

Nasty Women Join the Hive

[transcript]

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Calling Nasty Women (Call and Response)

who dress like women, and nevertheless, persist

On Inauguration Day we leave our pink pussy hats home

Drape yourself in unmet resolutions,
strap on your yak feet
and cleat the ice scattered on sidewalk:
Resolve to rush into the wind's season.

Run where the trees have thrown off
their bothersome fall clothes,
hear the groan of bark on bark:
Resolve to love with hot consent.

Take the baby and throw him out
with your dirty obligations,
the dust balls and grit of un-mopped floors:
Use your resolve like a steel to sharpen

the needles of your feminist rage,
knit the revolution in all hues of pink,
wrap and turn the crooked stitches:
Call a senator with bitchy resolve.

Lick the cat clean with impatience
as you drip cream cold from the carton
into cheap, black coffee that tastes like work:
resolutely step in your community walk.

Always wash your ibuprofen down
with two glasses of flat champagne
to taste the disappointment of stuck bubbles:
Resolve to remember middle-class aches.

Throw an alcohol-free New Year's party
with too many balloons and stray kids

belch your affections into your apple cider,
you will need to be sober with resolve.

Let your food cake face and fingers
like this is your death meal,
eat without wiping your mouth:
Resolve to be a nasty woman every hour this year.

despite Locker Room Talk

Fifth grade. Gym class. Changing in the toilet stall. They found your diary at the sleepover. Read it. Threatened to pass it to the boys.

Summer of eighth grade. The sweat of band practice in Georgia heat. They stare at my breasts that grew two-cup sizes in two months. The taunt “you grew boobs!” Returned with “too bad you didn’t grow a penis.”

Same year, Suzanne R. grew to encompass the doorway (out), pushed her new breasts (out) at me and said the boys all know now. I slapped her across the face.
My first personal violence.

One year, I tried to fuck like a man.

despite Rape Culture

I had to stop listening to Billy Joel
and Jane’s Addiction- sex is violent?!
In the 90s, my first conscious act of political resistance: I’m only listening to women sing.
“Your feminism has ruined you.” They said.

What are new feminist metaphors?

Let’s say grapefruit, thick skin peeled by a sharp thumbnail.
An onion, too. Tears of anger shed in righteous rings.
Cumin if we’re staying with sustenance. The heat of it. Taste. The warm, living funk.
If feminism is food, and food is life, eat with dirty abandon you nasty women.
Make honey from the sting of politics. Be Queen Bees.

“When we place ourselves with people aware of their oppression, we begin to see how we are implicated, to wrangle with the connections between privilege and oppression” (Carrillo Rowe, 2005, p. 35).

(Who gets to be included? Who’s been traditionally left out?)

Call and Response

“We build alliances to link our lives together, to transmit power, and potentially for the purpose of transforming power” (Carrillo Rowe, 2008, p. 1)

What if?

What if instead of a wave?

What if instead of a wave of hegemonic staid understanding?

What if we create a feminist alliance like a HIVE? Think about this moment.

“Our Feminism Must Be Intersectional.”

What if we see alliances like hives of bees?

For some of us, safety is a given.

Just listen!

Pink. Bodies. Bits.

(Blue box. Pink hat. White suburb.)

a de-centering of White Feminism. (I am a White Feminist.)

leave our pink pussy hats home

They want an acknowledgment of the intersectional issues that have plagued Pittsburgh (everywhere, everywhere). They want the voices of women of color and femmes to fill the room, for once.

“In other words, rather than going in search of a set of themes or watershed periods that have been argued to characterize a particular wave, we may well be better served by explaining why moments emerge as meaningful and by what the initiating and connecting impulses are locally, globally, and regionally.” (Rowley, 2013, p. 80)

What if we make honey from the sting of politics?

What if we leave our pink pussy hats home?

What if we listen?

What if we keep learning?

What if we

- recognize our role in allyship as one of active listening and educating our peers (Xiao, 2017)
- decenter White woman

- consider different women's experiences
- acknowledge various realities

“Eradicating white feminism is worth the growing pain.” (Xiao, 2017)

The Hive Responds

Friend, may I borrow your resolve?
I need it to feel more than frayed
and aching. My anger blooms but bruises

so easily. Spent and tender, it wilts
toward despair. I watch you
from my too-small space, hair

unwashed, face lit with flickering glow.
You scroll by, all muscle and motion
on my screen, your signs sure and pink

and beseeching. *Wake forever
from this endless dull dumb sleep!*
I know what crowds sound like,

metallic thrum of three million
bees in the hive. I've seen parades go by.
I've seen my daughter stride down the sidewalk

to the stop, angry with more than just
her mother's loving limits. The world
wants to pin her wings to the wall. Listen,

my hair is falling out; creases deepen everyday
around the stuck open scream of my mouth.
You can resist and resist and yet

still feel terror. You can weep while
you wield your best intentions, march
around your small city block. It's okay.

Grab your child by the hand and keep going.
Throw your fist in the air knowing it's just another
word for *watch what happens when I open my palm.*