



MAYA MACKRANDILAL



# ANTI/body

and selected recent work

Maya Mackrandilal



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I





# ANTI/body

I

I want to shape the structures that will break this world  
apart  
reveal the other world  
that was hidden beneath  
—surviving in the shadows, in memories, in the stories our  
mothers told us  
in the ways they resisted.

I want to break this world apart with the things I make so that  
we may tumble into the blackness beneath where we are free.

The blackness  
that has lived in our bodies  
has survived every attempt at erasure.  
The structure of the black, warm earth,  
the consciousness of the universe,  
the place we have longed for since birth.

The deeper structure  
that defies logic and reason  
that defies physics and language  
the structure our body has always known  
—the ANTI/body

## II

The body that has survived apocalypse  
The slave ship, the concentration camp  
Indenture  
Criminalization  
Rape

Has burst forth  
Risen up  
Refused

The body that persists  
In the cracks of history  
Sharp, gleaming teeth  
Red eyes

The body that is the beginning and the end of all bodies  
The black, the queer, the nomad, the woman  
That disobeys borders and morals  
Bites the hand that feeds us scraps  
Sings the battle songs in the moonlight:

The ANTI/body





III

I taste the salt of their violence in the soil of every land  
Its fruits thrive, one generation after the next  
A legacy of suffering / never-ending / war  
A woven tapestry of destruction and death.

We, the untamed things  
The bodies that defy / resist / disobey  
We're barely surviving  
Barely living in this toxicity.

Now is when we ask: what is it like to live?  
To thrive?  
What is it like to live in abundance?  
In a culture of love, with enough to eat  
    a home  
    an education  
    a way to breathe

I hear the old white men  
They say this is impossible  
They believe in the correctness of this hellscape  
Their hearts rotting in their chests

ANTI/body:  
Survival is resistance  
To thrive—

—that is a rebellion.









**#NEWGLOBALMATRIARCHY**



# #NEWGLOBALMATRIARCHY

The Goddesses are back, and they're not happy. They find themselves in a world that has forgotten the radical abundance of women, forgotten our fierce, warrior insides. They're back, ready to fuck shit up, to take pride in the limitations of their human form—eager for sex, money, decadence, violence, love, community, and power. They will raze the earth with the righteous fire of their anger and build a new one from the ruins: a culture of abundance, radical justice, and balance.

Initially coined by Maya Mackrandilal, the #NEWGLOBALMATRIARCHY hashtag invites radical women and femme people to imagine a truly liberated future for themselves and others. In collaboration with the artist Stephanie Graham, the two performed as ancient goddesses who have become incarnated in contemporary US-hegemonic culture, a world of reality television, instagram celebrity, and hyper-sexualization. By inhabiting the visual language and logic of consumerism and voyeurship, the goddesses infiltrate imperialism on its home turf, imbuing the mundane and familiar with moments of radical imagination. What does it mean to be a strong woman with friends in a culture that can only imagine female sexual competition for the ever-elusive “good man”? How can we construct narratives that sabotage a culture that devalues black life, the labor of women, and commodifies queer desire? Is it possible to seduce the oppressor into relinquishing his power?

#NEWGLOBALMATRIARCHY is continually shifting between real space and cyber space, and moves fluidly as the artists who engage with it evolve. Graham and Mackrandilal presented collaborative work at the Chicago Artist Coalition and ACRE TV as well as independently.

Mackrandilal continued this work as an online persona under the handle @globalmatriarch on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook where The Goddess posts memes and thoughts. The Goddess also appeared at the Women's March in Los Angeles on January 21, 2017 and performs within the video piece titled *knife/woman*.



# knife/woman

performance text for video



## PART I (AAJI)

Girl-child, born of the earth, maintained through fire, liberated by water. Girl of anger and vulnerability, rage and trauma.

Feet sheathed in dust  
Your dark hair a shroud  
Mourning your life from birth.

They taught you their logic of violence, they didn't know what a good student you were. What if they had foreseen the rifle in your hands? The boots on your feet? The blood red shawl?

Here you are, little one, carving furrows in the dirt  
Piling the cow-pats high  
Mixing the mortar  
Stacking the bricks.  
Your big brown eyes always watching. Tracing the crimson tracks of  
your wounds. Learning the language of their brutality.

For you, love was quantified in beatings and tears. In the rhythms of  
suffering. Little tiger—prowling in the dark. Sleeping in trees under the  
moonlight. Dancing in the monsoon. Libations of mud. Men have al-  
ways killed their prophets, why should you be different? After the pain  
and suffering and death, something lived: in a gaze met, a fist raised, a  
defiant posture.

Infecting our bodies.

Spreading on lips.

The archives of women.



## PART II (PHOOLAN)

There is an anger in me that will not quell. I am not crushed by your violence, I do not cower. I have thrown the bridal jewels back in your face.

Some days, I prayed for the current to carry me away.

How vile I am to you. But also a threat. A threat that reaches deep down inside you, to a primordial memory. Your flesh remembers that we were once free. Our imperative was always to survive, to house the future in our bodies before it rips us open, one generation after the next. We chose servitude in order to survive. Chose it over and over until we forgot it was a choice. But I remember.

You broke my body apart. You, my so-called husband, cut my little body open with a knife, gutted me like a fish, your cock was a bludgeon. You, policemen, locked me in a cell, brutalized my body, made my father watch. You, townsmen of a higher caste, invaded my body, cracked me open like an egg.

A girl can only be brutalized so much before she becomes a goddess. So here I am with my sickle, my rifle, a switch cut from a branch, my gleaming teeth.

Here I am, you mother fuckers, you sister-rapers, you sons of whores. Here I am and now I have nothing to lose, which means I am free. My body is a constellation of pain, embellished with scars. My body is my testament.

Do not underestimate the depth of my rage, tiny, little men. I will bathe my hair in your blood, paint the doorways of your homes with your guts. I will cut off your dicks and shove them down your throats.

My name is Phoolan. My name is Durga. My name is Kali. My name is Vengeance. My name is Blackness. My name is Woman. Your greatest fear is that I will live forever in the imaginations of your daughters. Your greatest fear is that I tell my story and people will listen. Your greatest fear is that this anger lives in every woman and one day, they will say, "I will not quell."

Once you have stood up to the petty little tyrant in your village, there isn't much stopping you from standing up to the tyrant in the houses of power. Once you realize the most marginalized among you have been living within fascism all along, you will know who to lift up, who to listen to, who to make a leader and who must sit down and become a follower. You will understand that we, the black, the brown, the migrant, the queer, we have been carrying the revolution in our bodies for millennia.





### PART III (LAKSHMI IN THE STREETS)

I am the product of violence. It bore me into existence. The suffering of my foremothers, the things they survived, lost to me, lives in my flesh, embodied.

This is a kind of memory—a memory that is and isn't mine, lives as I live, breathes with me. One day followed by the next.

I am the carrier. The sentinel. Witness without words.

I am a womb for this unspoken history. It claws at me, beneath my skin—a knowledge that is my only inheritance.

Girl-child-cum-woman, woman-cum-monster. The fire in me burst forth onto the bodies of unsuspecting men. I crave your discomfort. I wait for you to crack open, even for a moment, so I may feed this blood-thirst. I lap you up.

The memory and the fire have honed me and now I cut deep.

You are afraid of what you have wrought.

You cannot run from me forever.

I have made myself unconsumable. Unpalatable. I am stuck in your throat forever. I don't like it but I want it. I wouldn't trade any of this.

This constant unfurling, slicing, making and unmaking. There is nothing easy about any of it.

I call to my kin: the monsters, the outcasts, the criminal bodies. The rules have only ever applied to the mathematics of oppression. The quantum state of power transcends all rules, all laws, all ethics.

It is time to imagine new laws, new ethics, centered on the bodies of queer black women—centered on the annihilation of oppression.

We call on the ancestors, both alive and dead, the genealogy of our resistance, the embodiment of revolutionary imagination that transcends borders and time.

The Future is a glorious, terrifying place. I know because I live there. When I speak it aloud the earth trembles, the stars flicker. All the feeble little things you have built: your walls, your towers, your laws, your so-called civilization. None of it can protect you from this reckoning. It all rests on our backs and as we rise up, each and every one will fall. Our dreams are your nightmares—unfathomable, unstoppable. Beyond language and logic—a promise.



# The Virus of Scarcity and the Culture of Abundance

We are born in the red: amongst the blood and flesh of our mothers—already indebted. What we owe our families—a debt of the body. And slowly the circle widens. Our debts to our friends: the price of acceptance; our debt to our communities: the price of civilization. Then come the banks, with credit cards and student loans and car loans and home loans and loans to pay off other loans until the entirety of our life is one big red circle of debt.

\*

Like genes in the body, ideas make up a culture through a process of replication, interaction, and mutation. This is the basis of Richard Dawkins' concept of the meme, which he defines as an "idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture." But the strength of a meme—that is, the extent to which it has taken hold in society—does not denote any moral quality, or even suggest that it is the best, most efficient way of living. Instead of a healthy cell, an idea may be more akin to a cancer or an invading virus, propagating to its own benefit even as it kills its host.

There is one such meme-virus that has reached pandemic proportions: the culture of scarcity. It has produced a disease that has taken hold of every facet of our lives, from our most public selves as citizens to our most intimate relationships. The culture of scarcity is an individual and social belief

that there is not enough. That resources are limited and thus survival depends on competition. It is a starvation economy: accept the conditions or be subjected to social death. And so we are left in a perpetual state of fear and want. Fear of backsliding, fear of drowning, fear that at any moment the precarious balance we have struck will topple over and we will be lost forever. And in this fear, we reach out for more: because more leads to more. The nicer clothes will help us network, the nicer car will make us seem less desperate, the nicer TV will ensure we have more friends, the nicer home will make us feel more secure. And so we end up in a strange alternate universe where millionaires think they are scraping by, that they must wrangle an extra percentage point in tax breaks year after year to satiate the fear and want. We, as a culture, have no conceptualization of what “enough” looks like, and so we cower in our homes and allow the rich to slowly consume us all.

This is not healthy. This is a state of social sickness. A state in which the wealthiest country on the planet cannot afford to provide quality education to its children, cannot afford to fix its bridges, fund its public transportation, fulfill its obligation to its people to support health, security, and general well-being. A way of thinking that says, in order to have the best healthcare system in the world, some people must make do with the worst, or none at all. That in order to have the biggest houses, the most pristine neighborhoods, some people must be homeless, and some must live in a warzone.

In the art world, the culture of scarcity runs through our veins. Each year a freshly minted cohort of artists are jet-tisoned from their institutions to fight over an increasingly shrinking pool of resources. Tenure-track teaching positions become adjunct gigs, grant money dwindles, the cost of residencies rise. This is our fever: the constant grind of applications and contract work, squeezing our artmaking in during our “free time” which isn’t really free. The nausea of seeing

the accomplishments of our peers as a denial of our own worth. And perhaps the worst symptom—the keeping up of appearances: flitting from one event to another, not only professing that we’re not sick inside, not constantly exhausted and emptied out, but insisting that we are at peak health, that everything is wonderful, and aren’t these canapé’s great?

As cultural epidemiologists we must identify the sources of the outbreak and trace the chain of transmission. We must determine the points where this chain may be disrupted with immunization. Let’s delve in and trace it back to its source. Those infected with the culture of scarcity believe that the only labor worth compensating someone for is labor we don’t enjoy, labor devoid of love. So our practices are either transformed into work worth being paid for—a labor of soul-deadening unhappiness, an art that is the equivalent of pushing papers around on a desk—or we work for free. Thus, one carrier of the virus is the logic of late capitalism, and a lack of critical engagement with the cultural meaning of labor in an increasingly mechanized global economy.

Another symptom of infection is the belief that only certain, special people get to be artists. That certain, special people are gods. And that these certain, special art-gods should be lifted up above us, their labor housed behind the walls of the museum, the average person priced out of purchasing, the poor priced out of viewing. The name of this carrier is hierarchy, and it is comprised of a complex, intersecting taxonomy of dominance. One is white supremacy, which feeds off of the belief that the very qualities of human-ness must be kept scarce. Another is patriarchy, the belief that cultural agency must be kept scarce. Another we could name as monogamy and queer-antagonism, the belief that our bodies, our sexualities must be made scarce.

The chain of infection runs deep and spreads like an infinite web across the globe. Different carriers lying dormant at dif-

ferent points across space and time, allowing the virulence to build towards complete domination. And what was patient zero, the fount from which all the vectors spread? We could call it bodily debt, the idea that our lives are not our own, that they are a limited commodity, and that our relationships are built on the exploitation of that commodity, with balance sheets neatly kept. Patient zero is that body that made itself dominant through the belief that it has a right to the body or life of the other, whether through social injustice, bondage, imprisonment, torture, rape, or murder.

Immunity: protection or exemption from something, especially an obligation or penalty. From *immunis*, free, exempt.

Art, at its root, has always been opposed, in one way or another, to the debt of the body. It is a gesture towards abundance, excess. If art is truly a space for our culture to dream, then it is a vital point of inoculation against the culture of scarcity. Art is outside of, and thus speaks back to, the necessary toil of survival. It is there to pick apart every base assumption and build something new from the rubble. It is the site of our immunity: the culture of abundance.

A culture of abundance is built upon the idea that our society is structured not around debt, but around sharing. That we are each overflowing with human potential. It says that in that excess, we must be promiscuous: indiscriminate, without order. Pro (forward)-miscere (to mix)—to mix forward.

This meme, the culture of abundance, stands against the material realities of much of Western Art History, and Western History in general. It is a logic of the margins: taking shape in queer collectives, indigenous memories, POC-run spaces, and feminist dreams—the fraught, messy, interstitial spaces. The places we find ourselves when we are on the edges of things, on the precipice of a great chasm, where we reach out for the hands of those closest to us, because we know that in that

moment when we feel as if we have nothing, it is then that we release ourselves from our bodily debt and find abundance in each other.

The new vistas of our imaginations: how can we locate and live in spaces of abundance in our daily lives? How can our practices as artists push this imagination forward? How can we as an art community mix-forward responsibly? How do we address hierarchies at the foundations of our culture without reproducing them? How do our institutions become abundant? Our politics? Our global culture? These are the vectors that will travel out from the culture of abundance, replicating themselves from body to body, propelling us into the future.









# How to Be a Monster

*"The monster is that being who refuses to adapt to her circumstances. Her fate. Her body"*

– Bhanu Kapil, *Incubation: a Space for Monsters*

*"I watched this being who had erupted from my brow get on her knees, open her mouth, and drink the red river that surrounded us. With every drop of blood, she became more excited, her black skin more radiant. At one point she looked up at me, smiling with all her teeth exposed, her red tongue dangling, and I understood that she hadn't manifested to kill. It was pleasure she sought, the sweet savour of life.*

*It was at that moment that I recognized her as myself*

*Kali, I whispered."*

– Vivek Shraya, *She of the Mountains*

\*

My grandmother said: Little girls should be seen and not heard. I said: Little girls should be heard but not seen. I was a child, and this was all I could say. But in that innocent reversal is the trajectory of so many lives: for the roar of our voices to inhabit a space beyond the reaches of our bodies. To be heard when the world would prefer that we remain silent. This is the life of the artist, the maker, the writer: to exist in some way outside of ourselves, to inhabit our monstrosity.

My grandmother's dictum was an inheritance, passed down to her in the most intimate ways. It drew the boundaries of her limited resistance, but I can trace its source clearly. It begins with ships laden with dark bodies, hauled like cargo across the face of the earth. It ripens in schools and churches that worked tirelessly to erase cultural memory. It bore fruit during her first trip to England when I was in my early teens. When she asked what sort of souvenir she could bring back for me I asked for "an old book". She brought back a doll of Queen Elizabeth II (last empress of India) instead. So I placed that little white lady in her plastic cylinder to protect her plastic body on top of my bookshelf, where she could silently disapprove of the ways in which I was seen and heard. I want you to know that colonialism is a plastic queen on your bookshelf, her blue eyes and pale skin a constant reminder of your lack. The plastic queen is the symbol of my failure to assimilate, my failure to live up to all the dreams implanted in the bodies of my brown family. For too long we have lived in the shadow of plastic queens. I am here to eat them alive.

There were other signs of my monstrosity. The way the principle on my first day of elementary school couldn't pronounce my first name as she introduced me to the class. The way my teacher didn't even bother to try to pronounce my last name correctly when I graduated college. The way my aunts said I had a big mouth and my uncle said I was "Malo come back." Malo was my grandfather's mother, a woman who had a hard life, which made her strong and mean. And that's all I know about her. I have a picture of her – stout, wide, like an immovable object. Like a woman who could pick up a stick and beat a man senseless. Like a woman who could get shit done. All I really have is my imagination of her. But there is something inside of me that I have named Malo, it is the part of me that will not quell.

I'm not a special snowflake and adolescence was hard. Then university. Then graduate school. And all the while Malo sat



in my chest like a stone. Which wasn't to say that I was silent, unseen. But like many monsters, I had a death wish, a desire for the things that only self-destruction could bring: to be normal, to fit in. But my body will not let me fit in. Men stop me on the street to ask what I am. I want to say: I am an abomi/nation.

A monster is really a portent: from monere, to warn, but also, to instruct. And isn't the world filled with little monsters, trying to teach people to be better? Trying to learn to love ourselves? A demon is a spirit, something that hijacks a body and can be cast out. A monster is intimately tied to the flesh, to lust and abjection; the monster is queer, the monster is female, the monster is other. The monster is not cured, the monster is either banished or killed.

They have lots of words for a monster like me: half-caste, half-breed, mongrel. I guess when people say I shouldn't use the term "mixed race" because white women invented it to talk about their black babies, I want to be like, who invented black? I'm pretty sure it wasn't black people. I'm pretty sure they had to steal it from the mouths of white people, twisting it into knots to make it their own. Maybe I do think of myself as a cannibal, a savage, a mongrel, but if I have to check a box on a job application or census, I'd prefer it say "mixed race" – though there is a strange comfort in checking "other." No one really lets you forget it when you're one thing and another thing, which makes you something like nothing. You're always a surface for projection. Every word in a conversation is a battle for your selfhood. When someone asks "Where are you from?" you end up giving a mini lecture on the history of British colonialism in South America and the Caribbean, or you list all the places you've ever lived and no answer is ever quite right, ever quite enough. Sometimes you want to wear the word "other" like a shroud, cover your face with it and be done. But monsters like me are never comfortable, never accepted. The monster is only loved in death.

There are more words for a monster like me: bastard, illegitimate, love child. Growing up, my friends, classmates, my teachers, the parents of my friends, always wanted to know where my father was. When I was in elementary school I used to say he was on the other side of the planet. It made sense; my father is not here because he is far away. When I was a teenager, I discovered he lived about an hour away for most of my childhood. But then I was also learning that there were different kinds of distances, built on silence and lack. Now, I just say that I'm not close with my father. I see all the assumptions pile up like heaps of black earth behind the eyes of others. I say nothing as they bury me alive. In a recent email my aunt said that my grandmother and grandfather were ashamed when I was born. Little mongrel bastard girls should be seen and not heard. Monsters are either banished or buried.

There are other words for a monster like me: bitch, slut, social justice warrior. My language is crude, dirty. I like to say fuck a lot. Sometimes even when I'm fucking. I also like to tell people to go fuck themselves. Or to suck my dick. The plastic queen is not amused: How like a mongrel bastard to have a foul tongue. How like a mongrel bastard to be so corrupt. How like a mongrel bastard to be unashamed. I inhabit a space of constant disapproval, of being the thing that must be cut out, expelled, discarded. What an embarrassment, to have an unapologetic woman in your midst. This mongrel bastard will fuck your men silly. But don't worry, they'll come back to you. Intimacy with monsters is only enjoyed in moments of moral weakness. Friendship with monsters is always a risk; you never know when they'll bite. You never know when they'll call you out on Facebook or embarrass you at a party. To love a monster is to feel her claws tearing at the very foundations of who you believe yourself to be.

Some more words for a monster like me: Anchor baby, exotic, un-American. Here I am like a swarm, infiltrating your cita-



dels of white comfort with my foreign tongue. My wild tongue that speaks threatening words like “rape culture” and “white supremacy” and “Euro-centrism” and “heteronormativity.” My body that always marks me as not objective, as swollen with the excess of history, vomiting out everything that has been erased. Growing up, my aunts said my mother had a “black tongue” which meant that she would say things and they would come to pass, that her tongue was like a curse. And here I am with my black tongue in the street, chanting “Fuck racist police” and this is not what a model minority is supposed to be. And here I am, a little drunk on wine after dinner, defending abortion and critiquing the death penalty. This is not what ladies do. And here I am on the internet, writing “polemic” essays and being accused of reverse racism. This is what monsters do. The monster does not adapt. The monster resists. The monster says no. The monster says yes. The monster says yes and no. In the saying is the revolution. In the refusal to disappear. In the insistence on survival. In the fleeting moments of joy.

Monsters creep into your bed at night and get you hard, and just before you cum, they start talking about decolonization and the violence of borders. Monsters offer you a beer and then itemize your privilege. Monsters flirt with you at parties and call you a #whiteboy on social media. Monsters are always infiltrating, using whatever privilege they have to get into the room, and then their mouths open wide to swallow you whole. A monster wears her alienage like a family crest. She asks uncomfortable questions at faculty meetings. She takes notes for future rebellions. A monster takes her hurt in her hands and lays it at the feet of the offending party, holding picket lines and séances.

Today, men with machine guns roam my country, mowing down monsters like me. On the border, they hunt monsters like me for sport. The men in boardrooms come up with new ways to exploit monsters like me. White men in my country

occupy a disproportionate number of legislative positions, coming up with laws to oppress and silence monsters like me. Today, men sit in classrooms and buses and front stoops, ready to threaten and silence monsters like me.

I have a promise for all those men. The future belongs to monsters. We're here to pull out the guts of Western Civilization and bathe our hair in the gore. We're here to tear your canon limb from limb. We're here to fuck the patriarchy out of you. We're here to establish #NewGlobalMatriarchy. In the future we will chant spells over earth mixed with our blood and we will fashion new beings that we can't even imagine yet. They will be beings of radical abundance, who will laugh and then cry as we recount the old stories of how so many suffered and died for a thing called profit. They will treat the Earth like a lover to be nurtured and protected. They will love so openly, without abandon, that their relationships and family structures will be completely unintelligible to us. They will have words for their mother's other lover and their childhood fuck buddy. Their language will rip civilization apart. They will hold the wounds of history close, whispering the things that we cannot say, the things that will heal us – that will put us, the specters of a broken past, to rest. They will be queer black aliens, trans everything. The creative scope of their lives will transcend our dialectic capacity.

In the monster future there will be such a thing as "enough" and such a thing as "too much" and everyone will have the former and no one will have the latter. In the monster future the only abomination is violence and the only dogma is compassion. In the monster future everyone is an artist first and something else second. Artist-farmer, artist-engineer, artist-bricklayer, artist-accountant, artist-diplomat, artist-plumber, artist-philosopher. Future monsters will spontaneously break out into a song on sunny afternoons, and dance every night in the summer. In the monstrous future, women will write the laws and be the judges, they will keep the peace and distrib-



ute the resources, they will write the histories and perform the rituals. Future monsters know that fists are for fucking, not for fighting.

There will be only two things that future monsters worship: the Earth and the bodies of their lovers, but they will tell us that those things are one and the same. Future monsters will live in an extended family network of ten billion people. They will discuss their favorite books and tv shows with people on the other side of the planet and they'll attend radical femme knitting nights weekly at the corner coffee shop. Future monsters will be a bit angry with us, with the problems we left for them to fix. They will ask why we didn't face systemic racism sooner, why it took so long to abolish borders, why we left the bodies of women open to violence without justice. Hopefully they'll pity us, love us despite our flaws, hold our inadequacies in their hearts and say: never again.

Today, I see all the men crouched, waiting to pounce. I see their fear of monsters boiling behind their eyes. I see them at the ballot box and in gatekeeping positions and the media and on the street. I see them salivating at the thought of monster flesh. But we've reached a tipping point. The monster future is coming. They will keep hitting us, hard. They will attack our bodies, our minds, our souls. But the monster swarm will keep coming. We will canoodle on park benches with our lovers and fuck-buddies and platonic friends in every combination of queer desire. We will let our tits hang out. We will demand respect and consent and love. We will dismantle all the bombs. We will tear down the fences. We will cancel all the debt and burn all the money. We will take over the factories and the boardrooms and the backrooms. We will dream of justice and make reparations and build intersectional solidarity. We will write poems and make art and sing songs and dance. We will be monsters, and monsters drag the world, kicking and screaming, into the future.



# An Ethnography of White Men by the Goddess Kali

## I

He took a drag from her cigarette  
The trace of her lips on his  
A species of intimacy  
Breathing  
Devi speaks: I'm here to dismantle white supremacy

## II

Stepping past his hockey gear in the hall  
(placed like a defiant smirk)  
The Goddess entered his room  
Music playing from his laptop, he asked her a question

I don't speak Spanish  
She said (again)  
Before removing his head, and adding it to the garland around her neck.

She left  
Licking the blood from her fingertips  
Rouging her lips

### III

The dining hall was emptying out  
The clink of dishes being washed by invisible workers  
He said: We just have to wait for all the old people to die,  
then racism won't be an issue anymore.

Her knife sunk deep into his chest  
He died in ecstasy  
His blood bathing the floor  
Staining her feet red as she danced.

### IV

The van idles by the curb  
The night is still, trees looming up from behind houses—  
Like witnesses.  
Like threats.

The radio plays, but they don't listen.  
She sits, cupped like a stone in the seat  
Thinking of all the bodies that have sat there before:  
Their sweat seeping into the cushion  
Their skin ground into the warp  
Their desire  
—a type of memory.

She says that the Tarkovsky film was fine, but all the mommy issues  
were a bit tiresome  
Hurt, he says she is self-centered, myopic, unable to see it his way.

She bathes her hair with his blood in the moonlight  
Before advancing into the dark.

V

The devotees come at her sideways  
Full of flattery  
Bright eyes and smiles  
Never mind the claws  
Never mind the teeth.

She says she is afraid of being erased  
Of being whited out  
She fears for the memory of her ancestors  
She fears for the bodies of her kin

They listen for a while, then say:  
but, you look white

She made a skirt of their severed arms  
And wove flowers into her hair.



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*An Ethnography of White Men by the Goddess Kali* originally appeared online in issue 23 of Drunken Boat, now known as Anomaly.

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Maya Mackrandilal is a transdisciplinary artist and writer based in Los Angeles. She holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she was a recipient of a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, and a BA from the University of Virginia, where she was a recipient of an Auspaugh post-baccalaureate fellowship. Her artwork has been shown nationally, including at the Chicago Artists Coalition, Smack Mellon, Abrons Art Center, and the South Side Arts Incubator. She has presented artwork and research at national conferences, including the College Art Association, Association for Asian American Studies, and the Critical Mixed Race Studies Association. Her writing, which explores issues of race, gender, and labor, has appeared in a variety of publications, including *The New Inquiry*, *Drunken Boat*, *contemptory*, *Skin Deep*, and *MICE Magazine*.

You can view more of her work at [mayamackrandilal.com](http://mayamackrandilal.com) and connect with her @femme\_couteau

She also maintains the social media feeds of The Goddess which can be found @globalmatriarch



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