



Artwork by Sara Rivers.

Our Body's Bodies

Strip me down to a single bed: still, I am a many bodied being. Padded, upholstered, slip seam softness, iron casted, grave-depth darkness, enveloping one, stacked on many old caskets; you see a body for one, I tell you, there are bodies (buried) inside it: for the body's body is not one, but a hundred – and then some – like tales threaded nightly, to sleep violent eyes awake.

Whether foam or loam, my mattress confines me, but the bodies within swim and play. I am your hunger inside; the ache in your spine; the longing long cold from the night before last. I am the politician's sneer, pixelated piggy live time, negligence un-warded, for a homeless hawker's cry. My veins are thrumming with your headlines, buzzing with your new lies, carotid in the half-light of another Covid day. My nerves are rigged by your new spiel, triggered by your faux appeal, tripped by a mute reel, looping tired lagging wires. Because, the body's body is not one, but a hundred – and then some – rapidly changing circuitry, flitting genomic technology, cyber motion primetime, digitised corporeality, buffering blood and cells.

Limb to limb we sleep, my bodies and I. Limb to limb, not frozen, but chattering through long cold nights. Inside they talk of poison, policies broken, votes and vetoes choking, unclothed bodies elsewhere. Limb to limb we try to sleep, cursing retold stories, coughing up old yarns, craving dormant myths, whispered in marrow and bone and flesh.

Our body's bodies are open eyed hymnals, singing light and loud and high, glimpsing up into cloistered beams of a crowded chapel dim. Our body's bodies are tree roots, grasping down into the dank earth, wrapped around an old pearl, a crown, a skull, an old shell, of some prehistoric self.

Strip me down to a single bed: still, I am a many bodied being. I am the unsaid words in your head, the roll call of remedies unfeeling. I am the soft shame that went viral, the girl who smirks and shakes her head, the jaded eyes taking in redness spilling over our many screens. I am the distant flow, the distant ebb of murmurs beneath the sea. I am your violence revived, repairing skin and muscle, retribution in typography, this page, these tabs, displayed.

These bodies are my body; we are a many bodied being. Touch this one, you move them all, our bodies' body.

Everything is written on the body – but what does it mean to write about our bodies in the era of Covid-19? And is it possible to write about bodily experiences in the face of such pervasive and continued violence? Using different modes of writing and art making, Lucy Writers presents a miniseries featuring creatives whose

work, ideas and personal experiences explore embodiment, bodily agency, the liberties imposed on, taken with, or found in our bodies. Beginning from a position of multiplicity and intersectionality, our contributors explore their body's bodies and the languages – visual, linguistic, aural, performance-based and otherwise – that have enabled them to express and reclaim different forms of (dis)embodiment in the last two years. Starting with the body(s), but going outwards to connect with encounters that (dis)connect us from the bodies of others – illness, accessibility, gender, race and class, work, and political and legal precedents and movements – *Our Body's Bodies* seeks to shine a light on what we corporally share, as much as what we individually hold true to.

Bringing together work by artistic duo Kathryn Cutler-MacKenzie and Ben Caro, poet Emily Swettenham, writer and poet Elodie Rose Barnes, writer and researcher Georgia Poplett, writer and researcher Hannah Hutchings-Georgiou and many others, as well as interviews with and reviews of work by Elinor Cleghorn, Lucia Osbourne Crowley and Alice Hatrick, *Lucy Writers'* brings together individual stories of what our bodies have endured, carried, suffered, surpassed, craved and even enjoyed, because... *these bodies are my body; we are a many bodied being. Touch this one, you move them all, our bodies' body.*

We also welcome pitches and contributions from writers, artists, film-makers and researchers outside of the *Lucy Writers'* community. Please enquire for book reviews too.

For submissions relating to trans and non-binary culture email dytorfrankie@gmail.com

For poetry submissions email elodierosebarnes@gmail.com

For reviews, non-fiction submissions and general enquiries email hannah.hutchings-georgiou.16@ucl.ac.uk

Submissions are open from 6 January 2022 until late March 2022.

Quotations as springboards, points of interest, notes of inspiration:

'I am an anachronism, a sport, like the bee that was never meant to fly. Science said so. I am not supposed to exist. I carry death around in my body like a condemnation. But I do live. The bee flies. There must be some way to integrate death into living, neither ignoring it nor giving in to it.' – Audre Lorde, *The Cancer Journals*, p.5.

'...Slowly I realized that getting better meant being brave enough to occupy my body again. To be brave enough to feel the pain of it, the weakness of it, to bear witness to how broken it had become. It was only once I started to do that that my body and I started to understand each other again.' – Lucia Osbourne-Crowley, *I Choose Elena*, p.110.

'What I want to show is how power relations can materially penetrate the body in depth, without depending even on the mediation of the subject's own representations. If power takes hold on the body, this isn't through its having first to be interiorised in people's consciousnesses.' Michel Foucault, 'The History of Sexuality' from *Knowledge/Power*, p.186.

'Intersectionality is not the morcellation of collectives into a static fuzz of cross-referenced identities, but a political orientation that slices through every particular, refusing the crass pigeonholing of bodies.' Laboria Cuboniks, from *The Xenofeminist Manifesto* (London, Verso), p.57.

'...the sea was like slake gray of what was left of my body and the white waves...I remember.' Quoted in Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, (Duke University Press, 2016), p.41.

About Lucy Writers

[Lucy Writers](#) is an inclusive online platform devoted to uplifting the critical and creative voices of women and non-binary writers. In collaboration with [Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge](#), Lucy Writers supports and promotes the work of writers all around the world, from inside and outside the college community. With a thriving [Arts](#) editorial, including interviews, reviews and features on the latest shows from Tate, Royal Academy, Sadler's Wells, the National Theatre, Barbican as well as smaller arts venues around the UK, and original writing and previews from the likes of Irenosen Okojie, Jen Calleja, So Mayer, Amalie Smith and Ida Marie Hede, Lucy Writers aims to forge a nurturing and inspiring online environment for the next generation of writers and journalists.