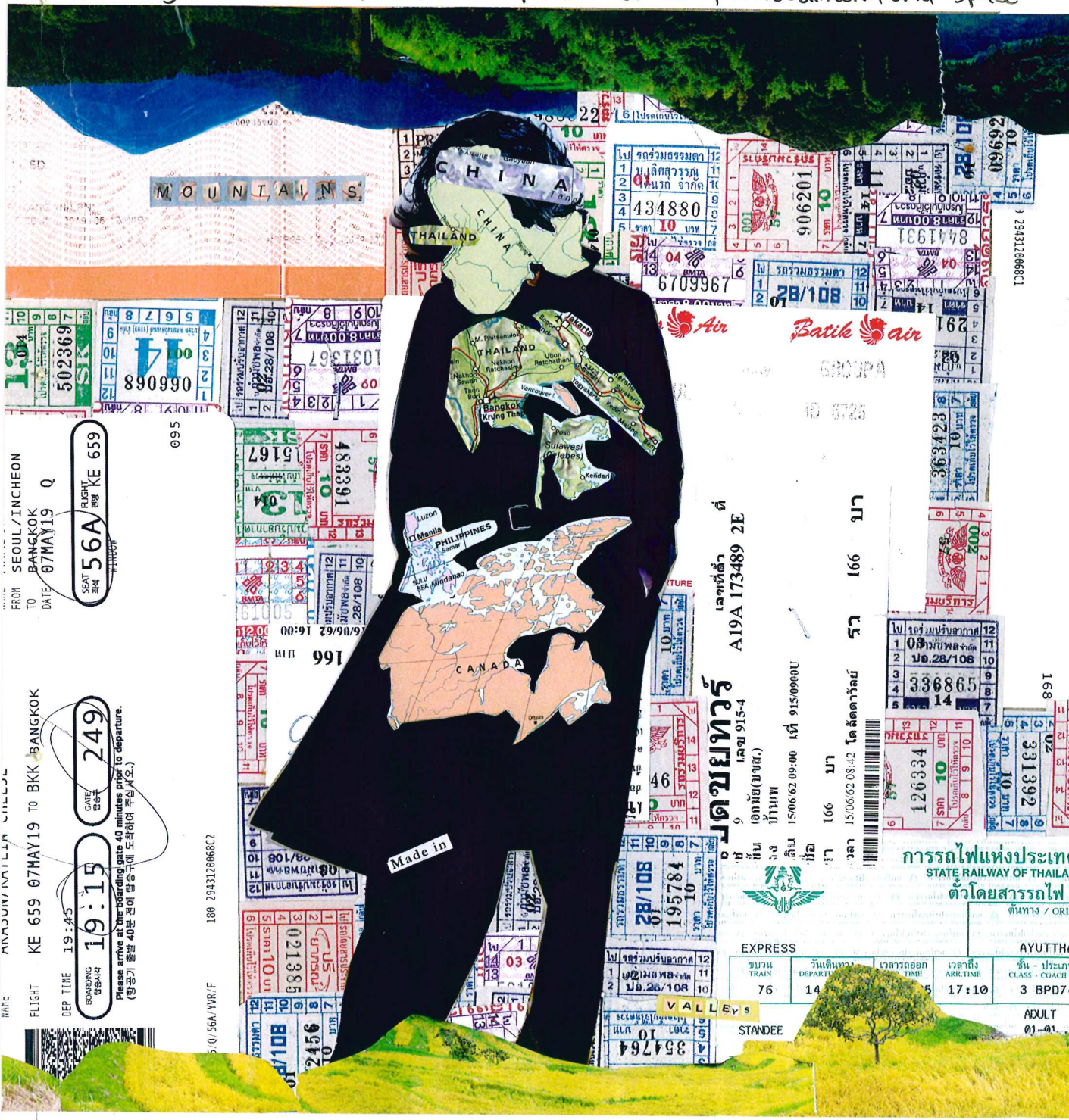


Coming Home to Myself: An Exploration of 'self', embodiment, and space



FROM SEUL/INCHEON
TO BANGKOK
DATE 07MAY19 Q
SEAT 56A FLIGHT KE 659

DATE 07MAY19
FLIGHT KE 659
DEP TIME 19:45
GATE 249
Please arrive at the boarding gate 40 minutes prior to departure.
(항공기 출발 40분 전에 탑승구에 도착하여 후심(후심))

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นายชัชวาลย์
เลขที่บัตร 915-4
เดอหนิง(บุตร)
บ้านทุ่ง
ถนน
เลขที่ 15/06/62 09:00 ถึง 9:15/09/00

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เลขที่ 15/06/62 09:00 ถึง 9:15/09/00

การรถไฟแห่งประเทศไทย
STATE RAILWAY OF THAILAND
ตั๋วโดยสารรถไฟ
ต้นทาง / ORI

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76	3 BPD74
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14	17:10
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5	17:10

GES : CAPI 2019

Kaullin Arason, February 2020

This project is a collection of stories, shared through journal entries, analog photographs, and some poetry I wrote upon returning to "Victoria." Through these art pieces and reflections, I share my vulnerability with you. Exploring the intersections of space and place, embodiment, privilege and positionality and identity, I hope to transcend the limitations of geographical and temporal boundaries. Moving to a foreign country can be scary, confusing and overwhelming - it can be uprooting. Through the Stones I share here, I hope to translate my process of rooting myself in the space of Bangkok, re-creating myself in the space, and simultaneously coming "home" to my body and self. What does it mean to be on the other side of the Pacific, separated and connected by the same body of water? What does it mean to have pieces of my heart left behind, and yet fall in love with a new space every day?

My first month away, I met a new friend. We shared feelings, challenges and fears. She reminded me that life is full of mountains and valleys. But the valleys are special, coming with change and transformation. We must express gratitude for both the mountains and the valleys.

Throughout my experience, I fell in love with the beauty of limbs as a symbol of labor and love. Working with the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, I became conscious of the interconnectedness of us all through labor - how I am sustained and nourished through the labor of others. In the following pages, I share some images of some limbs who left imprints on my heart. Through the self-portraiture of my own limbs, my own body, I further express what it means to "come home."

During the last week in my internship, I was at the UN for the regional convening for the 25th Anniversary of the BPfA - a landmark document for women's rights worldwide. As a representative of GAATW, I sat in on the negotiations among government delegates in the Asia Pacific to decide on the final language in the outcome document. My privilege, as a student from the Global North working with a large NGO in the Global South, granted me access to this space which many grassroots women don't have access to - a reproduction of colonial power relations. My body is not only an embodiment of self, but a space of privilege and power.



eating the best gado-gado in the world with Dornai
Jakarta, July 2019

I am reminded every day to practice

gratitude,

patience,

and love.



my old bedroom in Victoria, May 2019

today I mostly packed up my
room which felt good, but also very
sad, like a part of me is missing.
spaces are important.

I am really going to

miss the ocean and the sand of



on the ferry, May 2014

the waves crashing.



uprooted.

Megan Dewar, 2010

I just felt

so lonely today.



my hallway in Benghazi, May 2019

Adjusting takes time. Be patient.

who am I without my
home — my people?



my apartment in Bangkok, May 2017

I am so happy to have my refuge in this little apartment.

I feel isolated but at least I have a space.



My view is me.

I think it brings me a lot of comfort.



It's nice to be here

with my pigeon friends. This city is so loud and



colours at Lumpini park, October 2019

+ feels really good to be away from all the

hustling and noise.

one of my biggest accomplishments was
riding the bus for the first time!



A Bangkok bus ride on b;w, August 2014

I fall in love
with the city a little more
each time I take the bus.

I am learning to flow with it all -



feet in the Gulf of Thailand, June 2019

falling in love with this place more
and more every day

I get to watch the

ebs and flows of light pass



Coming home after work
September 2019

through my apartment, illuminating

the walls and creating life-like shadows.

finding balance

time spent with community

time spent with myself



flowers resting on my flesh, February 2020

still learning | smelling the flowers

on my walk home | YES!

my feet.

carry me

everywhere I go.



Sick day, July
2019

the class and county privilege

to access those spaces.

to be attached to limbs with no bounds

to be able, to be mobile

to run, walk, dance, stretch

to take me to lumphini park, to the GAATW office, to my favourite

som tum place

across countries, continents, artificial and arbitrary borders

to me: lines

to some: barriers

to have access to knowledge, culture, spaces

dear body, please be mindful

please tread lightly

proceed with care

proceed with grace

these limbs are an undeserved gift

laughing as we danced in circles holding hands.



fresh bananas in Kendari, Indonesia
July 2019

I can't remember the last time I felt so!

— / / / / —
alive!

and fueled by! community!

love, and!

laughter!

But the one hug I won't ever forget is the one
with the smaller lady with the sweet face. I.



A traditional Kenderi meal shared with Astin
July 2019

started crying and so did she, and I was reminded:

that we don't need to speak the same language:

to connect and share love.

I am a product of the air around me, the food fed to

^(with love?)
me, the labour of the farmers who grow my food, the labour



Hands at a market in Yogyakarta, Indo
July 2019

of those who sew my clothes. I am so honored to benefit

from this labour.

light and shadows



Sunset in my apartment, Bangkok
November, 2019

feeling at home!

homesick

solitude

community

discomfort

comfort

ups and downs.

This weekend is Sandra and Mathias' last weekend.



holding tight on the MRT
Singapore, August 2014

Honestly, I'm really sad about that. They really

make me feel comfortable and loved.

I booked my tattoo last week



jasmine etched on my skin
Bangkok, November 2019

I am ^{so} happy to have a physical reminder
of this space on my body — a reminder of the
pain, the growth, the challenges, and all the doing
learning and living.

Being in Asia

Is like a return to my roots

a return to a familiar yet still an unfamiliar space.



finding home in sun rays
Victoria, February 2020

I am trying to embrace this

idea of coming home to myself

"can I call you chinadoll?" he says

why did he need to say that?

perhaps my skin is a little more warm, my nose a little more flat,

my eyes a little more oval

a Chinadoll in a sea of whiteness

hypervisible

twelve thousand kilometres across the body of the "Pacific"

same face, different sea

once hypervisible, now a mask

masking an ideology of whiteness, a culture so deeply embedded

I carry it with me every day

looking more closely, to the etchings on my skin and bones

my mothers flesh— *my* flesh

she peaks through 22 years of Canadian assimilation

maybe not so white after all

this body is a product of 8 months
carried "inside my mother



Bangkok, November 2019

I am a product of her physical being.

My flesh, my bones, my blood, are her flesh, bones, and blood.

I honour her.

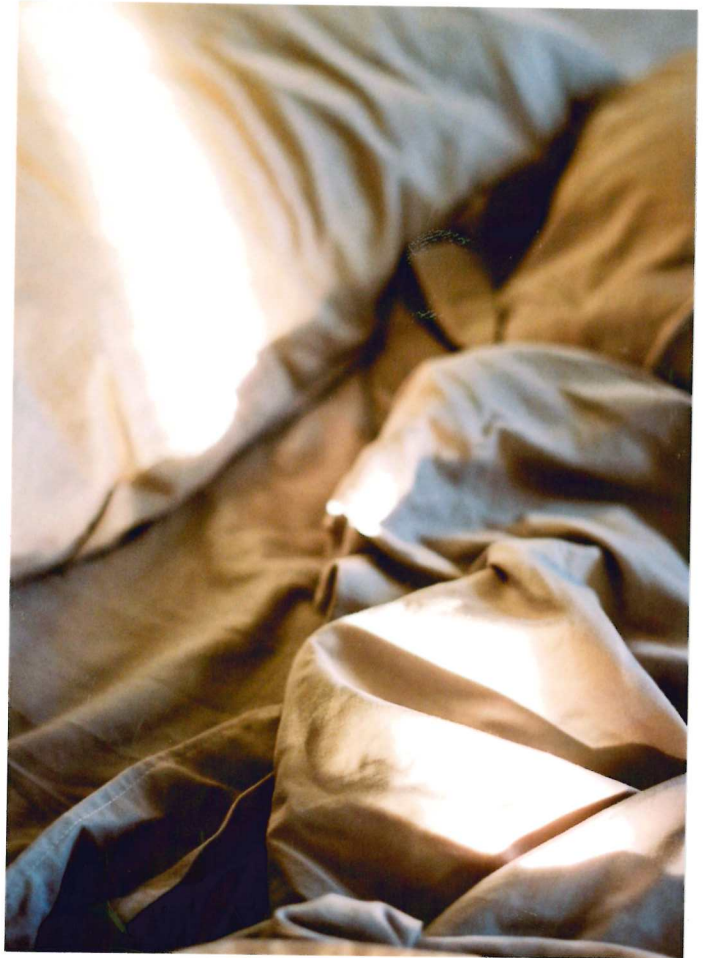
I looked around my room today and realized how it's become my space.

It was so bare

when I came,

now it's full of

pieces of me.



Now is the hard part:

It hurts to brace

myself for goodbye — everything feels so unfinished.

light in my bedroom
Bangkok, August 2019

I think time

might just be a word to explain change —

aging, growing, transforming.

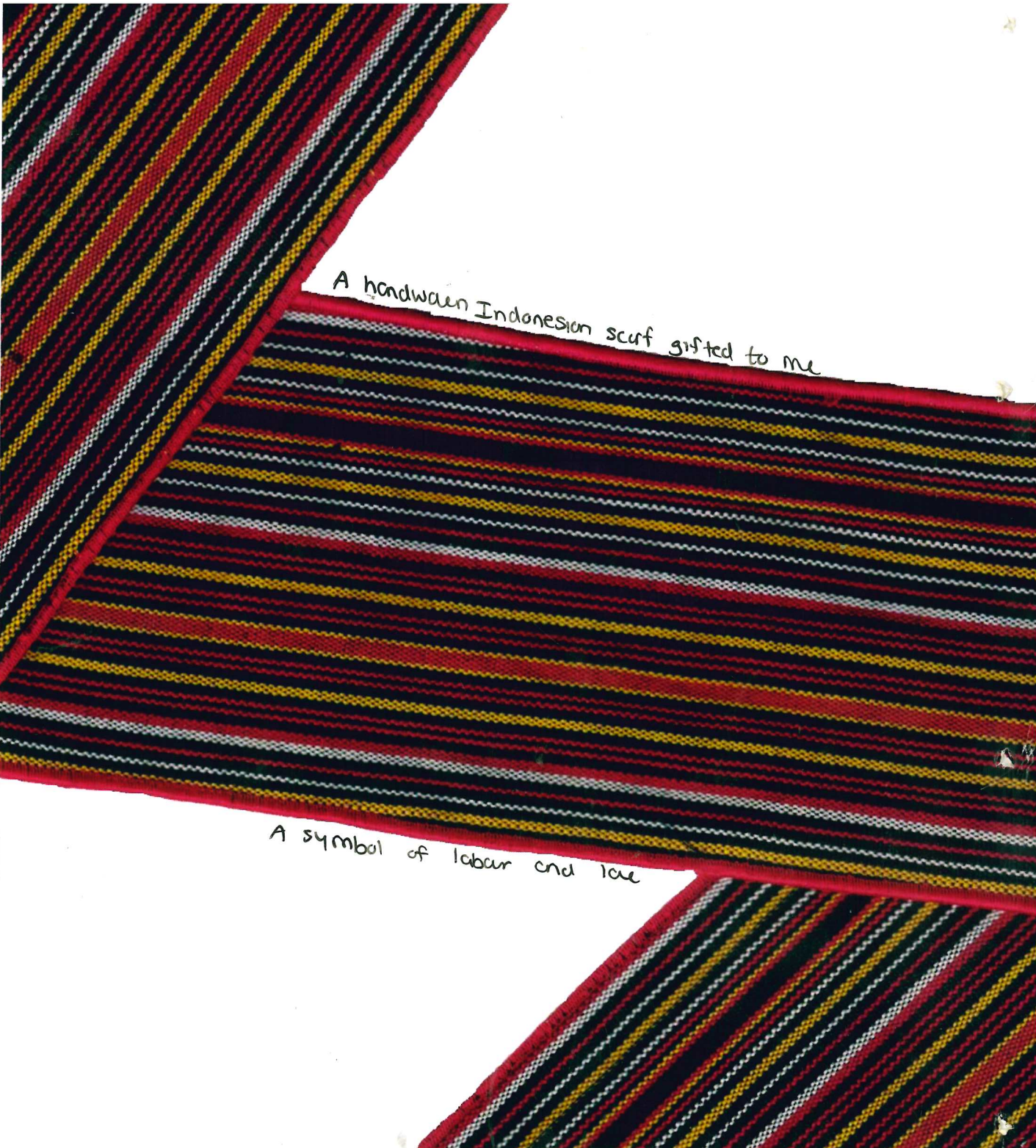


jade for good luck
Victoria, February 2020

maybe my time in Bangkok will come to an end.
but my lessons about myself, the world, those around
me — those will stay with me forever.

Home is: Victoria, Bangkok, my mother, the ocean, feelings of comfort, the smell of Jasmine ^{my} body - a diasporic and hybrid whole.

I cannot end this story without deep gratitude to those who carried me through. Thank you to CAPI and GES for flying me across the Pacific. Thank you, Robyn, for reading my words and supporting me each step of the way. Thank you everyone at the GAATW office for your passion, teachings, and snacks. Thank you Pining for nourishing my body, heart, and soul every lunch hour. Thank you Moo the pup for sitting by my feet and keeping me company while I munched. Thank you Leah for endless chats about eating the rich and dismantling capitalism. Thank you Sandra and Mathias for being my home away from home when I needed it the most. Thank you to all the Indonesian women's rights activists (with a special shout out to my lae, Astri), and to Pat and Yui. Thank you for reminding me of the power of community, resistance, and revolutionary love. Lastly, thank you Winnie and Nan, for being there through it all, for being a space of comfort and lae, and for nurturing my heart.



A handmade Indonesian scarf gifted to me

A symbol of labour and love