

Writing the Body

#1

Read/listen to Jane Wong's poems here:

<https://www.underblong.com/jane-wong>

Responses:

- What does it mean to you to be alive?
- What does it mean to you to be alive in your body?
- Think of what you want your bodymind to do and be in your life?
- Does this have to do with how you perceive your bodymind?

Questions to ponder:

- What is embodiment?
- What does it mean to embody?
- Are we ever *not* embodying?
- What emotions arise when we observe our bodies with as much stillness as possible?

#2

Read the following:

On Mel Y. Chen—'Don't you know that you're toxic?'

Mel Y. Chen talks about race, toxicity, and intimacy

<http://gender.stanford.edu/news/2013/dont-you-know-youre-toxic/>

'Spastic messiah / erotic daughter'

On Petra Kuppers's 'PearlStitch'

<https://jacket2.org/reviews/spastic-messiah-erotic-daughter>

On the late José Esteban Muñoz

<https://www.boundary2.org/2014/03/joses-hope-or-what-munoz-taught/>

https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/jose-esteban-munoz-1967-2013/

Responses to the reading:

Take one specific experience you've had today within your body (e.g., being on public transit, working, cooking, or sleeping, or being on your phone). Jot down everything that experience has to do in relation to other bodies, and within your life. For instance, who is in the same room as you as you are in front of this computer writing, if anyone? What other bodyminds do you interact with in a day? What keeps your bodymind going? Why are you performing this act?

Now zoom out and think about your bodymind in relation to the greater world. What is happening in the world today that frames your bodymind—for example, what are the politics and economics that determine what you do to sustain yourself, to do what your bodymind does to live? What are your belief systems about what's right and wrong in the world? Who do you love the most in your life, and how does your bodymind behave in relation to them?

Think about how your bodymind feels, and also think about how it is perceived by various different people.

Writing Exercise:

Write a poem about connecting and/or disconnecting with other bodyminds in everyday life, from the vantage point of your own, with some or all of the above in mind.

These writing prompts are taken from the course 'Stanza Body Studio', delivered by Khairani Barokka for the Poetry School