The Feminist Toilet

Third Edition

World Toilet Day 2021

Artwork by Razia
Dear Toilet-appreciator,

For some the toilet is an embarrassing necessity, something one does but never talks about. It just happens in the room it happens in - safe, sanitary, solitude. But we know that this is not true for everyone. More than that, we recognize that without this ingenious contraption our lives would be at risk. Each sip of water, each middle-of-the-night bowel movement, each playful swim in the river would be frightening.

While all editions of *The Feminist Toilet* are about valuing the toilet for what it is - a protector and guardian - this issue is goes deeper. Thanks to our partnership with International Medical Corps and WeHo Poet Laureate Brian Sonia-Wallace, this edition shares the voices of poets and artists living in Pakistan alongside poems by poet laureates and high schoolers!

We at *The Feminist Toilet* want to do more than organize fun poetry parties for World Toilet Day, we want to have a positive impact on people’s lives. We have become official members of the World Toilet Organization and are partnering with organizations doing vital, life-changing work all over the world.

From toilets as morning rituals and break rooms for introverts to spaces for sanctuary and daydreams as one poops on “jagged rocks,” this issue of *The Feminist Toilet* will transform your love for your toilet from meh to my-goodness!

Happy World Toilet Day 2021!

Sammy Ginsberg

Editor of *The Feminist Toilet*
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ABOUT THE FEMINIST TOILET

“No innovation in the past 200 years has done more to save lives and improve health than the sanitation revolution triggered by the invention of the toilet. But it did not go far enough. It only reached one-third of the world.”

Sylvia Mathews Burwell, former US Secretary of Health and Human Services

The toilet... It’s a place that’s private in public, a place where it’s okay to be alone, and a place that should always be safe.

Everyone uses the toilet—rich and poor, young and old, executives and interns, teachers and students, even Kim Kardashian and Queen Elizabeth. We all use the toilet. It’s what makes us equal. It is totally and utterly feminist.

In a world that takes itself too seriously, the toilet can be the last refuge of the silly, and therefore of the profound. It prevents disease and keeps our water clean. Unfortunately, this basic necessity is a luxury for people worldwide. For example, while 99.9% percent of houses in the US have at least one toilet, it is only 74.6% percent in Mexico. That’s 26.4% or 33.7 million people who do not have access to a toilet. Just in Mexico!

We at The Feminist Toilet want to do more to make sure that all people have access to this revolutionary and fundamental technology.

*The Feminist Toilet* is a semi-annual literary magazine for people who care about health, safety, hygiene and gender equality, and enjoy art in all its forms. This edition is in partnership with the Brian Sonia-Wallace, West Hollywood’s Poet Laureate, International Medical Corps, and, as always, UN World Toilet Day.
ABOUT UN WORLD TOILET DAY

Valuing toilets

“Who cares about toilets? 3.6 billion people do. Because they don’t have one that works properly.” That is the starting point of this 2021 Campaign for World Toilet Day. The Observance celebrates toilets and raises awareness of the 3.6 billion people living without access to safely managed sanitation. When some people in a community do not have safe toilets, everyone’s health is threatened. Poor sanitation contaminates drinking water sources, rivers, beaches and food crops, spreading deadly diseases among the wider population.

This year’s theme is about valuing toilets. The campaign draws attention to the fact that toilets – and the sanitation systems that support them – are underfunded, poorly managed or neglected in many parts of the world, with devastating consequences for health, economics and the environment, particularly in the poorest and most marginalized communities.

On the other hand, the advantages of investing in an adequate sanitation system are immense. For instance, every $1 invested in basic sanitation returns up to $5 in saved medical costs and increased productivity, and jobs are created along the entire service chain. For women and girls, toilets at home, school and at work help them fulfil their potential and play their full role in society, especially during menstruation and pregnancy.

Spread the message!

Your participation in the campaign is crucial to our success. Visit the official UN Water website, leading agency of the Observance, where you can learn more about this problem and help us to spread the message of people who have neither a voice nor a toilet. Check out their cool Communication Tool Kit in different languages and spread the world.

VISIT AND HELP!
Poem Regarding World Toilet Day

By Mohammad Zahir Saadat

Celebrate World Toilet’s Day on November 19th
Spread awareness around the world
Let me share few words
That will be helpful for every human being
So, I must inform you
Spread awareness around the world

Celebrate World Toilet’s Day on November 19th
Take care of cleanliness wherever you are
As cleanliness is the half of faith
Just publicize cleanliness wherever you are.

Celebrate World Toilet’s Day on November 19th
First and foremost, cleanse your body
The second is your home, the third is your homeland
Practice it you all

Spread awareness around the world

Celebrate World Toilet’s Day on November 19th
Wash your hands properly
There will be less diseases around you
As most diseases are caused by dirt

Spread awareness around the world

Celebrate World Toilet’s Day on November 19th
Use the toilet in proper way
Take care to keep you clean anyway
Wash hands thoroughly with soap
Spread awareness around the world
Celebrate World Toilet’s Day on November 19th
Use less water and don’t waste it
Do Justice with the blessing of GOD,
Even if you are on the shore of the sea
Spread awareness around the world
Celebrate World Toilet’s Day on November 19th
Take this advice, saying Sadat “O my country and world’s people, do it”,
Use the toilet properly
Spread awareness around the world
Celebrate World Toilet’s Day on November 19th
Spread awareness around the world

Mohammad Zahir Saadat is a Pashto poet and writer in Pakistan. His articles have been published in Pakistani newspapers, including Wahdat, Hiwad and Shabbaz. Saadat has written six poetry books and two books of Pashto articles. He is the leader of Dir Pashto Adabi Tolana, a Pashto literary group.
Voter sticker after the 2016 election, at the wmn’s loo, The Women’s Centre for Creative Work Los Angeles

-Linda Ravenswood
Bullshit Lines

collated by Dwell Time (2021)

*Dwell Time is an award winning, not-for-profit arts publication reflecting on mental wellbeing.*

**Produced and curated by Alice Bradshaw, Vanessa Haley & Lenny Szrama, founded in 2018. For National Poetry Day and World Mental Health Day 2021, Dwell Time collated responses to an open call for bullshit and this is the resultant collective poem.**

They’re bastardising Monet with their glitter and their glue, to make him more appealing to the likes of me and you.

But what are you gonna do with a fine art degree?

There’s an opportunity for you, we want you to be involved.

Give me your tired, give me your poor.

You don’t look like you could manage high pace work. Have you tried the library?

Good day, I don’t think United Kingdom has already joined the EEF ("études en France") process. We see you as a partner.

There has never been a time since history began when it was not possible, given complete power and lack of scruples, to induce the majority of people to confess, profess or denounce anything we might wish.

It will be a red white and blue Brexit.

Received a Facebook ban for calling someone a sausage. A sausage.

An invisible illness does not exist, as it is invisible, therefore you are not ill!

Reply from the arts council on disability assistance in the arts. The reply; Sorry that’s not within our remit, if you require any more details please do not hesitate to contact us.

We won’t invest in a health festival there is no real return on it, we are hosting a beer festival, people love beer.
Bar wench! I’ve been coming to this bar for 25 years, I’ve never called anyone a bar wench, you must have misheard, bar wench.

Working in a hostel that promotes inclusion but signing people up to move into the the hostel with exclusion licenses so it’s easy to give people an immediate eviction.

Watch the following from Jason - STP for LML - BUT we must also consider that we use the relevant TUT CODE to access this review via eTracker.

We believe in and practice inclusivity.

We cannot support people to come along to Phoenix arts and health group as we only work Mondays to Fridays.

Use the grease gun to inject grease in to the nipple until it oozes out of the sides of the flange. Police women are not here to do anything in a rape case, it is the rape victims role to protect the vulnerable women which the Police employ.

I’m afraid we cannot approve your loan request to fund the hiring of a hit man, perhaps consider a new bathroom?

Levelling up.

The people progressing from secondary health care to primary services can no longer participate in the arts and crafts group, because they will become dependent.

Contains the following allergens: contains no allergens.

If you look at Saddam Hussein, he killed terrorists. I’m not saying he was an angel, but this guy killed terrorists.

Here to support development and create the conditions for the sector to thrive, for all.

What makes you think you have a career in the arts?

You will fail.

Too much bullshit, my coffee’s gone cold.
Hi my name is Asha Nevius, I’m from Altadena Ca, and I’m 22 years old. I’ve been writing anything and everything since I was 13 years old as a way to understand how I was feeling and even to remember how I was feeling. These are a few poems that I wrote that I’m really proud of and I hope you enjoy reading them. Thank u. <333
Zainab lives in Haripur District, Pakistan.

“I stood up for myself and my values as a woman when my family wanted to decide for me. I dream of a world where women can follow their dreams and make their own choices.”
Ode de toilet

by Jen Cheng

I can’t live without you
I need you morning and night
you know, the kind of purification and meditation that starts my day just right
when I miss our private morning ritual
I am filled with anxiety,
praying for a way to make it up to you

when I’m without you, I wonder when I will see you again
sometimes I feel so lost, yearning for your comfort
when things get too busy and I need some solace and quiet
you’re the one I go to for an excuse to find myself again
sometimes I don’t even need you, but seek you to provide
that escape an introvert needs to retreat from obligations of a party

sometimes I’m awaken by you, with a desperate urge that strikes me in my sleep
that terrible blur of reality in dream state
I might mistakenly feel your smooth coldness on my thighs
until, a panic awakens me, to strike me into alertness and I must clamor for you

the times I’ve been on road trips, I long for you terribly
strange places and foreign smells make my heart grow fonder
like a reluctant submissive
I am dominated by thoughts of you
sometimes I hate that I need you
and yet,
there are days when I cannot leave you
as I am wretched with cleansing
yes, you purify me
you are my ball and chain.

Jen Cheng is a multi-disciplinary storyteller, weaving her skills as a writer, poet, songwriter, musician, artist, and improvisor. She is the eldest daughter of Hong Kong Chinese immigrants, growing up with four younger siblings who sometimes neglected to replace an empty toilet paper roll. Jen always checks for the availability of toilet paper to avoid the trap of “toilet jail.” More about her at www.JenCvoice.com
Potty Talk
by Ben Moritz

The rumble and grumble that rock my world,
The quake that I’ve experienced many of times.
Here come the stomp and the flood,
Oh, how the floodgates have opened.
The splash and the terror of that THING.
It’s come to attack and it’s not holding back.
The pain and the burn. Why did I eat that?
Oh lest it’ll happen again.
OOHHHH, the release of pain.
That takes me back to the times, where lying on the floor
half dead and happy.
The orgasm of the emptiness of my tummy.

Ben Moritz is a high school student in Los Angeles who plans to build airplanes in the future.
Lost It

by Traci O’Dea

Il suffit que je sois bien Malheureuse pour avoir Droit a votre bien-vaillance
-from J.L. David. Marat Assassiné. 1793.

His left hand hangs, not unlike Marat’s right hand, outside the tub. The wedding band slips off and rings against the hardwood, pauses, then rolls away beyond the brass clawed feet. To no avail, he gropes the boards. His fingers turn up with only dust and specks of plumbing rust. His spent arm lingers against the cast iron side. He pulls the plug and hopes she won’t react like she’s Charlotte Corday, and thinks there are some little things she doesn’t need to know. He rises, employs a dirty towel to rub away the ring he left, kneels on the area rug, bows cheek to floor to investigate. No band. A slide of hand between copper pipes. He avoids the corners ’til he grabs the flashlight. Still no luck there, just what normally dwells in corners: bug shells, towel lint, shed skin cells. He’s not formally panicking yet. It must be under here, but where? There exist a finite number of voids beneath the tub where it could hide. As soon as he accepts it’s disappeared, he hears her slam the door.

In desperation, he unscrews the faucet’s stainless aerator ring. No dice. It doesn’t fit. He’ll try to keep his hands from sight. Later that night they dine. She catches on. They fight. It reaches the point of “Maybe you meant to lose it.”

“My Maybe I did.”

She grips the Corning lid
with clear intent
and aims it at his neck. It misses, hits a knuckle joint
on his left hand. Pissed, she grabs, with her right
hand, a steak knife. This time, bull’s-eye.
The wedding band rests beside the toilet, unaware of anything.

A poetry editor for the literary journals Smartish Pace, Lit.Words, and MOKO: Caribbean Arts & Letters, Traci O’Dea is the author of two poetry collections: Waving (Assure Press, 2021) and Restricted Movement (Scotland Street Press, 2021) for which she received a Seed Funding Grant from Arthouse Jersey. Her poetry appears in the following places: Poetry, Poetry Daily, Literary Matters, The Hopkins Review, The Jersey Evening Post, the Goethe Institut, and elsewhere.
For You, I’d Pick Up Your Poo

by Sammy Ginsberg

In the alley
by the Rite Aid
on Sherman Way
in an act of love
with a gloved hand
I collected human poop
into trash bags.

It was hard like an overcooked brownie
thank you LA sunshine
and I was not alone
others who cared
make neighborhood beautiful

wondering who
in desperation
took a shit here
left their Taco Bell, too
thinking it’s not for them,
it’s for us - a public health crisis
in our ‘first world country’
where we make Snap Crap
instead of address
poverty & homelessness.
Oh it is overdue, it is overdue.
I would pick up human poo
this love for you
my home, our home
we would pick up for you,
and do.

Sammy Ginsberg is the Editor of The Feminist Toilet.
Roses are Red

by Milana

Roses are red
Violets are blue
I have to go
Because I just had a Starbucks Cold Brew

Milana is a high school senior from Los Angeles. She loves music and art and is new to poetry.
First Lessons of Decolonization

Magdalena Gómez

Attempts to torch were made. 
Firefighters fought back every time. 
The building, big, dense, well built
like the tenants, refused to fall.
We’d been through a lot worse.
Mami grew up in a shanty town
raised on wobbly stilts over open sewage
colonialism’s backhoes dug toilets
of diphtheria, malaria, dysentery
efficient ethnic cleansing as the mainland
canned sprays for every hole
of women’s bodies. Desecrated
for profit.

The hole over our tenement toilet
gaped wider each day.
Upstairs neighbors got a
“free show” each time
we had to go.
I took to it all like a gas soaked duck
with umbrella
and galoshes.
Channeled Gene Kelly.
Step. Splash. Sing.
We laughed hard.
Held dignity close.
We had been through worse.

Magdalena Gómez is the Poet Laureate of Springfield, MA (2019-2022) and an Academy of American Poets Fellow, made possible with funds from the Mellon Foundation. Her print poetry collection, Shameless Woman (Red Sugarcane Press, NYC) is studied in curriculums throughout the U.S. and abroad. Ten of her poems were produced with music off-Broadway and on tour as “Dancing in My Cockroach Killers” by PRTT/Pregones theater, who also honored her with a National Endowment Master Artist Award. Her poems appear in The Progressive; The L.A. Times; Palabra; upstreet; Typehouse; La Libreta; and many other publications and anthologies. “The poem I have submitted is a true story.” www.latinapoet.com
I AM NOT RUDE IF I LIKE CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

by Saman Maham

I didn’t ask too much
Just clean drinking water and lunch
When you were draining your waste into the river
Drinking water from that river made me shiver
I asked you to dispose your waste in the toilet
But then you got rude and violent
I just wanted to keep the environment clean
But then you became so mean
You put your waste in the open
Which left me and the environment in commotion

Saman Maham grew up in Karak District, Pakistan, and currently lives in Islamabad.

“As a girl growing up in this region, I always carried a genuine interest in psychology and how it transforms our individual, social and collective realities. I was also touched by stories of human suffering and war trauma because of what happened in my region and I wanted to support people in need.”
W.C.

Affonso Romano De Sant’anna (from The body-object and other examples, No.10)
Translated by Lloyd Schwartz

You are the end

of house
of man
of poem

the ultimate remnant
of the ultimate remnant.

Seated

in the rounded white nook
of the commodious
accommodation

You wait

incommodious
intestine

You receive

mute, naked
the integral verb
(aquatic mouth
gaping)

Humiliated

more than humiliating
you’re the general separator
of good and evil
pushbutton or chain
roommm roommm blog blog
blong rooaingg
roommmrooommm chainngg
language

white

again.
W.C. (original in Portugese)
Affonso Romano De Sant’anna (from O OBJETO CORPO E OUTROS EXEMPLOS)

És o fim

da casa
do homem
do poema

o derradeiro objeto
do objeto derradeiro

Assentado

ao canto curvo
branco
do cômodo

Aguardas

incômodo
intestine

Recebes

mudo desnudo
o verbo integral

(boca aquática
escancarada)

Humilhado

mais que humilhante
és divisor geral
do bem do mal
botão ou corda
roam roam blog blog
blong roain
roamroam cháááííííímm
linguagem
branca
again.

**Affonso Romano de Sant’Anna** is one of the leading literary figures in Brazil. Poet, essayist, critic, journalist, teacher, he’s the author of some forty volumes of poems, essays, and chronicles. A 1981 Guggenheim Foundation fellow, he has been president of the National Library Foundation in Brazil, a visiting writer at the University of Iowa, and visiting professor at UCLA, the University of Texas at El Paso, and the Universities of Cologne and Aix-en-Provence.

**Lloyd Schwartz** (translator) is Frederick S. Troy Professor of English Emeritus at UMass Boston and poet laureate of Somerville, Massachusetts, for which he was awarded a 2021 Poets Laureate Fellowship from the Academy of American Poets. Among his other awards are the Pulitzer Prize for criticism and NEA and Guggenheim Foundation fellowships in poetry. His poems have been selected for the Pushcart Prize, *Best American Poetry*, and *Best of the Best American Poetry*. He’s also a principal editor of the works of Elizabeth Bishop and a regular arts critic for NPR’s *Fresh Air*. His latest book is *Who’s on First?: New and Selected Poems* (University of Chicago Press, 2021).
Shah Nawaz lives in Madran District, Pakistan. He is a sportsman and he loves to play cricket.

“I believe that humankind is responsible for saving God’s creation—planet Earth. I have planted many trees in my community and believe that everyone must plant at least one tree.”
Oh! what a pleasure it must be!

By Aisha Usman

I daydream all day long about a few things,
And sitting on a toilet is among one of them.

My feet are sore and heels torn,
from squatting uncomfortably when nature calls,
on uneven terrain, jagged rocks and pointing thorns.

Why can’t I have access to those clean stalls or public lavatories?
Only because I can’t pay a few cents for such facilities?

Whoever has determined that a price must be paid?
To relieve oneself of all the visceral waste?

Oh but what a pleasure it must be!
To have a seat
At every important place.
A prayer room, a classroom or a washroom
But for now, I can only daydream about those things.
And sitting on a toilet, is among one of them.

Aisha Usman was born in Islamabad, Pakistan, lived in Peshawar until she was 18 and then moved to Karachi. Aisha is a language enthusiast and aspires to become a hyperpolyglot. The most recent language she learned was Pakistani Sign Language.
My Secret Privilege

By Aqsa Khalid

I know of a safe space
Where only I perform
Where only I am the spectator
Where only I have the power
To stare at myself...
Where I can let out
My tear drops and my frowning
My dance and my swaying
My drama and my resolutions
But remember,
This secret about my toilet sanctuary
Mustn’t go out
Because,
The cage outside this safe space
Suffocates me much more
The suppression outside these walls
Stinks much more
Than the filth and the mess here
And, I dread a day
When this too will be taken away from me...

Aqsa Khalid is from Pakistan. She finds cooking while listening to music very therapeutic.
Razia lives in Haripur District, Pakistan.

“...I am very proud to share that I distributed sweets among my family when my niece was born, even though it was taboo [for a woman to do this] in my community.”
TƏTTee (poop in Hindi)

by Deepti Gupta

KƏr lay kƏr lay
would say my mother to me.
KƏr lo kƏr lo
I say to my son.
Do it Do it
it translates in Hindi,
A nation where
we do it on the streets.

God didn’t bless me with
the daily Do It genes.
I’d fret and grunt as I
sat on the Indian latrine.

Legs wide apart
butt hanging in the air,
expectant I sat
hoping for my fair share.

I had a cousin who
would sing himself to poop.
I have relatives who
need a cup of chai to “do”.

I’ve grown up now
and live in another country.
You’d think this affliction
would’ve left me.
Let me tell you now
my son loves potty talk.
He sits on his kid potty
and lets his rockets out.

My husband and I smile
at each other in glee
when he yells to us
Mummy, mainey kƏr lee. (I’ve done it)

Deepti Gupta is an Audie-Finalist, SOVAS and Earphones winning narrator and actress based in Los Angeles. Fluent in English, Hindi and Urdu, her career spans across India, Singapore, Pakistan and the United States. As an actress, she switches between big and small screens with ease and grace. She can currently be seen in Disney+’s High School Musical The Musical, Netflix’s The Politician and Hulu’s Little Fires Everywhere.

ABOUT THE PLUMBER PRIZE

Judged by Sammy Ginsberg, Founder and Editor of The Feminist Toilet, The Plumber Prize awards the monumental amount of $27.37 to the chosen writer, the average hourly rate of an unlicensed plumber in the United States. Poets with a plumber’s license qualify for $31.17.
“International Medical Corps relieves the suffering of those affected by conflict, disaster and disease, often in difficult and dangerous environments. We deliver vital healthcare services and training that help devastated populations move from relief to self-reliance.”

https://internationalmedicalcorps.org

“OVERDUE is a collective of individuals who pick up trash together to make their communities cleaner, greener and friendlier. We started in October 2020 in the San Fernando Valley, CA and have picked up over 30,000 lbs of trash ever since. Our goal is to develop a network of empowered leaders of all ages who are taking responsibility in their neighborhoods.”