the things she could not. She loss. 
She can. She will. 
Triumph in her destiny.

CIRCLE TWO:
Once upon a time, in a jungle far, far, far away. 
There was a young woman who…. 
Fell madly, head over heels in love with herself. How odd, that she would find herself there. 
In a room filled with her conquest and loss, & he followed her to the room just the same. Perhaps he saw in her.... 
The eyes shine like sun, the hearts beat fast. The two found their half. 
Their joining was lightening, brief, explosive, a jolt of power. 
And they danced in the cold moonlight. 
Hugging and laughing and always believing 
That they would be forever young.

CIRCLE THREE:
I have trouble starting things, unlike the flowers in May. 
Mostly because I forgot how to eat sunshine. Or maybe the sun just tastes like pain and loss to come. 
But I think in time I fight my darkness and started to taste the right side. 
The right side of the moon, chalky and dusty in the mouth. 
But a side of the moon I want to visit. 
I want to go and explore it and set up camp. 
And I bet you when I do, Habiba will be there. 
Singing and dancing and baking a cake and…. 
Smiling like she always does. & maybe, one day, we’ll get to go- 
Maybe one day I can sing and dance and bake again. 
Until then, the hospital bed is where I dream.

CIRCLE FOUR:
Today it felt as if the chase had commenced. He was so cute though! 
And I decide to make my decisions. “Chase”, the heart sought. 
A doe, the perfect target, beautiful and gentle. 
But sad. & lonely. 
And the animal was talking to another doe and telling her all his woes. He was out of a job and the forest burnt down. 
He had no home to where he could go…. 
He began a journey, he gathered all the deer he could find, and they set out, galloping through villages searching for a new home. It seemed fruitless, until…. 
They came across this little cottage next to the mountain. Inside they went and had sky lights and
flying fairies,
Catering to their every wish.
They lived happily ever after.
The End.

CIRCLE FIVE:
I would like to find....
A beautiful jewel, sparkling as the light in my lover’s eyes.
But blinding me so that I could not find my way. I felt scared and I felt trapped and I want to run. All of a sudden, I heard a noise.
It was....
Just a cat in the way. It was covered in soot- it was trembling. I guess I could relate to it. Immediately, I forgot my fears, and picked it up. It seemed....

I could feel his soul, not human of course. But very alive, just the same. His little heart thumping and mine comforting. It would be okay. We are alive. It will be okay.
This is what I say, then, one day.
I find, I touch, I smell, I taste
A bigger better day.

– UTSC Women’s Writing Circle
Freedom for some
Is not freedom at all
You see
There are parallel problems That intersect
You have to see the metaphor And rise above what’s tangible
Fall deep into the meaning
See the words can easily be subbed in
Blank lives matter
The radical notion that blanks are people
When you say able
I stretch the word into accessible Because both sound like an open door
And freedom rings
Because the truth has been summoned before
Tongue mangled
In rhetoric
By brains flashing like sirens
An alarmist reaction To impending rebellion
A fist pounding
Tantrum
To try and own conversation
In the same breath:
“There are no scales to tip,
It depends on what you measure with”
Looking rabid
The way lies hang off lips
They must thirst too
But they never stop talking
So he never has the option To clean his pallet

He doesn’t want to know What he’s stepped in
The greener grass
Was false advertisement
It comes

With a soiled conscience
With tall-tales Rehearsed like hymns It is a rewriting
It is furious wristwork Making pages of facts burn
What a tangled mess we’re in We must fight
To keep embracing
We must imagine
When we can look to all of us In search for love
When we can bow out
Of this chokehold isolation
The incessant competition That bores no winners
We can sweat
For the sake of living Not resisting
No more bodies As barricades Bombs
No more humans As missing Statistics
No more sacrifices For blind eyes

All children come home
There are no wars for freedom

– Elizabeth Mudenyo
In her, nature
a seed
planted by her mother one
she wouldn’t feel
until the first
of womanhood
inside of her chest
in bloom
a well of gratefulness
a rooted inner compass a quiet
but awakened awareness
a feeling
to trust
but no substitute for love

but enough
enough to show her it was possible
how sweltering heat could be rainfall how seasons
and time
could be here
and gone
the world
was waiting
the sun
held all aglow accountable
to living
expected not to shy away when she herself
was giving
“Omit outwards”,
she said

“Radiate like me
attend to your senses
let wind be a tide
to rush against your skin

...to rub the nape of the neck
to cool the temper of your breath let my darling,
grass
be a place to rest
climb up
on the shoulders of trees
or just
sit beside her
and feel herstory
firm
beneath your feet
foundation
for every path
for every choice
you chose to walk
and listen

to the silence
as night begins to fall
go to sleep feeling
the day was but a dream everything sings in you now
your heart is wild
and beating
and all the world
is a mirror
of that inner feeling
where she finds
in her,
nature
is breathing.

– Elizabeth Mudenyo