

Part 1

Rose: Would you mind introducing yourself to our lovely readers?

Lucia: My name is Lucia. I am an early childhood educator and mutual aid organizer living in Albany Park. I work with the Chicago Childcare Collective (Chichico), which is a collective of childcare providers that provide an organized free childcare for mutual aid organizations throughout Chicago.

R: What do you enjoy doing for fun?

L: I like to paint and draw. I really like to watch TV, especially teen dramas. Degrassi, currently.

Andres: How does Chichico work?

L: The general idea of Chichico is to allow caregivers to participate in organizing. Often due to childism, people who are responsible for a child are excluded from political organizing at higher rates, just because they might not have the time outside of those responsibilities.

R: What brought you into this area and how did you become acquainted with the free store?

L: Through Chichico, I was doing a lot of childcare in Albany Park. I sort of had an understanding that Albany Park is a hub for organizing in the city. I got acquainted with the free store through Carina, from the free store, who is also in Chichico. I was drawn to it since 3rd spaces are so important. You can see it actively welcoming every member of society. There are always kids running around during open hours. There is every demographic you can think of coming through the space, and it's not just to take advantage of the resources that it offers. It's because they're comfortable there. One of the major downfalls of capitalism is that different people get separated out, we don't get the natural throughline that humanity's social structures were created on, where people get to interact with each other at different times in their lives.

R: What does it mean to you to be an organizer?

L: I think it means conceiving alternate systems of getting people's needs met, whether through political action, mutual aid, or whatever plethora of social resources that establish skill shares, free stores, what have you. Free of top-down systemic power structures, which can be really limiting in terms of connection and productivity. In reality, capitalism is not particularly productive. Productivity in an organizing sense is not just quantitatively how many people's material needs get met, but in a qualitative sense. How in-depth are your connections or in an emergency situation, would those connections survive? It means developing alternatives to the spaces that the state provides us, outside of school, outside of businesses, outside of government institutions.

Another wonderful thing about Chichico is the child ratio. Our ratio is one to three to provide better quality connections and caregive at a higher level. It forced me to reframe my understanding of what being a child caregiver is. Instead of being a matter of How can I keep as many children physically alive as possible, it's how can I provide this child with a qualitatively positive childhood?

R: What do you think the impact of that vision of childcare is in organizing?

L: When you think about it, the world that we're trying to reach for, is one where children are part of life, along for the ride with whatever the adults are doing. It's not just a lack of childcare, but a lack of place for children in organizing spaces. The way that we conceive of how you organize things is informed by the idea of sequestering adults into a room where they're going to figure shit out and get shit done. The rest of society is not often involved in that, whether it's children or elders or other people that are affected. Children are the lowest common denominator, so I think that, wherever children can be integrated into a space, it's probably an inclusive space, and if not, then you have a long way to go. In terms of organizing, no one brings a six-year-old to an organizing meeting to help inform the decision-making. What that would look like, who knows, but it would make it more fun, and simplify it a little bit, which would make it better for everybody. Kids also have ideas that turn everything on their heads. They can just blurt out whatever they think and a lot of the time it's more creative than you would have ever thought.

## LITTLEB, Leeches + life WITH Lucia

By ROSE AND ANDRES

A: I've always wrestled with how much space do we give children to participate? Because it's like, yes, to everything that you said. But, the hardwired brain goes, Oh, but they don't know nothing, right?

L: The thing is, is that collective decision making is something that comes naturally to humans. It's something that's broken out of us as we grow up. So, kids from a young age engage in collective decision making all the time, you can see it just watching them play. What I like the most about organizing with children is that they are much less tainted by power structures, full stop. They can follow their intuition to react a certain way when something happens.

### PART 2

A: I wanted to ask you about the list of disgusting animals that you're into. You said rats? You said roaches? You said, I love spiders.

L: Spiders. Okay.

All roaches are fine, if out of my apartment. I've gotten really interested in leeches recently. I saw this girl on Instagram that has pet leeches and she feeds them off herself. Apparently a lot of adult leeches only feed like twice a year and they don't take that much.

R: Didn't people use them for medicine at one point?

L: Yeah, like leaching your blood. And that's not totally fake. It's just not super real either.

R: What do you mean?

L: I mean, sometimes your blood is fucked up, you know? [Editor's note: This is not medical advice.]

A: That's literally me right now.

L: I would suspect that that's also true into adulthood, there are periods of acclimation. I really enjoy periods of radical change for kids. I think we're way too hard on middle schoolers. We give toddlers a lot of leeway for being chaotic. And once kids hit puberty or pre-puberty, we see them as sort of mini-adults because they look kind of like mini-adults. They are not forgiven for the amount of chaos that they need to progress through that period of time. In an ideal world, I think middle school should be primarily cooperative or personal projects, environmental upkeep and a little bit of group therapy. I don't think there should be any formal class programming for middle schoolers. They should be in a period of self-discovery and experimenting on how to handle social situations and get things done together.

R: What are the main issues students and children are facing right now?

L: I think the expectation of obedience. The point of school now is training children to be obedient. It forces children to adhere to a set of standards that the adults in their lives expect them to. It's really sad, but I think that a lot of times all I can do right now as an educator, is mitigate the fallout of that push for obedience.

A: How do you feel about the way that parenthood is both socially and structurally forced while also scrutinized?

L: I mean, there are a lot of aspects to that, right? Parents are policed largely based on their access to resources. For a while, I worked at a school with children that were deeply emotionally neglected, but their parents were so well off that they would never be interfered with by the state. While I've worked with kids in queer families who were struggling financially, whose parents were doing their absolute best with the resources that they had, but still did not have enough to care for those kids adequately. Without being provided with those resources, they were reported to the state, and subjected to carceral actions around their children. A lot of that comes from optics, which is ultimately one of the things that drives our society.

R and A: You're organizing across spaces, feels on the surface, disparate, but how do you see them intersecting?

L: That's a good question. The other organizing that I do is with Parks for All, which involves encampment support. It can feel very serious. And homelessness is very serious. Obviously, you have to communicate serious shit and talk about political policy that is impacting folks, but I think the way that my childcare work comes out in my organizing with Parks for All is that, I'm like, okay, cut the decorum. Let's really talk or like, let's get a little silly. I think that in organizing generally, it would be really helpful to combine informing people about statistics, standards and policies, while giving space where people are allowed to openly express themselves. That is the way that I'm enacting how I would one day include children but it's something I'm still in the process of working through more proactively.

### PART 3

R: What are the kids into these days?

L: Six, seven, six, seven. Actually, I don't know that much because I'm in school right now but I think kids are into what they're always into, which is creation. They love to create. That's an always, you know? It's forever.

R: What's your favorite age group?

Developmentally, toddlers and preteens are kind of the same thing, because they're in this period of quick development. Their feelings are off the wall and they don't know what to do and they're all of a sudden getting acclimated to certain sets of social roles.

R and A: Anything else that you want to share that we never got to?

L: I think just that, this is natural to people. What I'm saying about allowing children to be free, and allowing them to participate in society as equals, is something that is primarily accessible to us and has been sort of beaten out of us by capitalism, imperialism and colonialism. This isn't some new concept. This is something that plenty of indigenous communities and black communities are well familiarized with. That's a criticism of Montessori, for example. It's not a novel concept. It's not pedagogy. It's just what one does. All of these concepts feel a little bit silly to talk about because it's not new. It's just natural to humanity.

# THE CRUSHING WEIGHT OF HELPLESSNESS

BY ROSE AND ANDRES

As you can maybe tell from the title of this month's article, a dark shadow has fallen on our beloved community. While we want to convey the joys that come with building up a network of community support and camaraderie, sometimes we must sit with the pain that comes with crossing paths with the state and acknowledge the reality around us. We do not live in the world we want to see right now. Our project is building it. But right now we have to confront a painful truth.

They are killing us. In the first 500 days of this current administration, 52 people died in ICE custody, and there have been countless car crashes and violent abductions. It seems like every single day we read the news expecting another preventable cold-blooded murder at the hands of bloodthirsty federal agents. The defensive refrain rings out: the "agents were in fear for their lives," while video evidence shows the opposite, and they call for more. More death, more blood, more deportations. Their call is for ethnic cleansing.

And the reality is that there is nothing we can do about it.

In just June alone, it is estimated that over 43,000 people got detained. Republicans boast about it, dress up like their favorite Nazis from history, and make AI slop to make sure that we all know that the cruelty is the point. And we do. The state boasts about efficacy, while glossing over the pain they are causing to entire communities that will never fully recover from the fear of existing in a country that promised them freedom and prosperity. Families are split apart in the most brutal and degrading ways. Although, you would be shocked at how quickly you become numb to this system as you come face to face with it, over and over again.

While navigating this endless sea of bureaucracy and legal jargon, you are confronted with the mundanity of government buildings and processes. The weight of bureaucratic machinations presses up against you, and you feel impotent to change anything—only able to go along with it in order to see your friends again. As obvious as it may seem, the regularity is forced. This bureaucratic normalization, as it is now, months after the "blitz," is a show of force stronger than any propagandistic "caravan," rubber bullets, or tear gassing a children's Halloween parade. The state nurtures the perception that it is simply too big to beat, dictating processes to paper over the violence with filings, paperwork, to-do lists. But we have to hold in our minds what it looks like, what it means.

It looks like your best friend crying. It looks like sobbing on the way to an ICE detention facility in a flood and tornado warning. It looks like bringing snacks to a group hug in a government building cafeteria. It looks like a child screaming while the front desk clerk with the colored contacts smirks disdainfully, like she gets off on it. It looks like the oldest daughter silently crying, asking for her father.

And there is nothing that we can do about it.

We are approaching the halfway point of this current administration's term, and their ruthless campaign against the people who got lured into this country keeps ramping up. This time, neighborhoods are not being tear-gassed anymore, but the insidious nature of this silent escalation keeps hurting the thousands of kids who have had to see their parents being taken away.

And there is nothing that we are doing about it.

The most painful realization is that this is not a 'current administration' problem. It is a bipartisan effort built over the last 30-plus years that has apexed to its current form. For those unaffected, the pleasant systematized procedure felt more palatable before. But if we cannot fix the internal selfishness that allows the hatred for immigrants to fester, this cycle will repeat itself over and over again. Sadly, as fascism rises all throughout the world, we will see this over and over again, endlessly.

And there is nothing I can do about it.



## Bird breath by Anna Q

An exhale takes form and flight on this cold winter morning  
The glistening wings of mist turn iridescent  
Reflecting the light of the rising sun

Can you believe it?  
I am alive

## WORD SEARCH

1. UMA
2. ELLA
3. OIL
4. MIELE
5. JIFFY
6. FROG
7. POTATO
8. FUCK
9. ICE

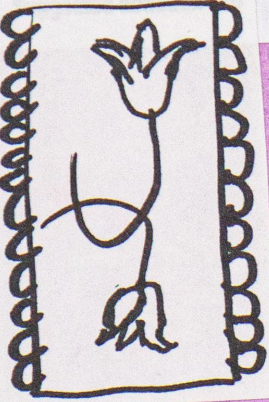
F O Y V N T B R D Y  
Z W X F P S A K A P  
E L D Q F V J N C O  
U M A E M I H L X T  
B P K S C U J I R A  
G O W A M I E L E T  
F P S C W Z Q J L O  
T R H X V O I L L R  
K V O N F U C K A P  
R Z Q G L X V B E H

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: The Public/Private Distinction

State agents are not permitted to search you or your private property, without consent or a warrant signed by a criminal law judge. However, they are allowed to freely enter spaces that are regularly held open to the public for use, for example a bar or a restaurant. They cannot freely enter spaces that are private areas within those public spaces that are not open for public use such as a break room or a back kitchen. Therefore, it is important to clearly and explicitly identify those areas where the public, and thus state agents, cannot access. Hang signs saying "Private" or "Employees Only." Make sure your employees know their rights and the specified private areas, to better enforce your right to privacy.

## Classifieds

Figure Drawing Collective (Ages 18+)  
Grotesque Burlesque  
4201 N Ravenswood Unit A105  
Wednesdays 7:30-10pm at Hidden Light Tattoo



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## UMA'S MONTHLY

Looking for Newsletter submissions! (:

Email your beautiful doodles or pictures of Uma herself, poems, thoughts, feelings, missed connections, word games! Anything you want to see in next month's newsletter submit here!!!

<https://forms.gle/8pG6wjLvP6ttuLaM6> or email APmutualaid@gmail.com



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To Potato:  
You are the cutest dog I have ever met.  
Please come back and visit.  
We love you.