

The Personal Is Political

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English 273 (Introduction to Literature: Creative Writing and Literature)

Mentor: Raindrop Wright

Artist Statement

This piece was written in lieu of America's current political unrest. I was prompted to consider what it truly means when the personal becomes political. What I found was a reaction in my physical body, hurt as tangible as a cut. Food—a carrier of culture, family, livelihood and identity—seemed the most appropriate way to show this pain I feel for the country and for those whose personal lives have been reduced by politics. What I have discovered is that the personal is always political and it is when we forget this that individuals and entire communities are left behind. This poem is a representation of my opinion of second-wave feminism and its limitations—its exclusion of women of color and issues such as ableism, homophobia and classism. Until we realize how personal politics are, and embrace all people in our fight for equality, we will not have a just country. This poem is a statement in acknowledgment of the hurt this country is experiencing, in particular the pain that often goes without acknowledgment or validation.

Carrots, peas, and privilege for dinner.

“It will only be four years and life will go on.”

I swallow my water and let it suppress
the red hot fire in my belly.

I smile

With teeth like mirrors,

Hoping he will see the reflection of his privilege

Between my parted lips.

But he laughs and my food feels dense in my mouth—

The peas

The carrots

The privilege

Lay heavy against the lining of my stomach,



Marley Aiu is an artist in many meanings of the word as she considers herself a musician, dancer, writer, and sometimes a painter. She is of Native Hawaiian, Filipino, and Greek decent and was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. Marley is pursuing her Bachelor's degree in English and Dance with an emphasis in Social Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

