

BELONGING TOGETHER

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You are at a bus stop with strangers when you learn that 49 people have been shot dead and 58 injured at a gay club.

You are at a job, pretending to work on something, as news of the hurricane comes in.

I am alone, about to go to class, when I hear of the fire at a party.

I am alone, frying an egg, when I hear that 58 people are dead, 851 injured from someone shooting up at a country music show.

You are in line, waiting for your food, when you read about Charlene Lyles.

You are on the train when you see the video. Diamond Reynolds and her four year old witnessing the police kill Philando Castile.

I am alone, cleaning my desk, when I hear that 1200 people have died, and 41 million have been affected by flooding in India and Bangladesh.

I am alone, brushing my teeth, when I hear that Erica Garner has died of a heart attack. She was 27.

I am alone, filling out a form, when I learn that 2016 and 2017 are the hottest years on record.

You are in a waiting room, reading more reasons to fear impending nuclear war.

The Rebel Body invites us to feel how resistance might move our bodies, to sense the landscapes that hold us while we persist.

Silvia Federicci's description of the persecution of women as witches ends with a provocation, describing a contemporary "process of transformation of the all of the elements of everyday life—peoples' relationship to death, to love, to nature—that allows for the more intense exploitation of people's vital energies." Building racial capitalism requires hunting witches, establishing male authority, reordering how land is held to eliminate commons and enforce free hold estate, eradicating forms of spiritual practice and healing based in connection to land that is not ownership, creating channels for extraction in the colonies and in Europe. In *Caliban and the Witch*, Federicci describes processes of "social enclosure," showing how contracting the space for group social connection, sharing of resources, and spiritual practice, and enforcing marriage and the private home was essential to the development of capitalist social relations after the English Civil War. These shifts have continued, toward the smaller nuclear family and, increasingly, the individual. Federicci argues that neoliberal/neocolonial economic arrangements, articulated by advocates as "free trade," are a new wave of enclosure and extraction. Capitalism always requires new

markets, invents new needs, changes the conditions that shape us to channel more of our lives through profit-generating relations, finds ways to extract more. These changes are narrated as producing new freedom, a freedom defined by disconnection and lies about efficiency. A freedom that makes some people quietly disposable, others spectacular targets of murder and massacre.

Staring at a screen, I think about the recent creeping captures, the current wave of social enclosure, the new ways we mediate our last shreds of connection. I operate/ am operated by the new technologies that make desire, appeal, belonging, and contact into quantities, sites of competition, compare and despair. I heed the latest commands for the free: Be alone, urgently writing the content for corporations that collaborate with the police and the Israeli government. Make yourself look right, smart, cool, connected, delighted. Say the right thing. Shame those who don't. Weaponize your feelings and beliefs. Take a picture of your breakfast. Demobilize.

taisha paggett slows and shows us how bodies move, together, in passionate dismantling. She plucks those movements out of their fevered, jubilant, angry moment and invites consideration of what it feels like to move together like that, what our bodies might do. Can we feel a different embodied experience than the isolation, feeling-stuffing, and alienation that comes with standing alone in the unending stream of bad news? Can I feel myself, not alone, others around me, outside, tearing something down? What happens when I invoke that feeling in my brain and body? How do I get outside? What is freedom beyond the newest device, the one that takes a better photo?

If I were an artist I would make a beautiful instructional poster/video/song/dance/spell/cake offering movements to do when the bad news comes: shaken fist, beat the earth, wracked with sobs, vigorous stomp, tear your hair, run around the block, imagine allies and ancestors surrounding. Could it matter to fill our bodies with the anger/anguish rather than suppressing, accommodating, habituating, hardening to the increasing misery? Could feeling *more* mobilize compassion, accompaniment, claim, demand, and connection? I am what I practice, and I am always practicing something. What does repeating that hear-the-devastation-and-stuff-it do to me? What does saying/liking things in proscribed profit-generating online forums and feeling like I did something do to me? If contemporary structures are designed to demobilize rebellion, contain disruption, and declare freedom, what practices mobilize embodied rebellion to the point of threat?

The Rebel Body provokes intimate questions about what my body has to do with the conditions in which it moves and with the other bodies moving around it, close by and far away. It invites a desire to connect to stone, forest, field, and friend, to inquire in our bodies as much as in our social movements about how freedom might feel, and what we need to feel to get free.