

DISPATCHES FROM AN/OTHER PLACE



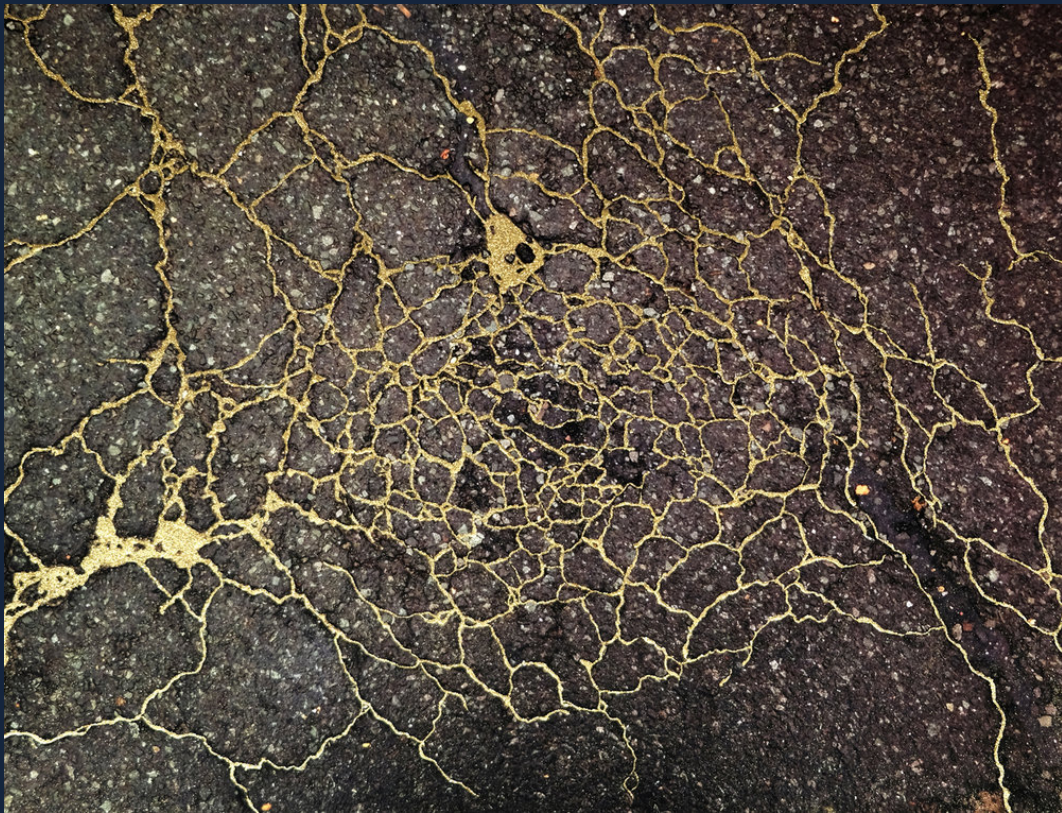
Dispatch 6:

Transformation

Dear students,

The Japanese art of kintsugi (or kintsukuroi) is the practice of repairing a broken vessel with gold. When a piece of pottery breaks, the cracks are artfully filled with gold dust, luminous veins that highlight rather than hide the damage. The effect is stunning - the original bowl or vase or plate turns from everyday object to work of art. It is a craft that celebrates the history of an object, that honors the trauma it has borne, and also transforms it into something completely new. The places that were fragile, broken, become the strongest part of the piece, the most beautiful. A transformation predicated on unexpected rupture. Perhaps you are beginning to see why kintsugi has been on my mind.

The picture above is a beautiful contemporary take on this process by artist Rachel Sussman in a series of installations called [Sidewalk Kintsukuroi](#), in which she repaired cracks in city streets with gold dust. More images are below:



In order, those are the streets of Brooklyn, Manhattan, and New Haven, and feels a fitting tribute to our cities right now. For more about kintsugi, and some classic examples, [start here](#).

Finally, this week, I am leaving you with one long poem, "[After Our Planet](#)" by [Mark Strand](#). Poet Eliza Griswold, whose wonderful reading is worth listening to all the way through, calls it prescient, and I was certainly glad to learn of it this week.

"I am writing," it starts, "from a place you have never been/where the trains don't run, and planes/Don't land." He goes on to describe the feeling of looking down on a deserted town, wondering about the solitary people below ("Does he live in that little white house? Someone is playing a tape of birds singing. Someone has fallen asleep on a boxcar of turnips.") and attending to some of the things we have been discussing in these dispatches - seasonal change, the poetics of space - in solitude: "Beyond the sadness—the empty restaurants,/ The empty streets, the small lamps shining/Down on the town—I see only the stretches/Of ice and snow, the straight pines, the frigid moon."

It ends with a beautiful, funny way of expressing the yearning to be seen. Take a listen:



As the semester comes to a close, I want to acknowledge how fundamentally each of our lives have been changed over the past several weeks. I do not think any of us will emerge from this pandemic unscathed. Nonetheless, around the world, people are still finding [joy](#), [delight](#), and [good things](#) in the world, and in many ways, we are being transformed for the better. We are remembering how to spend meaningful time with our families, and ourselves. We are contented with having less, and wanting less. We are caring for one another, we are outside more, we are dreaming more, laughing more, cooking, sharing. It has been a difficult end to the year, but I hope that we can each find a way to repair the ruptures we have suffered with care, and gratitude, honoring the difficult journey rather than turning from it.

I hope to see you all again in the fall.

Until then, be well,

Tamanna Rahman
your friendly neighborhood nurse practitioner



Tamanna Rahman is a psychiatric nurse practitioner who joined the CAPS team in January 2019. She completed her nurse practitioner training at Yale University and holds a BA from Williams College in American Studies, where she studied social movements and literature. Outside of work, she enjoys engaging in activism, gardening, cooking and baking, and hanging out with her Russian Blue cat and giant Newfoundland dog.