
Non-Linear Healing

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Abstract

Non-Linear Healing is a minifilm that makes tangible and visible the reality of healing as a continual process, rather than a target that must be reached. The film features visuals from a dozen personal journals spanning the years 2014 to 2020. In the background, audio recordings of different entries overlap with varying degrees of intensity, urgency, and volume. Those varying degrees allow for the non-linearity of healing to be felt through the sense of movement created when the recordings lull to softer volumes, to make some readings more audible than others. Below, is an adaptation of this minifilm, which has been reproduced for print form. The adaption includes a short media curation text and video stills placed strategically to convey the spirit of the film. Additionally, multiple listening and speed typing sessions were used to create a transcript that could adequately capture the auditory experience. This transcript is included in sync with the video stills.

Keywords

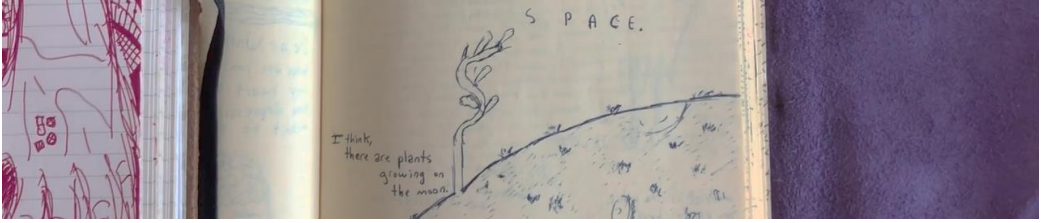
research creation, trauma healing, affect theory, art-based research



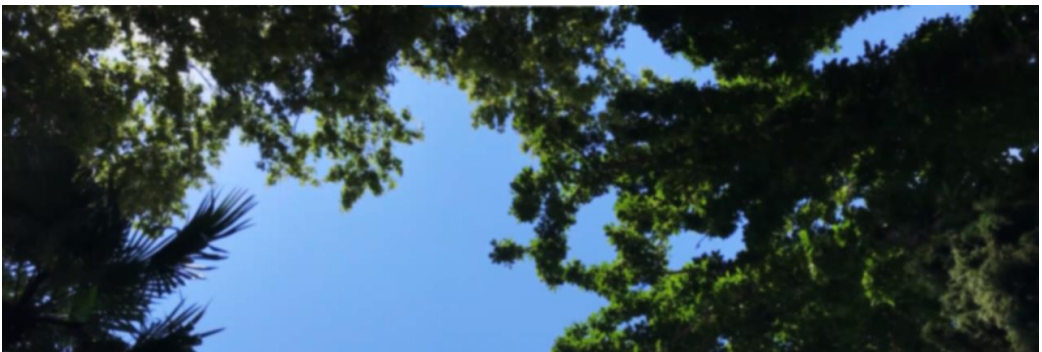
Healing is nonlinear. Tenderness towards oneself is necessary. This mini film features dated journal entries from over 10 journals spanning the years 2014 to 2020. There are several entries overlapping, in various volumes for the majority of the clip. Those entries vary in style from prose and poetry to documentations of emotional outbursts and self-revelations. The final 30 seconds of the minifilm are a creation of cut clips from various entries, creating an auditory black-out poem, to remind the audience of the importance of tenderness towards oneself.

The central objective of the mini film is to make tangible the experience of healing as nonlinear. Through inviting the viewer into my personal archive of unsent letters and private thoughts, I make visible the behind-the-scenes aspects of trauma and healing. Both states, trauma and healing, evoke a sense of intensity and finality that often leaves the person experiencing them with an overwhelming conviction that this state is static and unchanging. This mini film shows the temporally circular motion of healing, reminding the viewer that neither state is final.

Healing being non-linear creates avenues to experience the euphoria of healing, even while some pain is still present. It means that one need not postpone joy, experiences, or goals while stuck in a state of waiting to grasp the unrealistic illusion of final and complete healing.

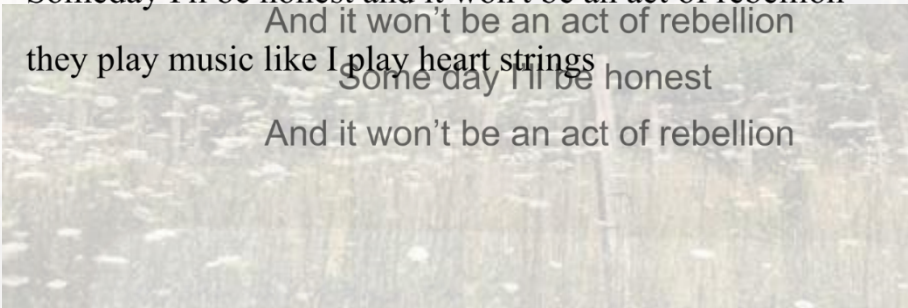


This minifilm invites the viewer to reconsider their relationship to themselves and to the small kid in each of us who requires extra tenderness and patience. What if healing were a practice, not a destination? What if you did not need to wait for all the hurt to be completely gone, to begin to move on? What if you can be tender with yourself despite the fact you are often depressed? What if you let go of an unattainable state of “healed” and embraced yourself for where you are at this exact moment? Comy? Maybe. But it’s also true.



October 2014

Maybe drowning and drowning in the
 I want to blow out my heart carrying it out like a
 Presence of someone else are
 darling no I don't smoke to piss you off Two different things
 that's how the song goes The scolding hot water many could have been
 the bodies of the forgotten people And I just want to be happy for them
 my heart can't handle strong weather conditions
 the weight in because of the things my chest doesn't burn he has My family is what it is
 street sellers and cigarette butts
 Sometimes I feel honest and it won't be an act of rebellion
 that's how the song goes
 moving the rush of water I don't smoke to piss you off
 It cripples on the sight of an 8-year-old girl up to the
 I do it because it heals
 some days I think it does it on purpose
 Throat closes up on itself, a beat from a heart that
 Throat closes up on itself
 I am so not a handy extreme weather conditions stitched to me
 An eight-year-old girl selling gum on a dirty road
 I am so damn sorry The sound of beggars praying
 and finding home
 I don't know what is my anxiety and what is the pills
 my heart is a loud child and I am the mother who
 And what is me
 And the rush of water and sewage into the street drains
 is always apologizing
 I feel the weight of too many could have been
 Sometimes I think it does it on purpose
 I am a writer its what I do don't flatter yourself
 The weight is stitched to me
 I just want to be happy for them My parents are who they are
 Some day I will accept that and resist it less
 but I am ashamed of my jealousy?
 Some day I'll be honest
 Someday I'll be honest and it won't be an act of rebellion
 And it won't be an act of rebellion
 they play music like I play heart strings
 Some day I'll be honest
 And it won't be an act of rebellion





November 11, 2020
Shamoussa

December 2015
There are good things

September 6, 2017
They play music like they're playing heartstrings
Sing in a language that does not call them home

November 11, 2020
I love you.
Sincerely,
Shams

Author Biography

Shams Seif is an artist, academic, writer, and part time nanny. They are a PhD student in Gender, Feminist, and Women's Studies and are currently preparing for their comprehensive exams. Shams enjoys self-reflection, growth, and open communication. They are passionate about creating a neurodiverse inclusive learning environment and world. They believe that wearing masks, socially distancing, and getting vaccinated are necessary social and civic responsibilities.