

LIVING WITH A LIMINAL MIND

YORIKO GILLARD

ABSTRACT:

Learning to be an educational storyteller entails using every creative skill I learned since my childhood and has allowed me to connect with others especially those in pain. This paper is a reflection of my emotional past. My tears are coming from the ocean and rivers in my liminal space. In this space, I contemplate my hopeful future and seek its contemplative challenges to discover what I still do not know and could learn as an educator. My sincere contemplation to serve society shall be a poetic reflection of who I am becoming each step of my life. Creative writing is the truthful voice of my soul. I, a contemporary artist, avoid making art unless my heart screams its pain and allows these stories to take flight. Memories of pain are seeded throughout my liminal space where water overflows and swallows them occasionally. The beauty of ambiguity is inside grey pavements and reflects the multi layers, which are subtle and bold at the same time. I shall become free with my sense of belonging that is connecting to my soul and history. Bio:

Yoriko Gillard is an artist, poet, researcher and teacher. After receiving heartful

support and care and mentorship from Dr. Carl Leggo, she advanced to PhD Candidate Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver BC, Canada in June 2018. While teaching Japanese language, Japanese culture and visual arts through a variety of creative practices in various educational communities, she tries to connect with people in the Kizuna way, which Gillard defines as a respectful, affectionate, and trustful reciprocal relationship. 絆(きずな: Kizuna) is a Japanese word which connotes a strong feeling of belonging to one's communities, people, lands, and nature. The concept is well known in Japan especially since the Great East Japan Earthquake struck the country in March 11, 2011. In 2017 she worked as a student researcher for Landscapes of Injustices at Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre in Burnaby where she uncovered the resilient Kizuna stories of Japanese Canadian communities from 1942-1949. Her desire in education comes directly from her mentor, Dr. Leggo's words; "Live creatively and poetically" to reach out people with her liminal storytelling practices.

There is always a shadow beside my eyes where I see the greys¹, the color of wisdom in my liminal mind. My liminal mind is where I allow myself to be free to think of anything truthful with intuitive sense ... in my liminal space. My liminal mind guides my living and thinking processes of a relationship among 'contemplate,' 'contemplative,' and 'contemplation.' It is my way to wander a world full of opportunities that occasionally seem promised, smooth, and secure, yet sometimes disappointing, rough, and bumpy ...

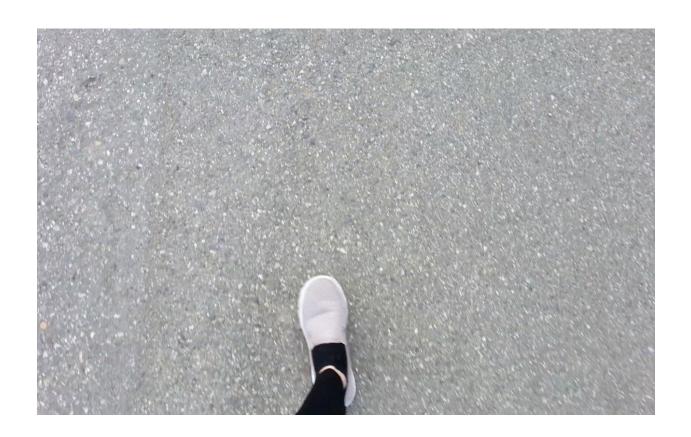


My liminal space, a safer place allows me to play with a lingering verb 'to contemplate' a hopeful adjective 'contemplative' a wishful noun 'contemplation' ...

The verb 'to contemplate'
an action to gather thoughts from the
past
imagination in the present
the path to our 'contemplative' future
with others to serve society ...

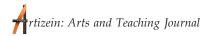
Let me hold my passion ...
let me seek trusting relationships ...
let me feel hearts of care and kindness
...

my way of living with a liminal mind another story to weave a grey journey I am mending in my liminal space ...



still ...
truly tragedy ...
earth shock
oceans awoken
tsunami warned
humans crying
technology ... radiation ...
our broken silence
March 11, 2011,
the day I will never forget ...

It hurts² me



I am connecting

with souls ...

tears still screaming

my careful selection takes time

outside the academy I stay

where am I?

where do I belong?

inside the academy?

liminal mind circulates ...

"... you need to stop thinking

am I good enough ..."

Mentor's words ³

wisdom,

care,

medicine

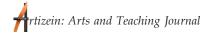
for many I know

contagious

genuine

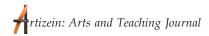
his trust

circulating ...



2018, seven years later
my contemplation
messy
people care
humanity
inside and outside the academy
many
feel the pain
many
see the pain
many
hear the pain
tears
fill my heart ...

Life and death
belonging or not belonging
life long contemplation
circulates ...
my liminal space a safer space
since childhood
living with a liminal mind ...



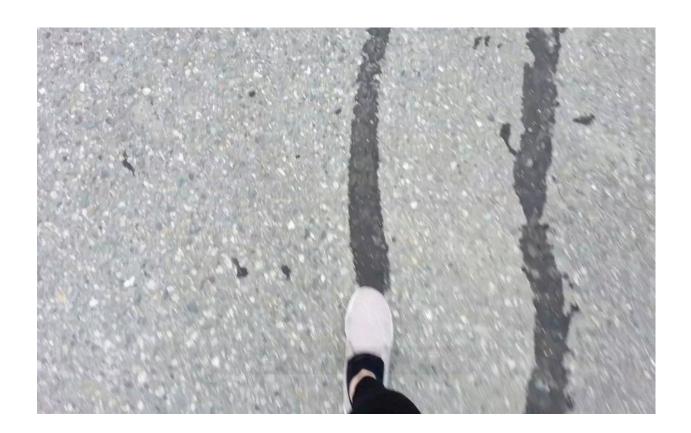
"I might not live long ... dear ...
I teach everything I can now"

Mother's voice echoes

my heart aches to survive ...

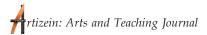
attentive to life
my mother her teaching
heart still beating
danger a teacher she says
smiling at school
hiding my fear of losing her ...

A girl sobbing alone at night still ... my forever friend my forever teacher ...



My liminal mind a guide to feel and hear voices pain of others ...

Learning journey
memories of liminal space
taking me far
deep reasoning
my actions
dancing together ...
I am alive ...



walking head down
thinking life
with others ...
staring cracks
in the street
reflect my life
with others ...

Every street has its history ... snowstorms

frost heaves

the earth lifts our sealed pavement

us relearning

the power of nature

can we command ...

street full of gray patches

telling us stories of

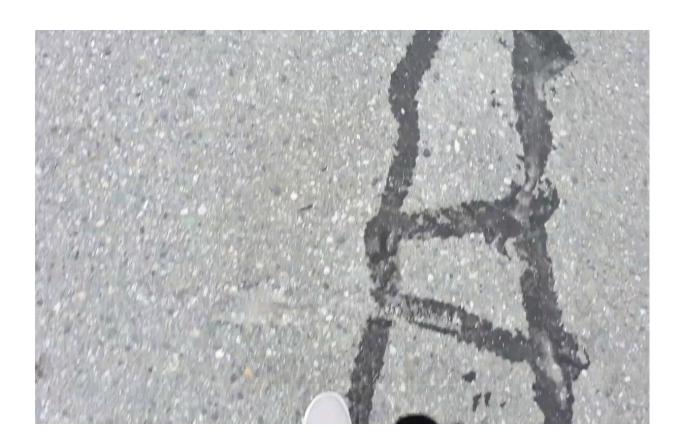
negotiations and contemplations

driving quickly

responsibilities

missing the chance to learn

again and again ...



Several promises to myself in staying in the academy ...

- 1) Admit I do not know many things
- 2) Be honest with my inner voices
- 3) Follow people I trust only
- 4) Be humble and stay away from envy
- 5) Seek help for reciprocal growth
- 6) Contemplate to serve society

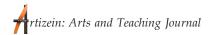
there

are

more

to

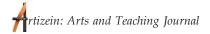
come ...



The world seems two-sided right and wrong life and death accepted and declined gain and loss success and failure trust and distrust binary concept continues endlessly creating multiple perspectives rightness reversed into wrongness "I like — " and "I hate —" multiplicity ... binary collections

Vancouver

myth of a multicultural dream city
full of ethnic foods
different languages echo on streets
are we belonging?
are we understanding?
are we feeling?
are we listening?



are we learning?

are we comforting?

are we caring?

are we sharing?

contemplation keep moving ...

Yes or No
Black and White
Up and Down
Right and Left
In and Out
Good and Bad
Correct and Incorrect
endless binaries ...

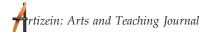
Nikkei National Museum⁴
a place that holds memories for many
from 1942 to 1949
Japanese Canadian injustice
still hurting ... haunting
many Canadians
they were called enemy aliens



my elderly friends teach and cry
silently and humbly
living with us
past/present/future
many ignore
many unaware
many disbelieve
many uneducated ...
still ...

My own ignorance guilt and shame this my force a reason to stay in the academy ... seventy six years long past already...

My commitment
research the past⁵
to the future
in present ...
fifty letters from 1942 ...



Japanese calling me

to belong

to understand

to feel

to listen

to learn

to comfort

to care

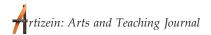
to share

contemplation connecting us ...

Japan to Canada
Canada to Japan
unimaginable pain
travels with my liminal mind
binary problems
existing

Contemplative processes break my heart deeply crying helps

still ...



crying reminds me pain
emotion our pure sense
who decided who does not belong
in the academy ...
crying many times
with my broken heart
walking around Fukushima ...
translating letters from 1942 ...
who has the right to say I am weak?
who can decide crying is weak?
I am alive
to feel the pain
in my liminal space
with a liminal mind ...

I am a human walking on earth full
of greys
I am a person who cares about pain
of others
Is this enough to stay in the academy?



"... you are an artist ...

why do you care about the academy ...

you should belong to communities ...

you are a social activist ..."

I hear well

I feel well

what is the academy anyways ...

contemplation circulates ...

Education ...

in the heart of our lives

within society including the academy ...



Pavement cracks

history ...

layers, mendings

history ...

Fukushima

Japanese Canadians

history ...

strength gained from survivors

irony and truth

resilience, dignity, forgiveness ...

history of hopes

circulate with my liminal mind ...

Meandering

living with a liminal mind stumbling all over the places get hurt and carry scars memories connecting souls to care pain guiding us forward ...

this is my love letter to the academy ...





Link to video

Notes



¹ Photos (Still Images) in this chapter are selected from the video created by the author. Gillard, Y. (2016), Living with a Liminal Mind.

²See https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0166942

³ Heartfelt words of encouragement given by Dr. Carl Leggo, my PhD Supervisor

⁴See http://centre.nikkeiplace.org/research/japanese-canadian-history-in-brief/

⁵See http://www.landscapesofinjustice.com/