

# MANIFESTO

by the s4 collective

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## ***Black Subaltern: Chapter One***

*On March 2nd here in Toronto the mental health day was celebrated for the first time. I saw the hashtag #BlackMentalHealthDay on a digital photo with the following paragraph. "This is the day we refuse to be silent about the effects of racism on our mental health". Then I asked myself: What does it mean to refuse to be silent about the effects of racism on my mental health? I guess writing about racism is not being silent. I suppose that naming structural and institutionalized racism is the first step in not being silent.*

*But it is also naming the fear you feel and the anxiety of living in that silence. I think silence is the most brutal effect of racism on my mind, because sometimes it is very difficult to name it and yet you*

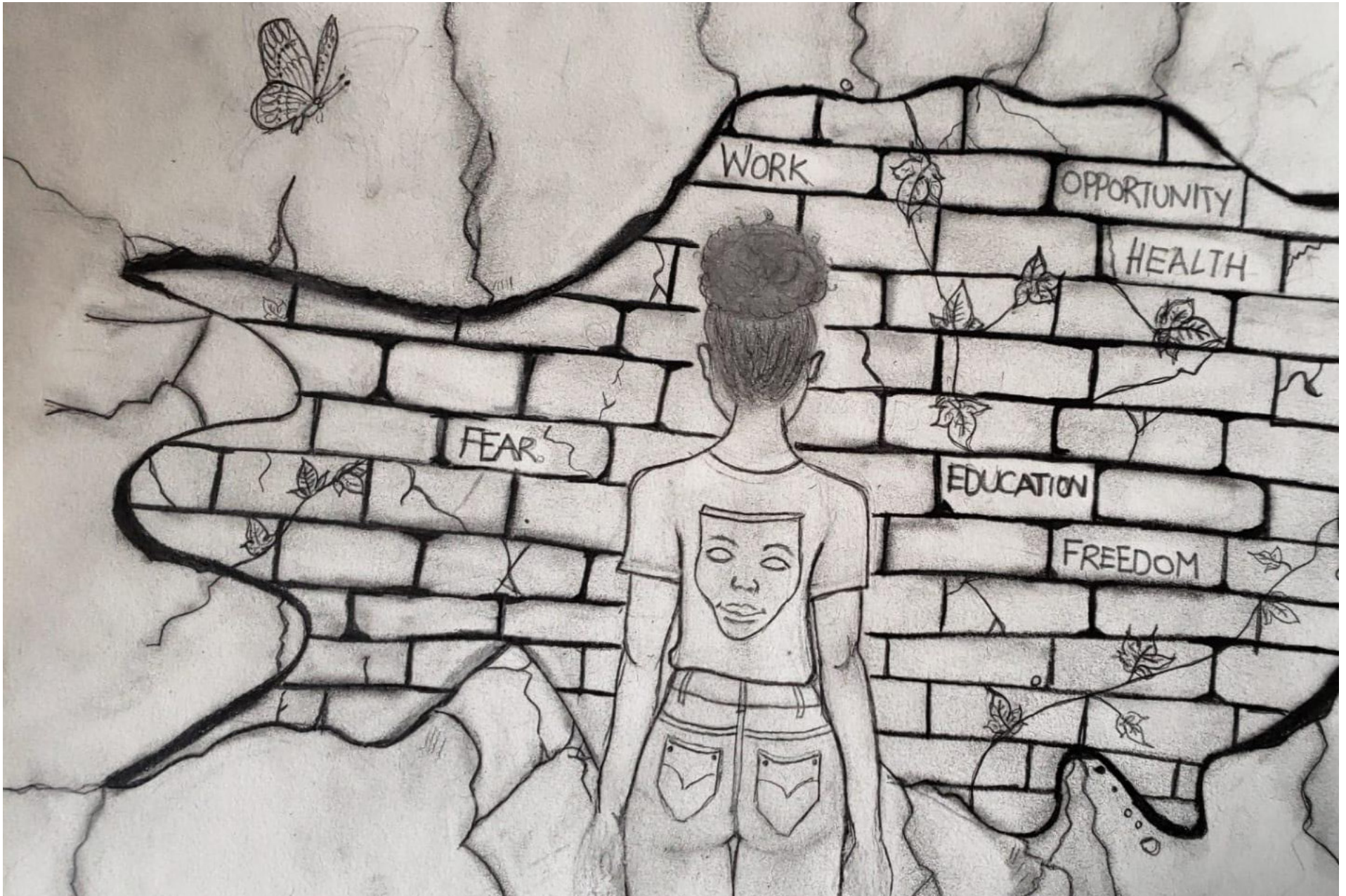
*see the contradiction. It is like a kind of eternal damnation but you don't understand why. And then it is exhaustion because racism is a contradiction and yet it is real. Brutally real.*

*During this Covid-19 pandemic, decreed (even the accounts seem superfluous) from March 15th until the publication of this writing, for thousands of workers like me, they are complex, confusing moments, but also of courage and love. I believe that the resistance of the 600-year-old African diaspora has always resolved and reflected on what it means to live daily within an oppressive system. I remember the Get Out movie, so I think Get Out of Silence is a good way to work on my mental health and fill that silence with a podcast of black psychologists talking about how to*

*heal our trauma. The news reports,  
the government speaks, the days  
continue, but the silence fills and  
builds new ways of existing. Now  
not from the silence but from the  
words as intentional vibrations of  
black voices like mine like yours. In  
the long run, resistance continues  
to make us subjects of action of our  
own reality, always reflecting.*

*E.G.*





## ***Becoming a Canadian Resident***

*My family and I came to Canada eight years ago, and our main goal was always to obtain residency, so we could have a better life. We dreamt of a life with more opportunities, new experiences, exposed to new realities and perspectives. Over the time, process after process, immigration lawyer after immigration lawyer, we stopped dreaming. We became part of the system and learned how to live day by day. We stopped making plans for the future, learned to not create high expectations so we wouldn't break our hearts. When people ask when we will go back to our country on vacation, we keep saying "soon soon" but that "soon" never comes. Those same people don't even realize how much we wished to have an answer to their question.*

*I would love to become a Canadian resident. I catch myself being so proud and accepting of a country that seems to not accept me, no matter how much I try. I would love to feel free, raise my expectations and make plans for future ahead of me. I would love to be able to make decisions such as buying a house or a car and not feel scared that I might have to leave the country in thirty days. I would love to find a job and know that my rights as a human being will be respected. I would love to become a Canadian citizen and be able to vote. I would love to be able to dream again.*



Neither here nor there

Some may say I don't belong to either places  
That my skin that the sun loves so much  
Brown like the soil corn grows upon  
Is too light for others  
Too dark for some.

That the articulate way I speak  
Must mean that I grew up in a white household  
I didn't  
I just know how to use a thesaurus whenever it's needed  
Carving and  
Verbalizing  
Words in a language that is not my mother tongue  
But neither is the other colonial speech I was forced to make my own,  
Lingua franca which disconnected me even further from my mother's roots  
And her mother  
And her mother's mother  
And her mother's mother's mother  
And so on.

The people here tell me  
"This is not your home! Go back where you came from!"  
And the people back there say  
"You're too foreign, you're not welcomed!"  
But the funny thing is that the land says:

"My child,  
your ancestors crossed rivers,  
Lakes,  
Mountains,  
Made their way through my valleys,  
My forests,  
And my deserts.  
There are no borders within me.  
I am infinite love and knowledge  
I am your non-human relatives  
I am you  
You are me."

And that's when I realized  
Jokes on them  
I am from here and there.

June/2020

弹性

## *An Existential Vacation*

*As a young boy who arrived to Canada thinking it was a five-day vacation, I was excited about Toronto, as I had never seen such a city. Grand skyscrapers, the countless and endless streets filled to the brim with shops and restaurants. Most amazingly, it had people; I had never seen so many people at once, nor had I ever seen the true contrast of the pallet of diversity people form. At the time, home was a small city where everyone spoke the same language, Spanish, and the biggest ethnic difference was skin tone. The difference between home and what was presented to me when I arrived was vast, yet it wasn't terrifying; it was a five-day vacation, and I was looking to play and mess with some gringos, to have something to tell my friends back home. I must have*

*had a lot of fun, for I had not noticed that five days were long gone, and school had started. It wasn't that I wasn't sure what to think of it; it was that I didn't think of it. The fact that my stay in Canada was more than a vacation didn't settle until a year later, when I started grade 7. I had overheard enough conversations between my parents and lawyers to understand we were attempting to obtain Refugee Status. I wasn't sure what it meant, and it didn't seem to affect me. I still had to wake up every weekday to go to school. My lack of situational awareness continued until grade 11, in 2013. It wasn't the fact that we were undocumented that planted me in my current reality, my family was rejected refugee status in 2010, my first year of high school. It was the sudden pressure of being constantly reminded about university, as a senior high school student. It was*

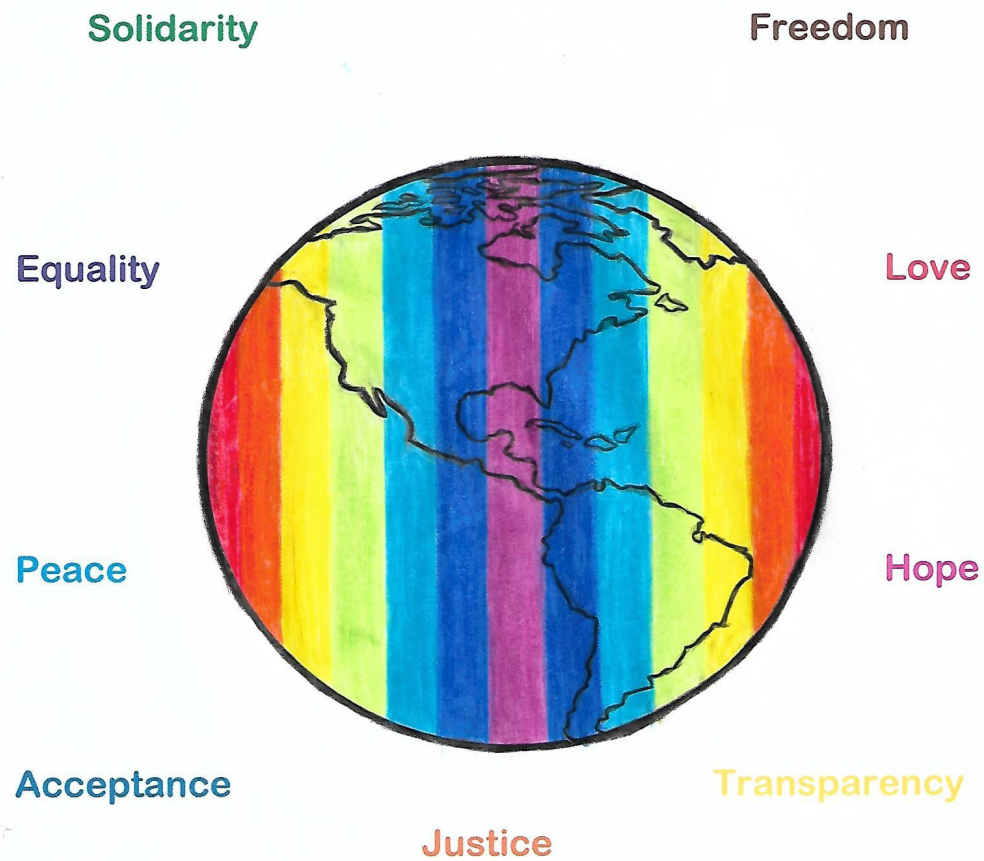
*the fact that I knew that I couldn't attend university that separated me from what was my life. Every school day was closer to the day I graduated, my friends graduated, the day everyone was to move on. I couldn't move on. University quickly became a reminder I was different, I was to be left behind. And left behind I was; I stayed in high school one and a half years after I graduated, before I finally moved to under the table workforce.*

*It has been a long vacation, yet I'm still fascinated with the people of Canada to this day. I've been lucky enough to share spaces of productivity, school and work, with both immigrants and natives. Yet I've remain separated due to the obscurity the Canadian Government poses in its immigration; the ambiguity of my future, my own*

*character and identity, is what separates me from the people I'm so captivated with. To objectively understand Immigration, observe my individualism as an immigrant, I would require omniscience, but clearly this isn't about me: The future of immigrants relies on our collective abilities and understanding.*



## A PERFECT WORLD

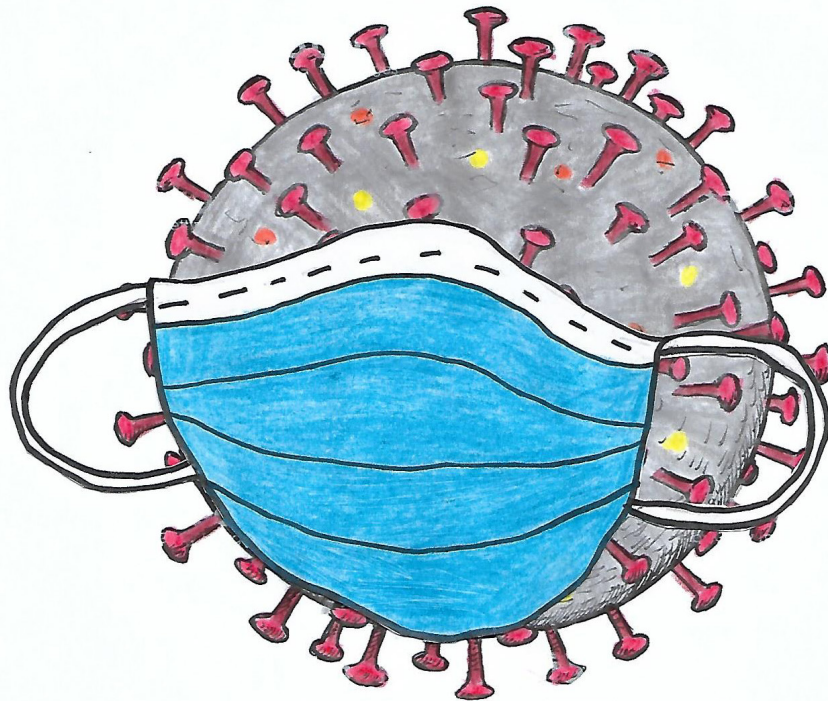


*The anti-immigration belief that views migrants as invaders or a plague coming to eradicate their way of life are now replaced by a real threat that affects us all.*



*It challenges the  
concept of ignorant,  
racialized fear versus an  
actual fear for survival.*

The Worst Pandemic is **FEAR**



Migration is not a Virus

***A narrative: The Roadblocks to a  
Life of Hope***

*I am from the lesser Antilles*

*A vast Island*

*Married between The Atlantic Ocean  
and Caribbean Sea*

*An inhabitant of 103,643*

*I am from a home occupied by  
bountiful melanin*

*Littered and spewed by meniscal  
entities*

*Known as the grenadines*

*I am from ripened breadfruit and  
seasoned fish*

*I am from a land where the sun shines  
365 days a year*

*Where the sandy beaches whisper  
joyous tunes*

*I am from poverty*

*A multifaceted concept some may  
never grasp*

*I am from a crisp cold*

*Nipping at every bite of my skin*

*Vigorous footprints in the snow*

*I am from hot chocolate under a warm  
silk blanket*

*I am from Christmas music*

*Ring ting tingly do*

*I am from a broken home*

*Torn and beaten down by inside forces*

*I am from blurred lines and  
contradiction's*

*Wrapped in uncertainty*

*Yet sprinkled with the love only a  
mother can give*

*I am from undocumentation*

*The fear of shackled hands and painful  
shame*

*I am from hope*

*Hope for a new day*

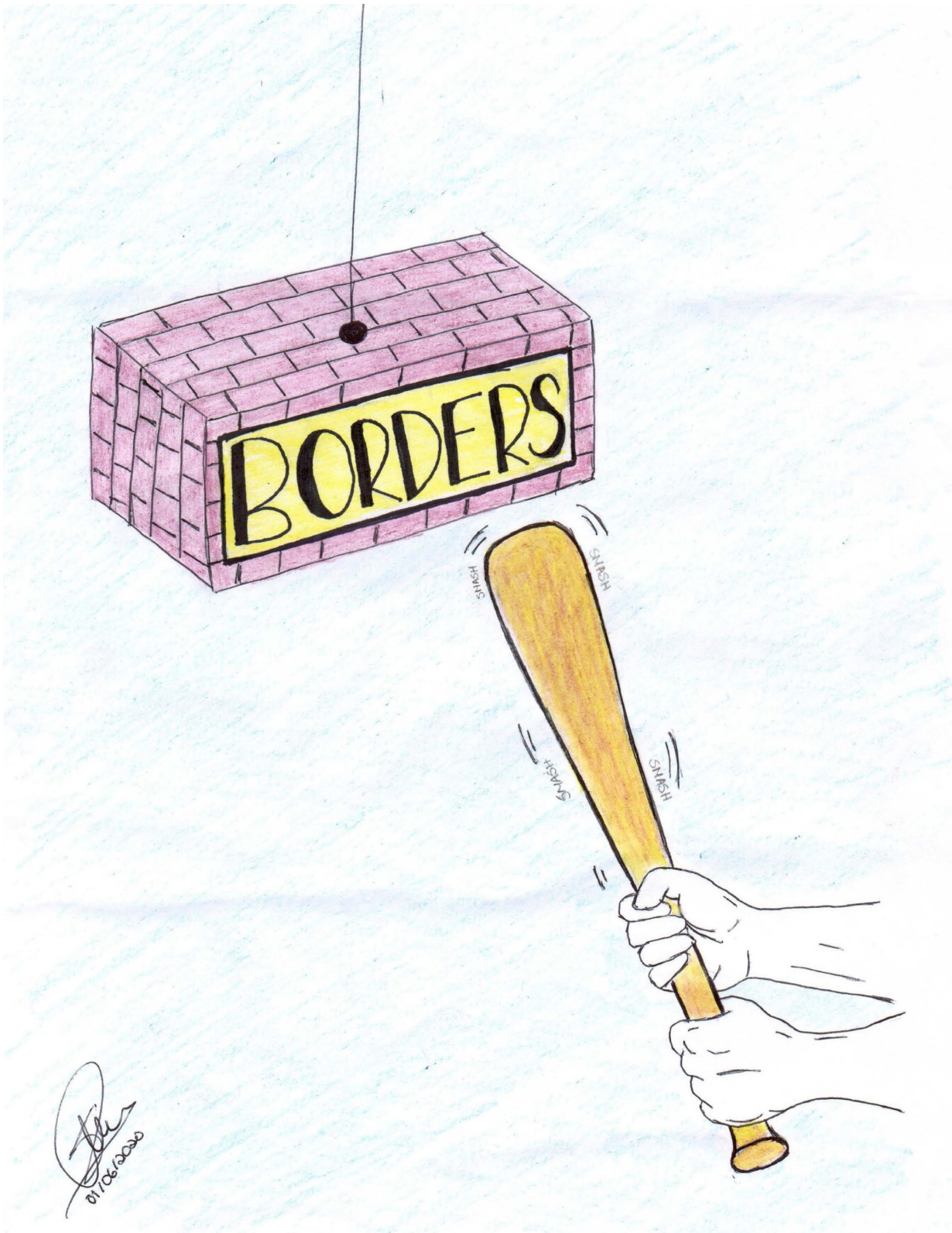
*Amongst the southern end of the  
windward island lies the island I once  
called home. There, my hike up the  
mountain of life began but not where it  
developed its full potential. Jolted out  
of bed one early morning, sleep only  
a wishful thought, I was primed and  
packaged; Ready to be sent off to an  
unforeseen future. What was to come, I  
would never have guessed. The instant  
my feet left the Vincentian airstrip  
my home land was but a fleeting  
memory. I am no longer the wide-eyed  
girl sitting on her grandfather's lap,  
playing with her baby dolls but in place  
a hopeful patriot of this exhilarating  
country I've called home for 15 years.  
Through the years I have been faced  
with many trials and tribulations but  
I refuse to let them dictate my life.  
Instead I learn from such things and  
use them as tools to better strengthen  
my drive for success.*

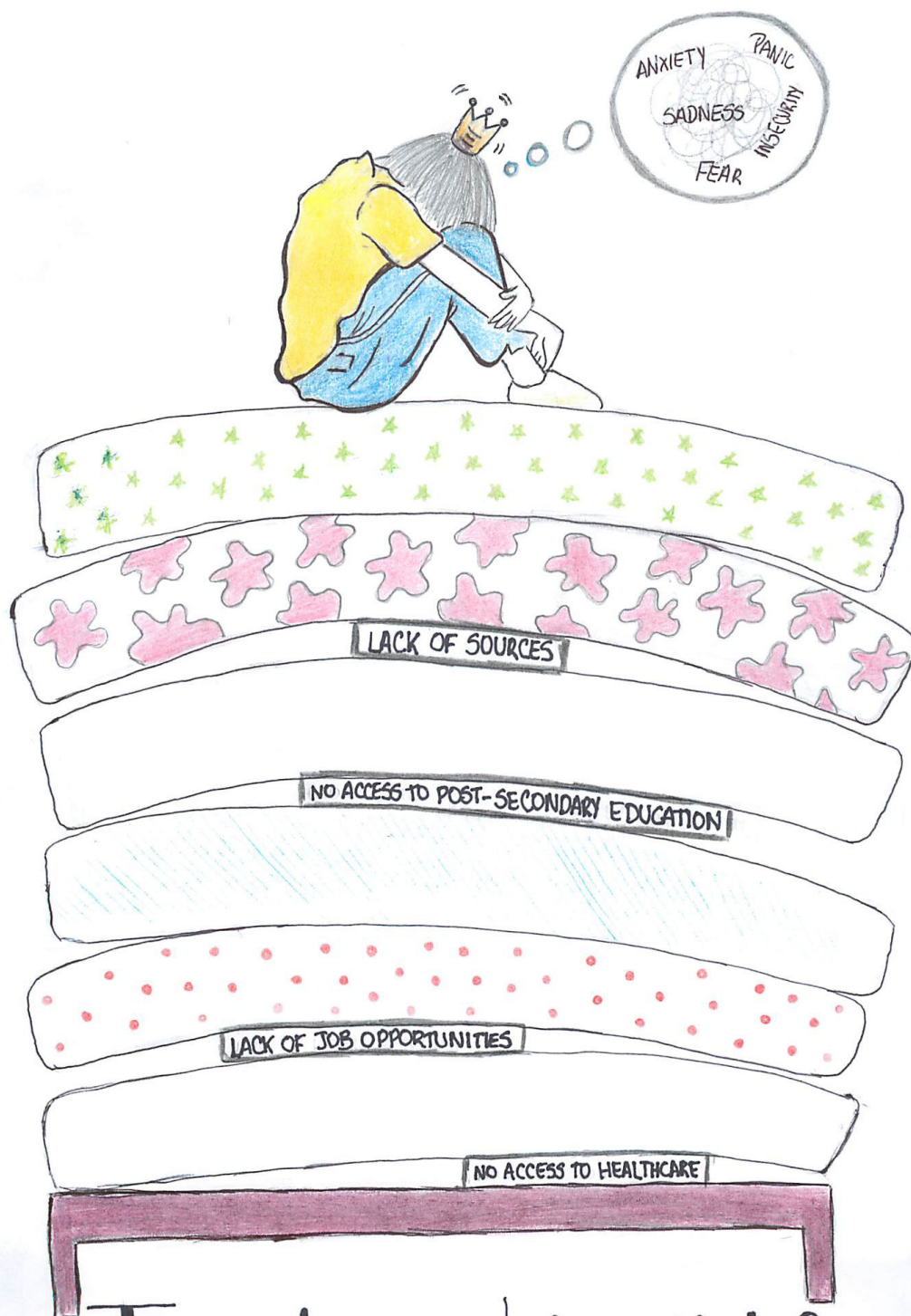


## *An Island Girl*

*Who am I? An island girl  
Where you smell the roasted  
breadfruit  
Hear the ocean kiss the soft white  
sandy beaches  
As you feel the beaming rays of  
the sun greet your skin with a  
hello  
There is where you will find little  
old me  
My little footprints left their  
imprints upon the sand  
The beautiful beaches of  
St. Vincent  
The place I called home  
Called...a past tense  
Of where they stay  
Now all a distant memory  
As I embark on a new journey in  
life  
Where I was greeted with snow, sleet, and  
brisk weather  
On a freezing winter day in April  
Here is where I now reside  
And where I begin my story  
Canada.*



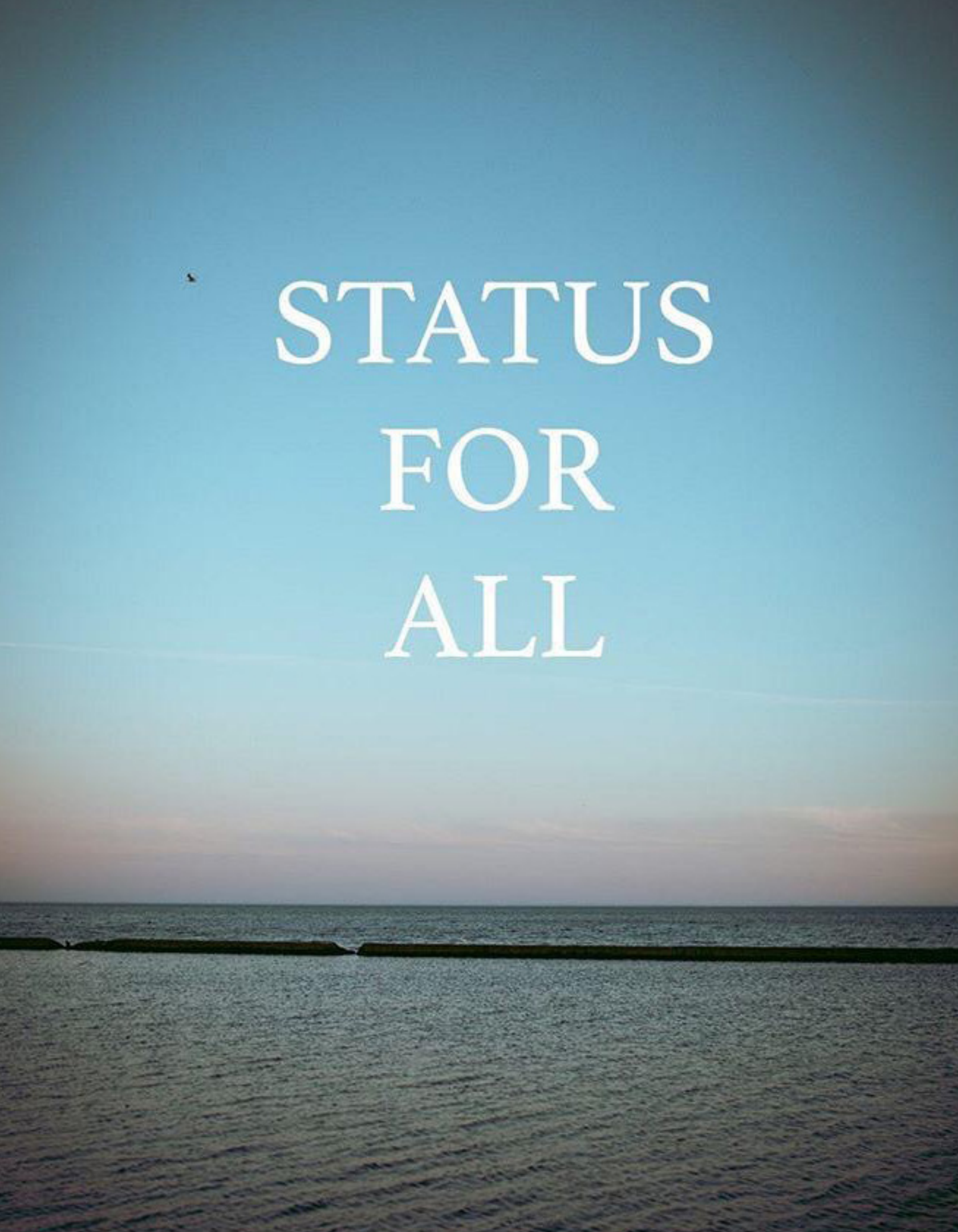




The princess & her status

*Ali*  
30/05/20



The background of the image is a photograph of a calm sea under a vast, clear sky. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a lighter, hazy blue near the horizon. The water is dark and textured with small ripples. A dark, low-lying landmass or breakers are visible on the horizon line.

# STATUS FOR ALL