

Outside the Lines: Two Poems

Patricia Hoi Ling Ki

Creative arts therapist statement

These two poems honour the ways of being and knowing that fall outside categories, defy binaries, and question the ruling norms. The poems are accompanied and illustrated by collage, mixed media, and embroidery on pages of found texts. Like tracing disappearing creeks and hidden trails, I stitched along the creases on the paper, crumpled by rage, with grief channelled through breath – inhale up, exhale down – making visible what had been coerced into hiding or forcibly erased by ableist, cisheteropatriarchal, colonial social orders. The first poem draws from my personal experience and emotions of surviving psychiatry as a racialised woman and my work in mental health services with women and gender diverse people, and points to the collective power of embodied, resistant ways of being that can shift oppressive, particularly misogynistic, patterns of social relations. The second is a critical inquiry of academia and knowledge production from my perspective as an episodically-disabled student and educator in art therapy, expressing the aspiration for learning spaces of collective care rising from the dismantlement of hierarchical domination. .

Keywords

Poetry, collage, embroidery, psychiatry, feminism, disability, critical pedagogy

Leak everywhere



Figure 1. Patricia Ki, *Leak everywhere*, 2021, collage and embroidery on a crumpled presentation script on hysteria, from art prompts by Tammy Reynolds and Margeaux Feldman, approx. 254 × 304mm.

wandering womb, menstrual blood flooding the brain, wind, earth, sea, growth, raging fire underneath, self-destructive rage, ever-burning candle-lights in mourning, for the lives and deaths and unheard voices of those before us, vigilant reptilian eyes, survival instincts, circle of life, circle of relations, phoenix rising, always coming back, always coming home, to the shadows, to the body, to bloodlines

it's a chaotic leaking, it's a strategic leaking

a happenstance, a mess, while threading/treading carefully

It is an art

for if we destroy the ground, we destroy ourselves

let's not forget how we benefit, how we are sustained by
this grounding

for nothing exists outside of discursive intelligibility

there's always a limit to our everywhere, but

finding gaps, tracing cracks in the wall, seeping through

the walls immersed in our stories

the white walls stained by our lives

mycelium running

the bloodlines

tilling, tilling, tilling

we turn over the world

Rivers of stars

two pieces of paper, letter-sized and crumpling into
a web of creased lines and warped boxes and twists and turns
words into worms

of note:



Figure 2. Patricia Ki, *Rivers of stars*, 2021–2023, embroidery and mixed media on pages of Bloom's Taxonomy instructional printouts, close-up.

“Bloom's Taxonomy”

“Cognitive objectives”

“intellectual skills”

“Separates whole in its parts, until”

“Knowledge.”

“Give examples”

“Explain”

“Recall”

“Explain”

“Explain”

“Explain”

Benjamin Bloom and colleagues, architects of hierarchical models for the classification of educational objectives — do you really want to know what I know?

ivory thread gripping the creases

from stitch interlocking stitch, needle point linking needle point, emerge

a strange being
five limbs and generating
thirty-three claws and sprouting
interconnected ribs sprawling
all held by an endless spine, of
songs
cries
phone calls
love notes
rage poems
knitted socks
lost emails
held hands
warnings
yearnings
ever hoping
in grief

Benjamin Bloom and colleagues, do you care to know what we know?
what lines cannot straighten, what warped boxes cannot keep? what hierarchies cannot
measure, what prescriptive words cannot explain? what bullet points cannot divide, what
letter-size pages cannot rule?

bone tethering bone tethering bone tethering bone tethering bone

worming
through

pebble
by
pebble

shifting
sands

shaping
paths



Figure 3. Patricia Ki, *Rivers of stars*, 2021–2023, embroidery and mixed media on pages of Bloom's Taxonomy instructional printouts, close-up.

unforgetting

at the head of the spine is a living fossil– ancestral lines from millions of years past in

seven golden fan-shaped leaves

and growing

all the while

a snail finds home in the creases, the folds, the hollows, the gaps

glittering slime maps the earth

leaving evidence

 rivers of stars



Figure 4. Patricia Ki, *Rivers of stars*, 2021–2023, embroidery and mixed media on pages of Bloom's Taxonomy instructional printouts, approx. 381 × 483mm.

References

Armstrong, P. (2010). *Bloom's taxonomy*. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>.

Mingus, M. (2022). *Leaving evidence*. <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/>

Shotwell, A. (2016). *Against purity: Living ethically in compromised times*. University of Minnesota Press.

Published:

April 2024

Issue:

Vol.19, No.1

Word count:

670

About the author:

Patricia Hoi Ling Ki

PhD, RCAT, RSW

Patricia is an immigrant-settler of Chinese/Hakka descent living in Tkaronto. Arts-maker, writer, educator, forever a co-learner, currently serving the community at Toronto Art Therapy Institute as executive director. Psychiatric survivor, art therapist, social worker, PhD in Critical Disability Studies.



This work is published in *JoCAT* and licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA-4.0 license.

Cite this creative contribution:

Ki, P.H.L. (2024). Outside the Lines: Two Poems. *JoCAT*, 19(1). <https://www.jocat-online.org/c-24-ki>



www.jocat-online.org