



## **women and femmes resisting housing injustice and creating care**



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## Table of Contents

Introduction	pg. 2
<i>The descent &amp; waking up in paradise</i> by Jaime	pg. 3
<i>Housing as a human right</i> by Lucy	pg. 4
<i>And Soon</i> by c.j	pg. 5-6
<i>[Untitled]</i> by Rose	pg. 7
<i>Peace, happiness</i> by Anonymous	pg. 8
<i>Nature and beings</i> by Lyndsey	pg. 9
<i>It's Getting Late</i> by Ivy	pg. 10
<i>How I became homeless</i> by Manuella	pg. 11
<i>It Sounds Like A Summer</i> by Adrianna Sutherland	pg. 12
<i>essence of clarity</i> by Dee	pg. 13
<i>Heartland</i> by Kantenah Arts	pg. 14
<i>Dreaming of the good life</i> by Nester	pg. 15
<i>Break the Cycle</i> by Trynelle Thomas	pg. 16-17
Resources	pg. 18
Acknowledgments	pg. 19
Making this zine: Call for zine submissions!	pg. 20
Back Page	pg. 21

2022

Hello! Thank you for being here.

Inside this zine you will find a collection of tributes from young women and femmes who have experienced housing injustice in colonially called Canada. Housing injustice is a startling public health issue and it is difficult to truly know exactly how many young women and femmes face this human rights violation. Experiences of housing injustice are diverse and impact different people in different ways. This zine reflects some of these stories.

You might have noticed that this zine uses the word "houseless" in the title and not "homeless". Understanding why is important: People who are often described as homeless are not necessarily without a home. A home can look like many things and usually includes a community where we live, a space to practice our cultures and traditions, and where we might leave our belongings. A house can look like many different things and typically includes the physical structure where we seek shelter and safety. A house is also a space in which our home *might* take place. For this reason, we use the word houseless and not homeless.

Nicole Santos Dunn (she/her) linked contributions of this zine together. She is a PhD candidate in the Clinical and Counselling Psychology program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Having worked as a registered psychotherapist in community settings, she wanted to create space to honour the wisdom and knowledge that young people hold. This zine was created as part of her dissertation that wanted to answer the question, "How do young women and femmes resist housing injustice and create care?" The intention was to create "research" that would honour the expertise of young people, while remaining accountable to return this knowledge back to the community in a timely manner. Should you have any questions, she can be reached at [nicole.dunn@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:nicole.dunn@mail.utoronto.ca)



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Reading this zine might make you feel a lot of different things and this is valid and okay. Please be gentle with yourself. On the very last page you will find a list of some freely available resources.



the descent

things will get worse before they get better. keep your chin up



waking up in paradise

even when you've hit rock-bottom, life is beautiful.

By Jaime

This was the flyer used to collect submissions for this zine. Submissions were collected from September 2022-December 2022.



Call for zine submissions!

## Women & Femmes Resisting Housing Injustice & Creating Care

As part of a research project, a one-off collaborative zine is being published. It will be a resource created by women & femmes with lived experience of housing injustice & who have struggled with their mental health.

Address any of the following topics

- Housing is a human right
- Taking care of each other
- Dreaming of the good life
- Resistance and clapping back!
- What I really, *really* want

Selected zine submissions will receive

**\$50**

Submissions can take any form you like including a poem, a picture, a diary entry, a story, or *anything else* you want!

Send a .doc or .pdf or picture to [creatingcare@utoronto.ca](mailto:creatingcare@utoronto.ca) of your submission. You are welcome to submit anonymously or to be credited under any name you prefer.



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FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION

It is with gratitude that this zine may hold the stories and wisdom of young women and femmes who have experienced housing injustice on Turtle Island, specifically within colonialism called Canada. Thank you for sharing your stories.



This zine was made possible through the generous support of various people and organizations. In alphabetical order:

AIDS Committee of Toronto; Amanda Huiward; Anduhyaun Centre; Anna Willats; Cornerstone Housing for Women; Dr. Sean Kidd; Durham Rape Crisis Centre; Elaine Paz; Evergreen Centre for Street Youth; Hard Feelings; Inspirations Studio; Maggie's Sex Worker's Action Project; Operation Come Home; Planned Parenthood Toronto & Ottawa; Sanctuary Toronto; The Sexual Assault Centre Kingston; Theresa Robertson; The 519; Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape; Women's Health in Women's Hands.

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## Hear me out -

I would really like to live. Not be alive, live. I want to be able to wake up in the morning and get out of bed. Not roll off my friends couch, not wake up in the middle of the night because it's too cold to sleep outside.

I want to have a stove to make food, and not worry when I can use the bathroom next. I want cupboards to store that food - oh, and I want to be able to afford that food instead of watching my hard-earned money drain away to pay rent.

I turn twenty-two year old today. I have lived in eleven places in the last five years. And that is just counting where I've paid rent, and not sleeping on a couch or floor. It was not my choice to move, but you either go where the work is and the rent is livable or you go on the street.

And livable rent is just a lie, by the way. I believe statistics for my city lay down that in order to rent, the rent is to be a third of your income. A third? Most people are lucky to afford half. I pay 80% of my income to rent.

As a woman sleeping on the street you know you are in constant danger. Couch surfing is a myth, frankly, none of your friends can afford apartments either. The homeless shelters are overrun and no one is bothering to try and build more.

So why is housing supposed to be a choice? Because it's not, not to a lot of us. It is a fundamental human right. To be safe and warm, to have a bed to sleep in, to not be scared for your life every night. Why has the world today made it seem like it's only a choice?

by Lucy

## And Soon

There's a saying of the "American Dream".  
It's a dream that has remained stagnant—unchanging—for decades  
It's a dream from a society that no longer exists, that perhaps never did.  
This dream is one of white picket fences, mortgages, a dog and a happy family.  
But why are we so shamed for the simple inability to have that?  
It's not about us, 2.5 children, a house and a dog.  
It's about the idea of "perfection" that has been forced upon us.

So, I say once again,  
Why?

These last few generations are severely unhappy with life.  
Millennials have the knowledge that nothing they do will fix their current existence  
Gen Z know that nothing matters anymore  
And the next generation will know that everything the previous generations knew is no longer applicable.  
Yet, we're not the ones who can fix any of it.

Corporate greed takes away our rights, our hope for the future.

They increase the price of our food, gas  
They raise the price of rent exponentially yet put spikes on benches  
All those "initiatives"? Posturing. Wasted. Performative.

Hotels turned to shelters for those in need, back to hotels.  
Mental health institutions overworked, underfunded, overcapacity, underappreciated  
CERB being taken away abruptly, only to need to be paid back with no notice, and soon.  
So soon.

## Resources

**helping your friends who sometimes want to die maybe not die [a zine]:**  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c38d909266c07526f7b4054/t/5fe3b10f57121c62e064c2e0/1608757534434/suicide+zine+SCANNED+COPY.pdf>

**Toronto Homelessness Resource Pamphlet [google doc]:**  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EqQFtzT7-vbC-KSrip-sVqQ6zplwx1yW/view>

**Crisis Resource List by CAMH [website]:**  
<https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/crisis-resources>

**Toronto Drop In Network [website]:**  
[https://tdin.ca/find\\_a\\_dropin.php](https://tdin.ca/find_a_dropin.php)

**Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 [phone number]:**  
<https://kidshelpphone.ca/call>

## Break The Cycle

Hi my name is Trynelle Thomas and I have titled my art piece "Break the cycle". The reason why my piece has this title is because it outlines the aspects of my own personal struggles and challenges as a woman who has a continues to face issues related to housing and injustice care practices. From the time I was a little girl I quickly realized how fast the roof over your head can be removed and had to learn and watch as my mother a single mom raising three children struggled with housing and keeping a roof over her children's head. Many people who haven't experienced housing as a issue in their life's don't realize the privilege they have.

From the early ages of my life, I moved many times always somewhere different to keep a roof over my head. I never really knew what it was like to have somewhere stable to live but I always knew my mother would do what ever she had to keep a healthy roof over her children's head. At the age of 17 I became homeless. I was kicked out of my mother's house due to my unmanageable behaviours at the time related to the traumatic events that took place in my earlier years. My mother could not manage my outburst and constant getting in trouble so one day I came home from school, and she told me that I was going to go live with my father. I refused to go live with my father as we did not have a close relationship at the time, and I was so angry at him for leaving me and not being more present in my life.

With no where to go and not trusting the system I ended up living on the streets. Within my first couple of nights on the streets I got trafficked. I spent my time on the street being forced to have sex with older men and doing drugs against my will. None of my family knew at the time because my mom thought I was living with my dad and my dad thought I was living with my mom. The right side of my art piece represents the pain I faced while living on the streets and that feeling of hopelessness. Overtime I was able to get off the streets and ran away from my traffickers but unlike most women and children out there "I was the one that got away". I was very lucky to have managed to escape the life I was living on the street and after long thoughts of not wanting to be back in the system as I was still under the age of 18 I went to go live with my dad. This in itself is a challenge as I still continued to run away during my college years until I finally broke that cycle "which is what the scissors" in the picture represents.

I finally had a stable roof over my head even though living with my father had its downfalls I had shelter. Although I struggled and still struggle with my trauma and the housing injustice in Ontario, while finding affordable places to live. I have now been able to move out on my own started my healing journey which is want the right side of this piece shows. I still struggle to pay my rent, but I am blessed to have a roof over my head and have a place to call home. I hope to one day overcome my trauma and hopefully own my own property ranch and build rooms in that home to help and house those who have been in the same position I was once in. I wish to create a place for many to call home.

by Trynelle Thomas

17

Our world is a ticking time bomb.

Canadians say, "at least we're not the States!"

But we're just as bad.

ODSP, LTD are not livable. They pinch pennies, but not from donors, but from us.

The people who need it.

Every dollar after \$200 gets cut in half. As if rent is only \$200 a month.

This society is NOT livable. It is trying to eradicate us, as if we're weeds. So, who benefits? Because as far as I can tell, all of us "others" outnumber you.

It's not about politics, religion, or creed.

It's about passive, slow genocide

They're trying to kill the others off, and it will happen at this trajectory

And soon.

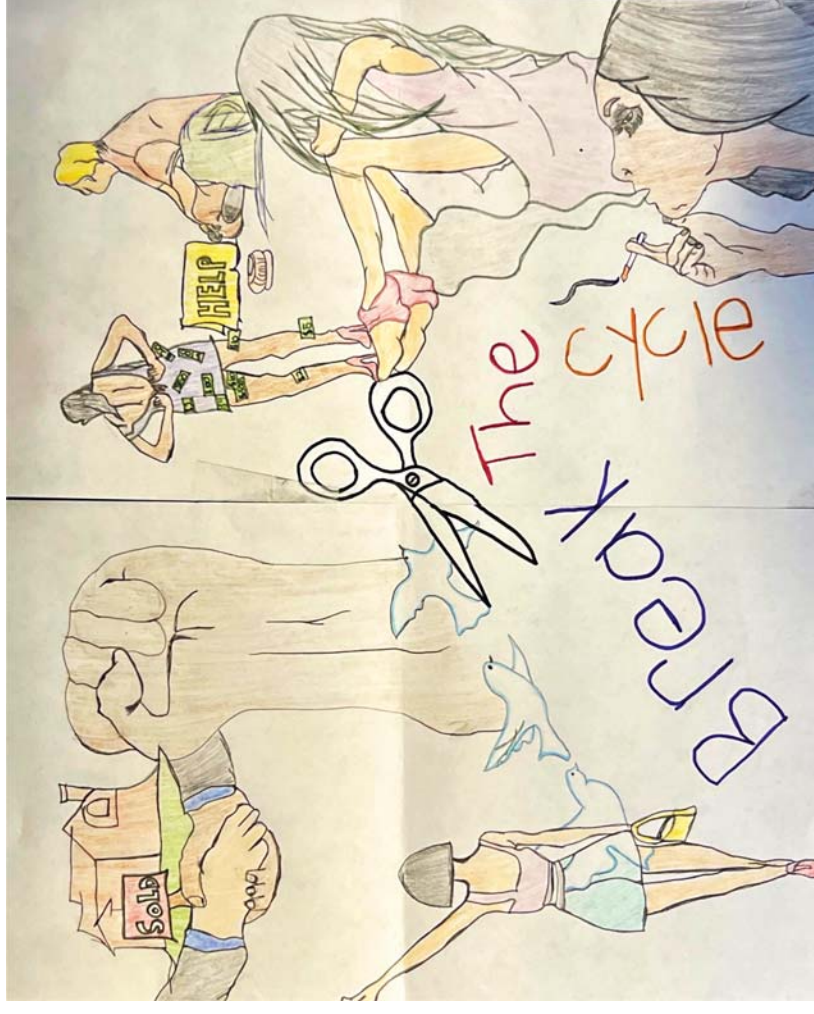
-C.j.

6

I want to share my story of my life because we are facing a real housing crisis for all of us who are damaged from all kinds of abuse including rape to sex trafficking. I was a damaged young woman with a childhood filled with all kinds of abuse and yes I was molested by my maternal adopted uncle who they protected in a very hateful misleading way. I was misdiagnosed with something I didn't have to prove my uncle didn't do what he did. At 18 at legal age to fight for myself I went back and had 5 reevaluations done all proving I didn't have the original diagnosis, which we knew I wouldn't have taken off that medication I'd been on for 8 years and put on medication for PTSD BPD cause by life of all abuses. and placed on ODS for rest of my life. which leads me to my next traumatic story I was still a young woman because of my uncle being protected believed it was OK that adults did what they did to kids and it was OK that I married the man I'd been seeing since 16 at 19 years old not knowing he was actually a sex predator who did put me out on the street corner me not knowing what it was all about didn't know that it was sex trafficking. however nothing happened cuz police rescued me very first time he did it. but then I had first child and then he raped me for second child and I got courage to leave. but not healed and very naive got involved the next two guys were abusive and I barely escaped with my life. spent the next 12 years single because I needed to find me. and I ended up with great guy now. however ppl take advantage of me even now where ppl I thought were landlords turned out not to be the real landlords and in fact signed lease to not sublet. which is the subplot they illegally rented to. now I'm facing homelessness because rent to high that landlords won't rent to ODS or welfare. I'm on ODS. and I can't find a place. I'm terrified because 2020 I was body slammed off two cars and my body physically can't handle anything. let alone being on the street. if my life been different as a child I would not be facing this today. I would have job and a life and. full education

by rose

7



16



Dreaming of the good life

Stressful living! Complete deprivation of privacy!

by Nester

15



peace, happiness.

by anonymous

8





Nature and beings- selfless in their  
truest form, care for one another  
with the simplest touch of love.

By Lyndsey

9



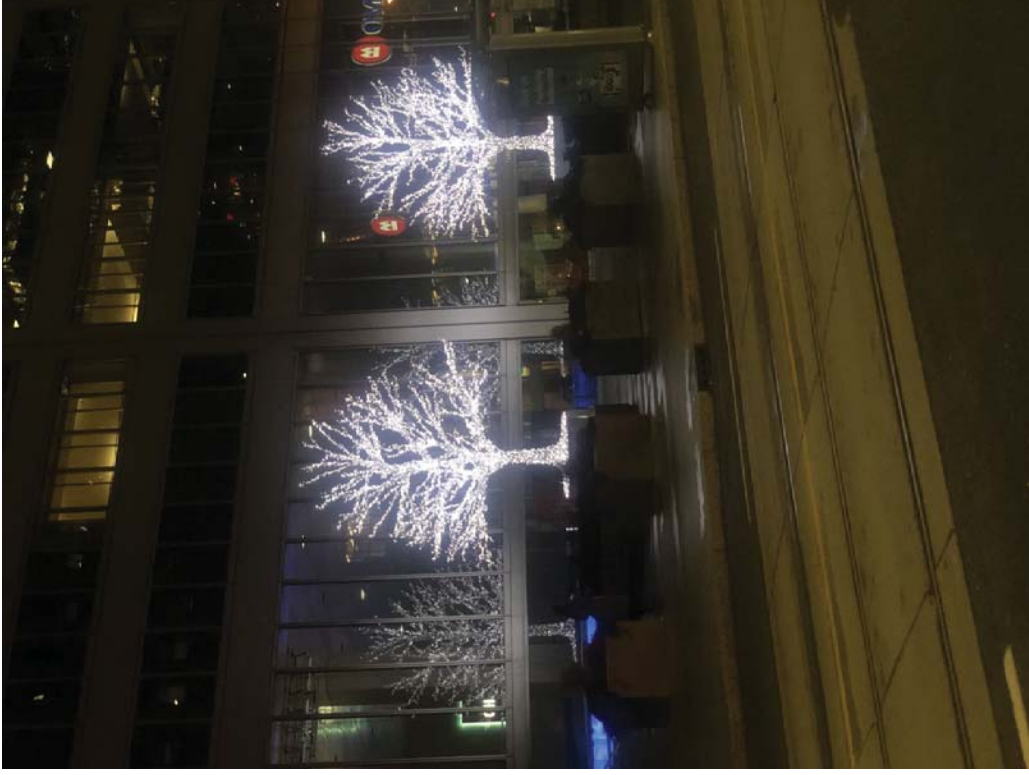
Heartland

The big heart is the Shelter.

The hanging hearts, with ballasts of different sizes, are us.

by Kantenah Arts

14



#### essence of clarity

This a place where I go to write music, the reason why this is important to me, is because it's a very beautiful and calming place to think.

by Dee

13

#### It's Getting Late

It's getting late and as the sun goes low  
She does too, on a man she doesn't know

It's getting late and she has no home  
This bed slept in by the girls that came before her  
This room is not her own

It's getting late and night has come  
Take away the pain with vodka, gin and rum

Too late to walk home alone tonight  
Because we all know that would be asking for it, right?  
Make-believe used to mean teddy bears and fairy tales

Now it's the only way to survive  
Telling herself over and over and over: "I'm fine"

It's getting late and the sun is setting  
Fleeting innocence remembered by the dawn  
Too late to be tucked in and read bedtime stories  
kissed goodnight  
or be a child that knows love

by Ivy

10

whom it may concern,

Hello my name is Manuela. I am going to talk about how I became homeless about a year and a half ago how I became homeless was when I had a dispute with my mom. I ended up going to my sister although since that didn't end up good, I decided to go to a shelter. The first couple weeks when I was in the shelter was very new for me it was like wow, I'm really homeless I 18 I could say living in the shelter was very difficult. There was rules there's dinner at a certain time you have to take a shower at a certain time and also a lot of people that want to help you and there's some people that are just there for the money. For me in my case, I was graduated high school at the end of June 2020. So I'm thinking in my mind. Wow I was the end of being homeless but at the end of the day I didn't think about that I thought I'm only here to make my situation better since I was in the shelter for a year. I took an employment program and also. I went back to school at least a good part was when I left the shelter and got Housing was very happy for me because I stayed there for a year and never got kicked out never d did drugs, or follow the wrong crowd about sticking to yourself while you're in there because at the end of the day you're only there for yourself and no one else for people who are in my situation I would like to say it's OK to be scared it's OK to be nervous being in a shelter being homeless but I always say keep your head up better days will come ahead I would like I to know who were in my situation to use it as a steppingstone. After all I've been through. I thought Housing I'm still striving today. If it wasn't for the shelter, staff and people who believed in me, I wouldn't be where I am today.

Sincerely, Manuela.

11

## It Sounds Like a Summer

I felt safe there—in the tent  
Having a couple of trees back there  
Just to have that nature there was really nice  
It covered the sun most of the day

The tent covered me  
I had a place to lay my head  
It was a community

Many days out in the rain  
It would be muddy back there  
But it still felt safe

—Do you miss it?  
No.

It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience  
Nineteen weeks  
But I've been homeless longer than that  
Five years now  
Since I came to Toronto

I'm still homeless  
It's like they forgot about me

by Adrianna Sutherland

12