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INTENTIONS:



To celebrate the traveling woman!!

To encourage other women to travel by themselves, for themselves, and to encourage her to climb the mountain that people said she shouldn't do alone.

BECAUSE women are rad and the world is a beautiful place that should be explored willingly and fearlessly.

BECAUSE others want to know how it makes us feel when we travel by ourselves.

BECAUSE others want to know how we do it (and why?)

BECAUSE others want to know what certain challenges and obstacles come our way being both a woman and by ourselves.

BECAUSE being bold is contagious!!

BECAUSE what better way to challenge the mind and body than to travel to an unfamiliar place, completely on your own, sometimes facing the hardest parts of yourself, or befriending the best parts of yourself.

Do we really need to explain ourselves?

Love,  
Holiday Hagan



This is the first ever publication of Her Mountain. If you would like to get featured in the next issue, please email

[hermountainzine@gmail.com](mailto:hermountainzine@gmail.com)



## THE SISTERHOOD

Dear all traveling women,  
 If you're a seasoned traveller you will have experienced the strength and integrity of what I'm about to tell you. I have only been traveling solo for a short while and have many instances of what I'm going to pour my heart out about. Even the way I'm writing this letter to all of you is an instance of this vast phenomenon. THE SISTERHOOD. If there's one thing that holds us girls all together it's this. If there is one thing we can feel sure about when we dream of and plan our overseas adventures, it's the sisterhood.

What I mean when I talk about this beautiful, unifying social tendency is; my observed habit of women, at least in the places I have been, to look out for, help and protect other women. No matter how old or rich or what colour they are I have seen so many women go out of their way to help me. They're always watching to see if all their fellow 'Babes' (is what I like to refer to them as) are all good.

My initial experience of this was in India when I was studying at Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi for a semester. I was one of around 300 Indian women living in the college accommodation. I was the only foreigner. It was intense in the beginning but in the end I was so glad. There's no other way I could have observed the sisterhood of Indian women via the 'full immersion' method. They way everyone was so kind to each other in an environment of 300 women all aged from about 18 to 21 was striking. I grew closer to certain people and it was crazy how much they would do for me. It was crazy how people I hardly knew were more worried than me about coming home late at night or walking out on my own on the streets of Delhi. Perhaps due to my naivety of the dangers. Perhaps due to their overriding urge to protect a sister. Sometimes I found it even a little overbearing. However, I should not complain because this urge to protect each other is what is going to keep us safe when we are traveling abroad.

Once I was in Mumbai, India for the weekend and I was trying to get to Marine Drive, where the city meets the sea, I was in the train station and I don't think I looked very confident. I always try to look like I'm on task. In my head looking lost could attract some unwanted attention. But this time the sisterhood saved me once again. If you're alone, female and foreign in India it's hard to blend in. If you're white it's impossible. I could see the woman before me in the line noticing me. I could feel that she was keeping an eye on me to see if I was okay. So sure enough she helped me buy the right ticket. She was going to same way as me as well so we caught the train together and she helped me get to where I wanted to be. The boy/man that I went to see in Mumbai was no help at all with any of the problems I faced even though he was supposed to be hosting me!



COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA



Another time in Goa, India I was with a female friend for once which was relaxing. Goa was also pretty calm in terms of being a spectacle (as every foreigner in India is). However we were partying in some club on Anjuna Beach and there was a lot of unwanted attention towards me and my friend by other men holidaying for the weekend. Over and over girls were trying to protect us. 'Hey come and dance with us... those guys are annoying,' is something along the lines of what they would say. They would continuously dance closer to us to defer the men around us that we clearly weren't interested in. They had to be on the look-out to notice that kind of activity. I certainly always am. I guess it's because I embrace entirely the sisterhood. If everyone does it becomes very strong. In India it certainly is. Perhaps the sisterhood is strongest where women are oppressed or are vulnerable the most.

This, however, brings me to my recent trip to Copenhagen, Denmark. A purely gorgeous experience that sprouted out of a bad situation. So, I was visiting a friend and she wanted to go to a party but I was tired. We were out so we decided that I would take the keys and go home. When we finally parted we both forgot the keys so my friend accidentally took them with her. I was on the bus when I realised and she didn't have a number that I could contact or internet access. So I hoped that the building door was open. It was. I hoped their door was unlocked because it sometimes was. It wasn't. My friend still hadn't realised that she had the keys. So I plotted to climb up the scaffolding outside and break in but I didn't have the nerve. So all I could do was try to sleep on their door step until my friend realised about the keys and came home. 2am comes along I'd been on the cold step for maybe 3 hours. I could hear the neighbour coming out of their apartment and I thought I better sit up so I didn't scare anyone. It was an older woman who was about to go out with her dog for a walk. She brightly wished me a good morning. I told her what had happened and she was delighted to repay the favour of my friend the week before. She explained that my friend and her housemate had earlier let her inside their apartment when she had been locked out. She didn't hesitate to invite me in to sleep in her bed. THE SAME BED. I also didn't hesitate to accept the invitation as the reason I went home is because I was tired! I felt unusually comfortable in this stranger's house. The great feeling of relief is still with me. It didn't end there either. She fed me breakfast and we chatted over coffee about our interesting lives so far. She was genuinely delighted to have me. In no way was this a charity. Recounting this story really warms my heart. I have never been so glad to have been locked out of a house before and probably won't be again.

I hope this paints my experience of The Sisterhood to you all. I also genuinely hope that this eases your transition from paired travel into traveling solo. If you just want to jump first time in alone that great too. Although I wouldn't recommend India for your first solo travel trip. It was pretty tough on me. If you have dabbled a bit in the solo female travel and have an interest in India, have trust in The Sisterhood!

With binding love forever, Erin Hendry xx

Erin Hendry is from Melbourne, Australia.  
 Follow her groovy travels @\_clingfilm\_ on Instagram.





LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA

i wouldn't have imagined that you could lose yourself and find yourself at a festival  
twice. but surely, that is what happened  
once in Croatia and then in Tasmania.

it's not that i tried to find some inner peace while falling asleep to psytrance,  
*i find comfort in being offbeat*  
or trying to seek enlightenment on x, y, and possibly z,  
*last thing i want is a semi-spiritual breakthrough in a cold tent*  
but going by myself was a festival in itself

sharing an experience with a group of french kids from the bus to Pula  
asleep under the sun, preparing for the psychedelic circus at dawn  
or the twin sisters from Melbourne, now dear friends of mine  
sharing laughter and music until time became finite.

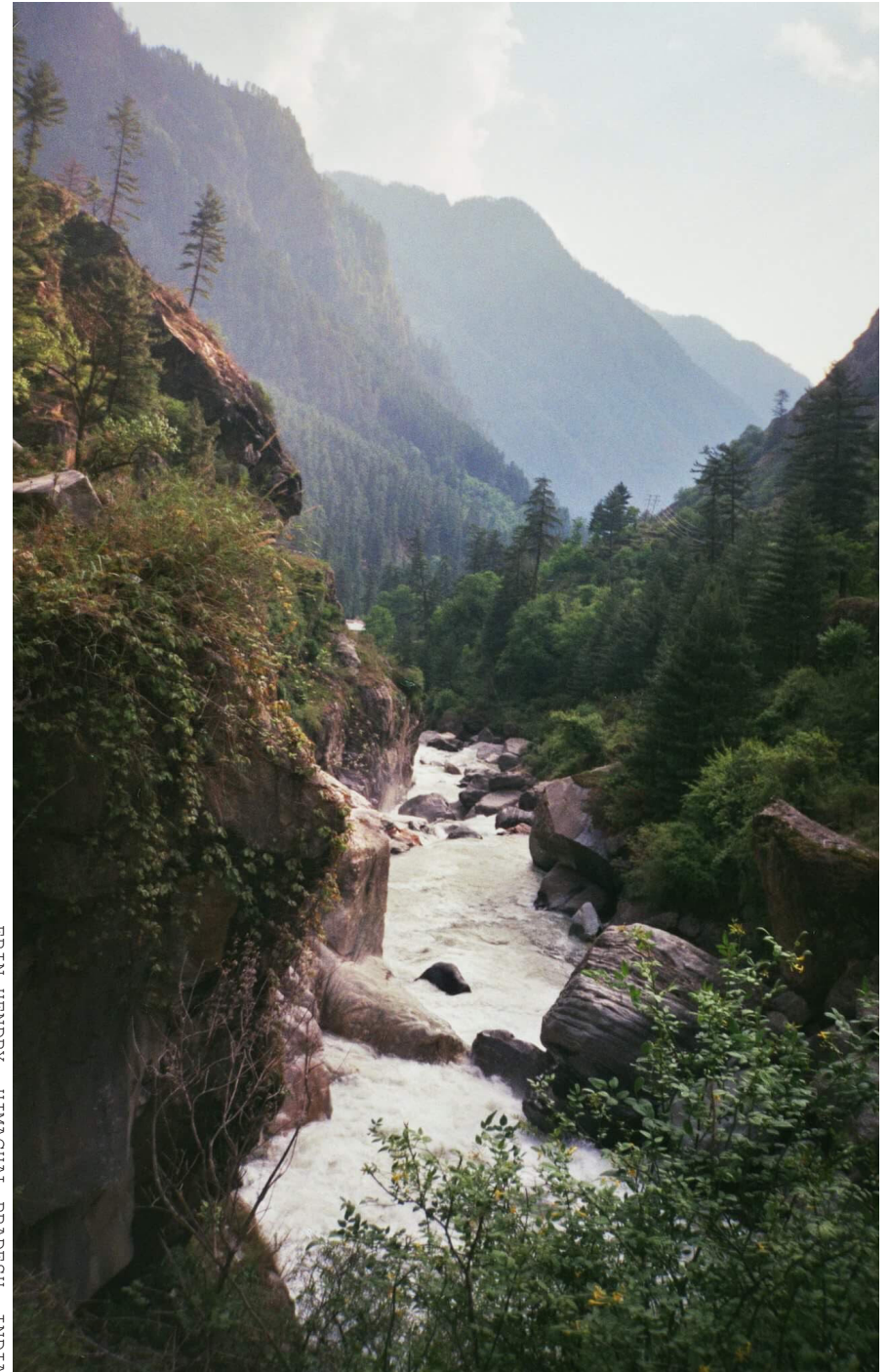
there is no proper way to have fun on your own at a festival  
no right way, nor wrong  
go with a purpose: volunteer your heart or sing your damn song  
no one knows who you are!  
do you even care?

wear something trashy or modest; you don't need your phone  
you are the truest, highest form of yourself when you are not home  
revel in the moment when you find yourself alone  
alive to the beauty that surrounds you for miles  
stuff your face with music like a gluttonous child

dance all night until you see the sunrise  
then find someone who walks with lonely eyes  
create a precious moment with a stranger who is just as thrill-seeking as you  
because that is why you are there  
this is what us travelers do

desperate to fit in a world that doesn't make sense, at least not yet  
until we find ourselves, and meet ourselves again  
in a place where it is not home and not our leisure  
learning from our own reflections, these are our teachers.

*Holiday Hagan sings in San Francisco, California.  
Follow @holidayolivia on Instagram.*



ERIN HENDRY, HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA



Beyond bliss,  
 Beyond pain,  
 Beyond suffering,  
 Ecstasy, Oneness,  
 I am everything,  
 And I am nothing.  
 Feeling my own personal transformation.  
 Bodies shifting, perspectives expanding.  
 I can see me now  
 Vibrating at a different frequency than I've ever felt before.  
 Every cell in my body is dancing, singing, laughing, crying, exploding,  
 orgasming, simultaneously.  
 Realizing my need to slow it all down so that I can truly experience,  
 Integrate, and understand  
 More deeply this miraculous gift of being alive,  
 On Earth today.  
 My own unique vessel, temple, of pure magnificence.  
 I am Bliss.  
 I am Everything.  
 I am the grief stricken lover who falls to her knees,  
 Cannot stop the tears from rolling, nor do I want to.  
 Feeling the freedom, the lightness that fills my knowing with each wail.  
 Moving away from shame and judgment in the face of these tears, of this shadow,  
 Of being too grand or too loud.  
 Now I realize.  
 Now I see.  
 I can free myself of my own shackles,  
 forced onto me by society's judgments,  
 Ideas of a woman, of normal, of me.  
 I coax the sound, the scream, the cry.  
 I know. I know. I know.



*Danielle Barnett cosmically vibrates in Berlin, Germany:  
 Follow her at @cosmiccatlove on Instagram.*



Nothin' like  
 some coffee and kindness,  
 Or remembering the apple  
 at the bottom of the backpack  
 Or finding a book in English  
 Or a phone booth to share love with  
 Or pantomimed directions  
 and a pat on the back from brotherly bikers  
 To give a weary traveler the strength  
 To find lift her rosary wrapped thumb  
 To find her next ride  
 To her next ride

Don't know where I am  
 Or when I'll eat next  
 But meditation comes easy  
 And people smell it and smile  
 And understand my malignant Spanish  
 Effortlessly somehow  
 The small town behind me  
 finally grows smaller  
 And I have the window seat  
 Tall grass waves like the ocean and the windmills flail their  
 limbs in rain dance  
 This, my head heavy on the  
 Window of a  
     hot  
         shot  
     freight  
         train through who knows where,  
 Is my America.  
 My China's out there somewhere,  
 Haven't found it yet,  
 But this will do.

This is my illusion of grandeur  
 My imposition of self  
 My greedy eating of experience  
 And the mountains have just as much  
 Of that purple majesty

Dear road, break my shoes  
 And show me how much I HAVE  
 To lose

I found myself at a bed and breakfast in Rosslare Harbor, Ireland. I stopped in to ask for wifi and was met by a jolly man working the garden with his dog. This is John Leader. He's got David Bowie's eyes and smile and everything else is my grandfather. He's 30 years younger than his age and can talk a million miles a minute. He saved his housekeeper from her abusive husband. And when this warm woman let him back in only to have indentations on her wrists again, John Leader, who played football when he was younger, turned the asshole upside down with one punch to the chest. He gave me four maps and two bananas and put me in the sun room to research bus tickets after giving me a tour of the entire country. I decided it was best to stay for the night and head out in the morning. He agreed.

His voice went up an octave and softened when I said I was a gardener. It made him very happy. He offered me a room in exchange for weed pulling. He's not a gambling man but one day he put down four legs of his friends horse along with three others at the pub. The horse won by a long shot and they teased the man who owned it, 'the one time you win is when Leader and his friends only leave you with the tail'. The man's just got luck in his pockets. He took me for a ride in his 1986 Porche when the guests were all tended to. It's looks and smells brand new, and man it purrs. He drives it like a madman. Or boy, I should say cause he whips it like a young rebel who will never die.

He bought and sold cars when he was a student. Once he ended up with shitty Morris Minor with the door hanging off. All dressed up and no where to go he chugged the thing to the nightclub. There was this beautiful woman and when he asked her to dance she asked what he drove. He said a Royce. Her accent changed that instant. He was in. They stuck around but "It was a formality, a few drinks then off to make the honey ya know? I told her to clean her shoes on the way down, the Royce is mint. When I got to the car and nearly pulled off the door opening it, she said "I'll be fucked if you think your getting me in that piece of shit" I never laughed so hard, I only wish there was a friend there to see it.

He brought in this fancy Spanish wine, "Have you ever tried it? It's orgasmic, it comes from heaven. It's super duper." He always says these fine things come from heaven as if he's been there. He said the dog was "wired to the moon" when he was young, humping legs and embarrassing him constantly. He showed me beautiful Irish poetry and got very serious. He said I must never value anything material over experience and shared an old Irish adage, "there are no pockets in a shroud".



30-07-17

I need to learn to love myself and let go of the ego. Find balance and spread love. Loving and being soft with myself is of utmost importance. Only then can I spread real love. And I do, but I am also aware that I am hard on myself. I don't really accept compliments and always want to push more. My friend said maybe this is my journey, but I do realize that I need to find love within.

MY HEAD IS FILLED WITH QUESTIONS, WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

Many a times I find myself wondering what the hell I am doing and why. Where am I going with this? What is my goal? What is my role in this wide world? Why do I even care? Why should I even care? Maybe I have too many choices? Would it be simpler if someone decided for me?

I was feeling lost as even in the fake happy plastic town of Byron Bay on the East coast of Australia when I literally ran into an eccentric french man. We ended up walking to the head by the beach together and talking the whole way. Serendipity some many call it. It was a perfect meeting as I needed guidance on my reflection path. His story is pretty incredible. From France originally, he studied botany and founded Seed Savers in Australia, an NGO which documented all plant seed and redistributed them. He was telling me how he found his life purpose by just being interested in plants and botany. So he was simply following what he loved when he found his purpose; to save seeds.

I myself feel like I need a focus, something to pour my energy into these days. I tried to dance for a while but that proved not to be what I wanted or need at this moment. My parents asked me the other day what my goals were, "to have new experiences. To meet new people," I answered. Though this, I believe, is a lifestyle and not so much a purpose or goal. So what is my purpose?

I visited an old lighthouse at Seal Rocks the other day and noticed the lighthouse keeper's house. This made me think about how they would have felt living there and dedicating their lives to the lighthouse duties. Did they worry about having a sense of purpose? Did they have itchy feet and want to explore the world? Did they wonder how people lived their lives on the other side of the world? Did they stare out over the horizon and wonder? Maybe it was easier because they didn't have so many choices. My Chinese uncle once told me I had too many choices and that was why I was lost and wandering. Wanderlust some call it...It is a good thing that so many doors are open to us now? If my parents had decided for me and forced me to follow in my fathers footsteps and I had become a physiotherapist, would I be happy?

Happy? What is happy? If happiness comes from within, couldn't we be happy with any situation? This French man I met thinks that happiness is a myth, it doesn't really exist. Maybe the right word to use would be fulfilled. Would I feel fulfilled?

Fulfilled:  
satisfied or happy  
because of fully developing  
one's abilities or character

I guess you feel fulfilled when you have found that so called purpose or life goal.

The big question: how do you find it? I think you create it. By following what I love, I am creating myself. But I love so many things! Photo, animals, plants, clouds, outdoors, science, music, dance, art, painting, circus, kiting, rock climbing, children, food, diving...the list goes on and on. I really like way Paolo Cohelo writes about our purpose in the Alchemist. For those who have not read it, it is a must! He says we must follow our personal legend. In the end, it is not about the destination but really all about the journey. I like to think that our paths in this life are like a tree. There are so many branches we can climb onto to get the the top of the tree. It doesn't matter which one you chose because they all lead to the top. There are so many different options for you to get to your final destination, thousands of branches. Some may break and cause you to fall a little but you always keep traveling upwards. Some are stronger than others and can support you for a long time. Traveling is all about creating yourself and learning about yourself and about others, it is one branch among the tree of life that leads us up.

Along the way, all you can do is do what you love. Follow what ignites you, your passions. This is the only way to know if you are on the right path. Follow the flow, the river.

Small focus and short term goals are very helpful in feeling useful and helpful. After all, we are human and our egos seek recognition. Working is a good way to fill the void of recognition and usefulness. My short term goals are learning the ukulele, teaching, reading more poetry, doing the splits, limiting my intake of artificial sugars, juggling better than I did, holding my handstand for a very long time, getting my ankle better... all very simple but triggers the rewards button in my brain.

Fiouf, feels good to empty my head and heart of these preguntas.

.xxXx

*Amelia (Ho-seen La Haye) is somewhere in the world soaking up the sun.  
You can read more of her blog at: [voyage1936.wordpress.com](http://voyage1936.wordpress.com)*

I am a lioness fearless, mighty, strong, loyal and perseverant. From the first time I saw Lion King I fell in love with the lioness they embodied the characteristics of the female I wanted to be. I know its silly to base part of your character off a cartoon, but it wasn't that it, it was the animal itself. The fierceness it portrayed, it was an image that would shape me forever. My story began in a small town off the Central Coast of California. As a young girl I always had big dreams and couldn't wait to find my place in the world. I would describe myself as someone who marches to the beat of their own drum. When the opportunity came I took the bull by the horns, a small town girl from the Central Coast packed her things and went to San Francisco.



San Francisco, my love, my pridelands, my home. I went to San Francisco for university, little did I know this decision would be the best decision I have made so far. I went here in broken pieces and became whole again, I became strong, I became fierce, and I became myself. The city, its people and its experiences shaped my mind and allowed me to grow as a human being. This place gave me my education, and not in the traditional sense but in very aspect of my life. I was able to shape my passion, dreams and drives and for this I am forever grateful. So much so that during my undergrad I decided to go to South Africa to study abroad for a year. The decision was made when speaking to a professor, she asked me "Where is the one place you've always wanted to go?" She didn't even give me time to ponder, she stopped me and said whatever popped in my head first is where I should go. When the time came I packed my bags and headed to Port Elizabeth, South Africa.



Going to South Africa was a whole experience within itself. This place freed me and enlightened me, I found true happiness and love. When I was here things began to come full circle as far as how I understood myself and what made me who I am today. There I realized that my whole life I had been working towards this feeling, a feeling of true freedom and independence. After a lifetime of waiting I was able to see a lioness in the wild. I saw two actually, they were sitting at a watering hole probably relaxing, when a pack of hyenas came and started taunting them. After a few minutes of what seemed like a game, one of the lioness stood up on her front two legs and roared as loud as she could. The hyenas ran away cackling, and the lioness without another movement laid back down and continued to enjoy the sun. In that moment I realized that I wanted to embody grace and ferocity, that was the type of woman I wanted to be. This year I woke up every single day with a smile on my face, I knew who I was and what I wanted to be. I do not mean this in a literal sense, but from the moment I left South Africa I vowed to myself that I would always be happy, free, and honest with myself. That I would always be like the lioness full of strength, confidence, and perseverance. When the moment came I packed my bags and went back to California.



The moment I came back to California, I felt lost. I had found myself and then felt like I didn't fit in the place that was most familiar to me. It was a process getting back to my center; relationships and feelings had changed. Over time I realized nothing had changed, I did. I became a better version of myself, stronger, kinder, honest and more open to vulnerability. I realized that I had to mend whatever wrong I might have done and be honest with who I became. Most of my my loved ones understood and still stick by my side till this day. Throughout the entire experience I realized I would not apologize for who I became and that I did not have to explain myself to others. If people truly love you, they will stick by your side forever. There are a few things I have learned through my experiences:

Being happy is important.

Take care of yourself mind, body and soul.

Be true to yourself and do not apologize for it.

You do not have to explain anything to anyone.

You are strong and beautiful, imperfections included.

If you fall stand back up, and if it is too hard  
loved ones will help.

Starting this journey has been the most wonderful experience, I consider myself lucky and blessed. I vowed I would continue to be free and follow my heart, so in 2016 I packed my bags and headed to Germany. My journey continues and I continued to learn more about myself. I will always evolve and push to be the best version of myself. I encourage this for all women, stand up, be who you were meant to be. But there is one thing I can say wholeheartedly today: I am a lioness, strong, free, beautiful and you will hear me roar.



*Jennifer Rangel drinks lots of coffee in Hamburg, Germany.  
Contact her [jennrangel06@gmail.com](mailto:jennrangel06@gmail.com) to say hello.*



Sorry, boring opening. As a solo woman traveller (I'm a cis-female and I identify as a female), it's pretty much nothing new in this age because of the ubiquity of information and a lot of women are gradually gaining more autonomy in various aspects, they have more control over their life and determine how they want to spend their time on. Travelling solo has never been easier to achieve now. However, how many of us are moved or at least influenced by the image of a courageous/strong/independent woman going on a journey or even a worldwide trip because of social media? The image of a super fit woman standing on top of a mountain in Romania/Iceland/wherever (are you kidding, of course the more foreign of the name of the country the better). And also it seems to be the right thing to do at the prime time of your life? I'm not disregarding the appeal of the sheer freedom granted when one is travelling abroad. In fact, it empowers us in so many ways that nothing else this world can beat. We are granted a fresh pair of eyes to ponder on a culture completely different from your upbringing and the values instilled in you. There's a fuck load to take on and sometimes it's appalling. Women rights in some countries in this world are so far-fetched that it's like some extraterrestrial. Acknowledging our rights and privilege, and respecting other cultures are of the utmost importance.

I am raised in Hong Kong, born in Canada, have been living in Australia for the past three years. The experience of living in Australia, especially the last two years, changes my life forever. I am given a new pair of eyes to perceive the world. I am battling the clash between my upbringing and values on a daily basis (the typical clash between eastern and western mentality) that I begin to shun a lot of beliefs that I once possessed and was indoctrinated while I was back home. I cannot deny the fact that I am empowered and I gained a lot of insights about myself and how I position myself (Asian cis-female, still relatively fairly attached to my Asian upbringing) in a first-world country. I strongly believe that I am in charge of my life and I am respected and treated equally with decisions I made along the way and in the majority of social interactions, that I retain the autonomy of myself, my body. Yes, I admit that travelling as a solo woman (where you are from and upbringing play a huge factor) can be a life changer and there's really no turning back for me to see the world how I used to see anymore!

BUT, it's also really important to bear in mind that so many other countries do not recognize women's rights and it's so crucial to look in retrospect and reflect. It's sometimes a really powerless feeling when you travel. A lot of contemporary western ways of expression of freedom are not applicable because that's not how the power dynamics work in these countries. Yes, you know what I am talking about, women in an almost absolutely binary society and they are actively oppressed in the society as a whole. Complacency is dangerous.

Travelling is also a getaway from what has constituted the environment that you have been living in, I don't recommend anyone should treat it as something to 'escape' from your life. Don't make the mistake of expecting this as something that can completely transform your life. Don't depend solely on it to change your personality and perspective of life. If you choose not to truly open your eyes, mind and soul, no matter how much you travel you're still going around in circles. Traveling is an extremely constructive way to refine and polish your skills to live as a human being in this world where sadly a lot of stuff even like taking care of your own self is a challenge (where I am from, a lot of female workers from the Philippines and Indonesia are working in a lot of households to take care of the family and especially if there are children, hence a lot of spoiled kids with no skills in taking care of themselves, and its another story).

We are here to be a collective voice to break stereotypes and show others as women, we can be completely reliant and sustainable on our own. I strongly urge you, yes you, to take the journey into your own hands and yes, go travel. Yes, it is undoubtedly less challenging when compared to our predecessors, all the majestic solo women travellers in the past century. You can still create your own path and carry on.



## Future Lover

Lick my body 'til I tell you to stop.  
 Once I am satisfied I will be the one to please you.  
 But when you meet me just know, I've been deprived from attention.  
 I want to be seen and heard and licked and touched everywhere.  
 I miss you and I don't know you.  
 I need you and I miss you so much I could cry.  
 Will you kiss my tummy the way he did?  
 Will you cuddle me even better?  
 Will I meet you soon?  
 I want to meet you so badly baby.  
 I feel you with me now.  
 I am so excited.  
 I am so excited to make love with you for the first time.  
 Oh baby. Will you like what I like?  
 Will you be different than I expect?  
 I miss you right now on this still night in China.  
 I know you won't be intimidated by my independence.  
 I miss your hands.  
 I can see your hands now on me.  
 They are tan and strong and soft.  
 I love you and I don't know you yet my new lover.  
 Tonight I am writing to you because I miss you instead of him.  
 You will be my next phase,  
 the person I can keep track of my weeks and years with.  
 We will travel every where and you will hold me on the train  
 and push my hair behind my ear,  
 when I remind you of all the music and art you love.  
 You will join in on my singing in perfect harmony.  
 You will love me and I will love you.  
 And right now, you too are starting to realize that we will meet any day at  
 any moment.  
 Maybe you are waiting for me in another country or maybe in the city I have  
 lived in for years.  
 Maybe you live next door.  
 But when I see you I'll know.  
 I know you'll like Hedwig and see the beauty in diversity because you will  
 have some beautiful oddity.  
 You will be down to earth and won't float too far away from me.  
 We will tether each other.  
 Bounce off each other from time to time.  
 Embrace in the clouds.  
 Catapult from the warm wet earth my love.  
 I see you.  
 I know you.  
 I miss you on this still night in China.  
 You are beautiful and I hope that right now as you sit at home on your  
 still night you feel the same sense of peace as I have, knowing I am just  
 around the corner ready to love you.  
 I feel you tonight. I miss you.



*Jocelyn Rose sings with her ukulele in Los Angeles, California.  
 Follow her @jocelynsinger on Instagram.*



GALWAY, IRELAND | LISBON, PORTUGAL

*Cailin Ruff lives in San Francisco, California.  
 For more photography, check out @spaceshinee on Instagram.*



## COURAGE, CURIOSITY, INDIFFERENCE, INANNA.

What is solo travel as a woman? As a teen? I was 19 when I undertook my first solo expedition. Six months of exploration. I remember the day I booked my flight. I was on Smith Street [in Melbourne] and I walked into the first travel agent I saw. I booked it. Three months later, I was off wearing a green t-shirt “ITS ALL ABOUT ME”.

I recently read *Tracks* by Robyn Davidson and studied a subject at university about travel and women in travel. There’s a common denominator; the forethought. The action that lead to the “quest”. I also have been inspired by the Sumerian goddess Inanna and together being a woman and (not a traveller) is all about being, being aware, being in touch with our femininity that gives us strength. Its our foresight, forethought and vulnerability that makes our travel experiences so unique. When we return, our fore bearings have been flipped into a greater understanding of who we are and what the world is to us.

## BEFORE TRAVEL, I WAS LOST.

I was so so lost and I remember age ten feeling lost. for most of my life, I felt, was lost. The six months solo involved only 21 days paid accommodation, no job. I had an awful time WWOOFing on a farm in Wales for 5 weeks (I left in tears) but I also got to experience and learn more about myself. I always referred to my six months abroad (even before travelling) as my “taster trip”. I was tasting the world a little bit of a time. Getting a feel for myself. I knew whilst travelling that I wasn’t my full self yet, I hadn’t self actualised yet. I’m 21 now and a completely different person. After I returned home, I made a lot of changes in my life and started the process of self-actualisation.

## YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT SOLO TRAVEL FOR WOMEN?

We face objectification every where on the street. We are considered objects so we need to see how objects can change the world. Robyn Davidson made her object a vessel for fire, energy. Inanna is a prostitute and she uses it to embrace the human orgasm that makes us euphoric. I made my object a vessel for curiosity, courage and possibility. It was possible for a girl to travel like I did and travel as cheaply as I did.

## MISSION, INTENTION.

I wanted to travel because I needed, felt the fire inside me to see the world and I had to do it by myself and I had to struggle and I had to fight because if I didn’t, I wouldn’t truly recognise my privilege or come to know myself. “Why travel solo?” because you are forced into more.

Day 3 of my adventure and I was alone, felt hopeless, weak, scared, no ambition. What did I do? Go to a Parisian park nearby. I needed human interaction, I approached a grandmother, I asked her if she spoke English. She did. She invited me to chat with her and her granddaughter. We sat in the park for hours and she showed me kindness.

## VULNERABILITY.

I was vulnerable and she gave me pureed fruit and told me I was brave. I will never, ever forget her kindness. Her love.

Solo travel pushes you. Since then, whenever I have felt alone, I’ll talk to someone who seems approachable. I’ve made the best friends by doing this: going to gigs alone, eating alone, drinking alone at the bar (a glass of wine at lunch is a fine thing to be enjoyed and safe), going to a park, being in public spaces alone. You are the least alone because when you have no one, you have all the stimuli. You only have your attention to feed and not a friends. It’s beautiful, it’s exciting.

My life is constantly improving since saying yes to be alone because I am less alone. I am a citizen of the world, not Australia. There are no “borders”, only insecurities.



*Bethann Taylor nourishes her soul in Melbourne, Australia.  
To find out more, follow @theholisticcondition on Instagram.*

Most people speak of women traveling alone, walking alone, existing alone, and think of nothing but the target on our back. A man returns home and is asked of what vast lands he conquered, what things he did. We are asked how we managed and why we did it. We are reminded we surely could have found someone to accompany us.

As a teenager I learned to carve my own self, my own world, out of the moments between night and morning. I found my freedom in the time I was supposed to be sleeping. My parents would say goodnight, the final order after a day of instruction from coaches, teachers, family. A day of people stretching and folding my limbs to make me fit a mold they’d imagined for my future. Only when that door closed did I find my autonomy. I had conversations with bell hooks, Nietzsche, Sylvia Plath, Jim Morrison; stayed up scribbling wild into diaries that would always end up getting discovered. I’d roll around the floor unsure what to do with all the squirming madness inside me, all the emotions I was never supposed to show.

I was 15 when I first popped the screen off the window. From that night on I couldn’t fathom how I’d never thought to poke my head outside; couldn’t believe I’d been so ignorant of the world around me.

In my mind the grass will forever be cold and wet. I kept my shoes in my hand because I thought my bare feet would bring me silent stealth. The lawn shot fresh waves of electricity through my body. The only thing I could hear was my breath shaking out of my tight chest; no thoughts entered my mind until I was out of sight of the house, beyond reach of anything familiar. No matter how many times I had seen the neighborhood around me, it became an entirely different dimension from the hours of midnight to five AM. The street signs became a foreign language, each alley a portal to a new world. The sleeping hush of the neighborhood made the atmosphere into a heavy blanket. I walked through it like walking through a lucid dream. I could fly if I wanted to. I could do anything.

There was never anyone to stop me. No one to question me. No one to stare me down or call me out as I walked down the sidewalk. I was alone.

It’s a hard thing to find nowadays.

After moving out of my parents’ home I quickly realized it is not so exciting to sneak out of a house where no one cares when you come or go. We have these things called cell phones and no matter how hard you try it seems you can’t run away from the constant mouths in the palm of your hand, the words spit across the screen, the alerts and notifications and voices shouting to your brain.

It’s difficult to be alone. Both to find a way to fully do so and to do so comfortably. Especially as a woman. Alone means you aren’t taking care of anyone but yourself. There is a question I commonly get asked. It becomes more frequent the older I get. It becomes more frequent as I spend more time alone. Sometimes it’s a stranger while I’m traveling, usually an older man attempting to carry conversation while waiting for the bus. Other times it’s my family when I’m home for the holidays but have no partner in tow.

*Are you single? Or a creative variation: Are you **still** single?*

*A seemingly simple question made up of a complexity of layers. Made up of other questions. What man do you belong to now, why are you alone, not even a ring on your finger to keep you company, no leash around your neck, no child in your womb, where is your utility, woman, you package of aging goods? Isn’t it past your curfew?*

It’s as if the older I get the more I keep running into something to turn my dreamy walks into a nightmare: a family member to police my actions, a president to control my body, a boss or stranger or teacher or history book to remind me I don’t get to be my own person, don’t have a say in how the world works or how I will navigate it, don’t get to explore—only to follow.

To travel alone as a woman is to commit an act of protest. It is to make people uncomfortable, to subvert the world as many have allowed it to be written. It is to rewrite the stories we are force-fed from birth. It seems that the farther we’ve appeared to travel the more of a threat we become. It is only safe to assume we’ve got distance behind us, length and time and experience. Leashes don’t run that long, umbilical cords can’t stretch.

But it doesn’t always take a plane or a boat or a camper van. It doesn’t always have to be in a foreign language or a place where no one looks like you. When I’m living independently, whatever that means for me, I’ll feel that cold, wet grass anywhere that I walk. We’ve all got experience. We can all chew off our own leashes, our own umbilical cords. We can all be free. These windows, these screen doors, these prisons. As women they exist inside our mind. Each TV commercial, each beauty magazine, every time a man speaks over us, every time we go unseen or unheard. These will all add bars to the window if we let them.

And it’s true, it takes strength and bravery and recklessness and intelligence to put our first foot down on the other side of the window. To step out alone, whether off a plane or a van or boat or out of our own home, maybe even inside our own mind. It shortens our breath. It heightens our surroundings. Sends those electric currents of life outward from our spine. That’s not what they will focus on. They will tell us this puts a target on our backs. And we will ask why it has taken them until now to open their mouths. These targets have been here since birth.



*Kristen McCandless reads, writes, and lives out of a van somewhere.  
Follow her on Instagram, @dirtpockets*





the tears waited for me to arrive,  
they expected me  
no one came

i felt hollow

i drove further towards the unknown

unknown = hope ?

more confused,  
i recognized i could be anything

blankness,  
celebratory blankness

“clean slate”  
they say

i coughed up apologies  
to my empty seats,  
podcasts talked backed,  
music allowed me to wallow  
in recent nostalgia

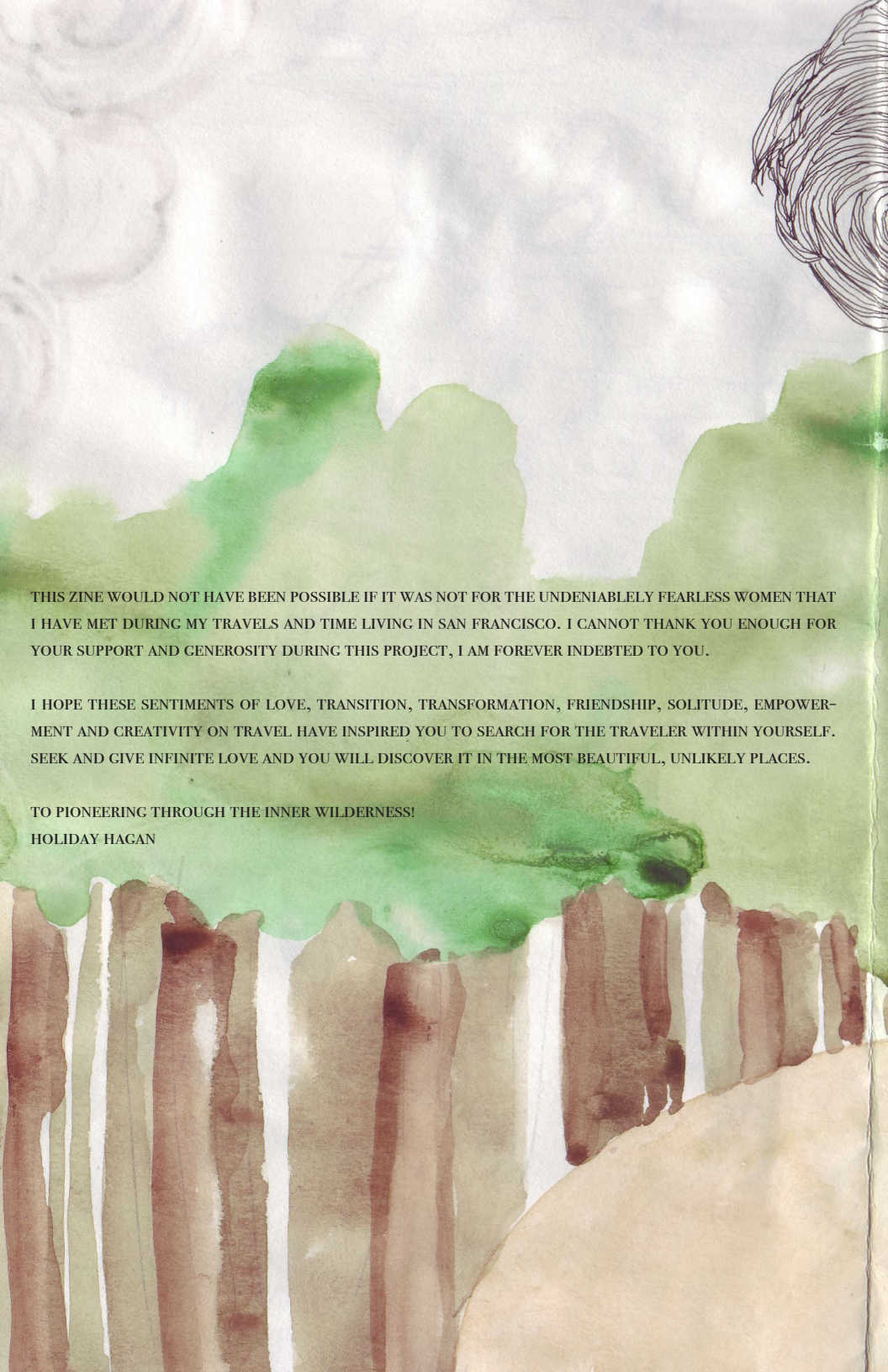
i couldn't stand it.

i calculated every sentence,  
every word, every letter  
that ever came out of my mouth

my tongue clicked in disagreement at such a silly notion.  
listen, and let listen!  
there's guidance in “silence”.

*Victoria Ordway is a San Francisco based artist.  
You can follow her Instagram @jodieforstalker to see more.*



A watercolor illustration of a landscape. The top half features a light, misty sky with soft, circular watercolor washes. Below the sky are rolling green hills, rendered with various shades of green. The bottom half of the image shows a row of brown, vertical brushstrokes representing trees or a forest. The overall style is soft and artistic.

THIS ZINE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IF IT WAS NOT FOR THE UNDENIABLY FEARLESS WOMEN THAT I HAVE MET DURING MY TRAVELS AND TIME LIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO. I CANNOT THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY DURING THIS PROJECT, I AM FOREVER INDEBTED TO YOU.

I HOPE THESE SENTIMENTS OF LOVE, TRANSITION, TRANSFORMATION, FRIENDSHIP, SOLITUDE, EMPOWERMENT AND CREATIVITY ON TRAVEL HAVE INSPIRED YOU TO SEARCH FOR THE TRAVELER WITHIN YOURSELF. SEEK AND GIVE INFINITE LOVE AND YOU WILL DISCOVER IT IN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL, UNLIKELY PLACES.

TO PIONEERING THROUGH THE INNER WILDERNESS!  
HOLIDAY HAGAN