

ENVIRONMENTAL ANXIETY,
SELF-ACTUALIZATION,
ACTIVISM

EACH STEP IN.

A poetry book by Kayla Carrington

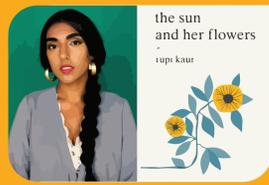


PROJECT STATEMENT

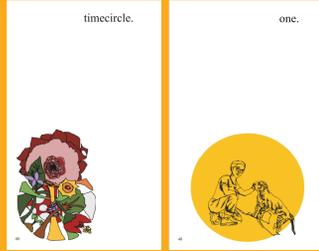
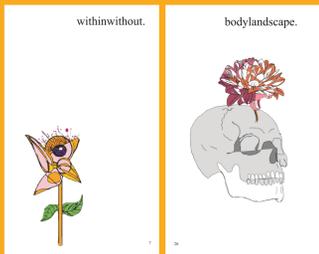
The term "activist" is often associated with aggression, extreme radicalism, and forcefulness rendering it ineffective and polarizing. Given the unstable state of the earth's ecosystems today, environmental activism needs to be as effective as possible in creating change. My senior project investigated where art and ecopsychology fit in to activism and how poetry can inspire action. To explore this, I immersed myself in the world of activist poetry. I read through dozens of published modern and historical artistic initiatives in addition to research on poetics, writing, and storytelling. I self-selected three books for their environmental and emotional relevance. Together, Rupi Kaur, Innosanto Nagara, and Christopher Poindexter demonstrated a power in language that articulates personal and emotional human-nature experiences.

METHODS

I drew inspiration from three main poets: Rupi Kaur, Innosanto Nagara, and Christopher Poindexter. I looked for ways that they employed literary form and structure, illustration, design, storytelling, and chapter sectioning to inform my own book.



FINDINGS



In **Rupi's** book, the sun and her flowers, she breaks each chapter up to tell a story of Wilting, Falling, Rooting, Rising, and Blooming. I reflected this simplicity and storytelling in my chapter titling (see left). To me, they all mean the same thing, but the phrasing of each chapter allowed me to tell my story of this ongoing personal transition from ego, to universal. From my own environmental anxiety, to a recognition of (and comfort with) my role in this a collective whole.

Innosanto wrote a (technically) children's book called "A is for Activist" where he goes through the alphabet rhyming his way through social, political, and environmental matters. Nearly all of the poems in my book rhyme, so it was important that I analyzed an example of where that is done alongside environmental action. The words that rhyme speak to one another.

I dissected **Christopher's** work to learn about the fusion of storytelling and poetry, particularly how a stand alone poem can tell a full story. Storytelling in poetry surreptitiously invites the reader to explore their own feelings— those past, present, and future— on overwhelming issues like environmental and social injustice.

Learn more and get a copy at www.kaylacarrington.com

Show me the angst of my generation.

"It's not my place," she went on.
Her voice caught in the wind
carried so quickly away from her lips
away from the women that stood before her
so that soon
it was as if she said nothing,
as if she touched no one,
as if she were no where
near
home.

~ Disquiet

abolitionist; admirer; advocate; aggressor; agitator; ally; anarchist; anti-capitalist; artist; asker; aspirant; backer; believer; busy-bee; candidate; caretaker; catalyst; chain-breaker; change-maker; collaborator; community-builder; creative; critic; decolonizer; demonstrator; devotee; disruptor; dissident; doer; dogmatist; educator; entertainer; enthusiast; expresser; extremist; facilitator; fanatic; fighter; friend; front-liner; game-changer; go-getter; healer; helper; idealist; innovator; insurgent; integrator; intercessor; intervenor; leader; liquidator; lobbyist; lover; mediator; militant; mother; motivator; mover; networker; objector; organizer; pain-in-the-ass, negative-Nancy; party-planner; party-pooper; peacemaker; persuader; petitioner; progressivist; promoter; propagandist; protester, net-rooter; provocateur, campaigner; public-speaker; punk; rabble-rouser; radical; realist; reformist; revolutionary; road-blocker; romanticist; rule-breaker; shaker; snowflake; socialist; solicitor; storyteller; student; trail-blazer; tree-hugger; troublemaker; truth-tosser; upholder; visionary; wonderer; zealot

~ 100 words for 'activist'

Karla Carrington
Put it in the box that's mine, check it off.
Let me get lost inside of
wire framed thoughts.
I wake up on rocks
under a blue duvet with grey dots.
I knew I couldn't stay long, yet
I couldn't find a thing wrong with
the blue on the blanket or the hue of the 'clouds,' so
I saw no reason to leave now.
Breathe in,
breathe— "Ow!"
I couldn't see beneath me, just the dreams far out
I couldn't see the screams because they only made a sound
I couldn't see the bleeding till the blanket turned brown.
~ Undetected Discomfort

Each Step In.
I lay my heart out in the cold
hoping it will dry.
"It's my only option," I say
"I have to try."
Three days go by and I'm inside
heartless.
I've set aside
darkness
to be a resting carcass
ingesting catharsis.



Sweetheart,
I'm weak in parts
I speak in scars
my technique's been barred
my work week's gone bleak
my checks taste antique
I critique my physique
till I remember
the outside,
and how dry now
my heart is.
I try it on,
it's cold.
I try again.
~ Bold

Is that tree dead or sleeping?
Are the bees here also weeping?
Do those cows ever stop their eating?

What's the loudest season
what's the proudest treason
what reason explains blue birds & ferns
as tall as I.

I—

How many words we have for 'I':
"Me, mine, myself," I
identify
with

you.

~ Tasmania

I douse myself in lavender
hoping I too
can show that I am thriving.
A fragrance that attracts.
A desire amongst the birds and bees,
deciduous like my sporadic sadness
intercepted with springtime perfection.
Every now and then,
I bloom.
I am the moon, too
I have phases
applicable only to the way I am perceived,
not to the way that I am.
I am myself, doused in lavender.



Every morning I pick a flower
and carry it in my pocket
so through the day
I visualize
how fast it dies
reminded inside
that time

that time

time flies.

You.

As a concept:
a committed project, prospect of potential
exponentially influential,
venture-full whilst very still, stone-like will
to only feel
like growing real,
glowing teal,
pulsing with an ego ideal.

Suddenly.
The song of the sun
was filling them up
as quickly
as it had departed.
They started to dance,
their hands amongst the plants,

nothing.

was static.

I think back to the time
when once you were mine.
I picked peas from your vine
and ate them, slowly
rewind,
slowly,
mental.

I wish I could see you breathe;
see you think; see you grieve. See,
sometimes I can just make out the loudest sounds:
from the leaves whispering in an autumn breeze
to the trees rooting beneath my feet,
aloud they speak.

"Please make noise. Please spread joy.
Please employ my virtue."

Somewhere between the earth and you, blue-sky-hue,
I stay.
I may
sway
differently but, better believe
my lips can bleed
the same sweet sap.
Overlap your canopy with my baseball cap.
I won't unstrap until I know you're safe.
I won't look back because I won't see my fate.
I won't wait for greatness,
I won't take the same shit,

I won't be discouraged by the lateness of effort
when I can shepherd
my attention
to the blessed.