

LORRAINE HUSSEY

bloody footprints

i am tracking
 bloody
 footprints *****
 across your desk.
...in a New Century font

 we are here,

(you and i and everyone
we pass in corridors,
meet in cafes,
travel with on buses and trains,
and touch
and kiss
and ...)

 in toronto,
standing on this land, in this place, now/still
 known by its "indian" name:
toronto, the meeting place.
 - i don't know which "nation"/
 "tribe", do you ? -

and we are (figuratively) ankle-deep in (real)
blood.

and so,

(because of murders/dislocations/
 ongoing oppressions)

"we" walk on
 living and dead and (unquestionably,)

 on figurative "indians".
every day "we" are walking a colonizing path,
an ongoing history-making,
 in which our every breathing
moment takes part....
 until our bones are buried,
 only to colonize the ground.

hence the footsteps...
 — not mackinnon's intended meaning,
 i'm sure —

but i also walk in that other blood.
in the (figurative) blood of (real) misogynist
 praxis and (real) gender-related killings.
here,
 in the blood of the tedious, the banal,
 the daily practices of
 (resisting)
 the man/woman
 divide.

(too close, too intimate, too felt, too lived)

while & where & when "we"

(and here the "we"
is meant to ensnare mostly
white, euro-descended,
self-identified feminists)

have re/membered

 the 14 middle-class,
 white,
 female

“victims”
of that man-who-hated-feminists ...
or when we re/member the “witches”

(because for 300 years some-bodys
were murdered
to pave the road to modernity
with their blood,
with their bones,
with their ashes,
and with their *suddenly available* land

“we” have NOT gone to the same trouble
to re/member
the bodies of the men, women, and children
who died —

and continue to die ...
at rates far surpassing any other

“canadian” “average” “population”

as an effect of the neo/colonialist struggle to
secure
***** for “our” feet,
the “right” to march across this
(home and native) land.

— and the “right” to sit m/y-our ass(es)
down on these chairs —

nor have “we”
(this “we” means to ensnare the not-jewish
portion of “our” feminist “tribe”)
gone to the trouble

— of course, some of “us” have more than
others —

of participating in the project of re-membering
the jewish women, men and children

who died in the centre of the 20th century and in
the “cradle of civilisation and democracy”.
some of whom “our” canadian government re-
fused to allow in as refugees or immigrants,
thus implicating “us”, once again ...

and who stood up to protest?

certainly, not *my* (anything but feminist)
grandmothers.

and yet, white feminists have used this re/
membering, have referenced this history, to
speak of the “witches”, to name a “holocaust of
women” ...
even when to do so is to
“cash in”

(a crass, and thus apt metaphor here)
on the “impossible memories” of that “ra-
tional” project of the same

(capitalist/
white- and christian-supremacist/
patriarchal)
modernist statism...

(and here the specifications of
“nazi” and “fascist”
have sometimes served to conceal
much of the complicity
of so-called democratic states
and their corporate denizens)

and yet, you/i/“we” must
— musn’t we!?! —
re/member, that the same project

- that secures this space for us,

- that led to the deaths of 90% of the “native”
population
north of the rio grande,

- that burned

(1,000,000 ? 100,000 ? i don't know
— too many)
european women and some
men
(to save their souls, how nice!),

—that organised and profited from slave-
trade economies,

is implicated
in the same grand narrative-in-action.
(for/of enlightenment,
equality,
freedom,
democracy,
profit
and genocide...)

but ... am i dangerously close to forwarding a
falsifying claim of a universal sisterhood-of-
suffering?

and ... how do i re/member this ?
when i also want to remember
my grandmother's
dishwater-cracked,
bleeding
hands

(they really did
bleed
from decades of dishwater;
i'm not being the least bit figurative, now)

in this academic
(in ANY)
feminist space
because **SHE**
never even imagined

the possibility

that her white-skinned, working class bones
would find their way into a university
and be "allowed" to speak with
"academic authority"
on these topics:

about a woman's hands that bled from
washing,

or the feet that are walking in blood

and NOW

*****tracking across your desk.

how can we honour all these women ?

without dishonouring some ?

or ourselves ?

*Dedicated to the memory of Irene Winifred Hussey née
Sheldon.*

*Lorraine Hussey is an undergraduate student in political
science and women's studies at York University, and the
mother of two children.*