

## PRAYER FOR HEALING

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*Friday May 23, 2014. University of California, Santa Barbara. Attended a three-hour-long talk on historical trauma, led by Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart.*

That afternoon I went to work at a café

Couldn't really focus

Listened to music

Did some mindless work

Responded to emails, maybe

I started feeling pain

on the left side of my stomach

then on the right side too

I ignored it and kept working

Got up and the pain grew as I walked

I started to worry

What is this pain?

It's Friday evening

I can't go to student health

I don't want to go to the ER

It's too expensive

I got home and started making dinner

My friend texted me:

“Hey u ok? Drive by shooting in IV just now ”  
“What?! I’m home, I’m safe”

I took a look on Facebook  
Numerous posts warning  
People to stay inside,  
There was a shooting  
No warning text or email from the university yet

My desensitized mind thought  
“It’s probably another ‘IV crime’<sup>1</sup>  
. . . how unfortunate”

More Facebook posts and articles  
Four dead bodies,  
Several more wounded  
This was not “just another crime in IV”

The pain on the side of  
my stomach became stronger  
I couldn’t stand anymore  
I had to sit down

I remembered the following morning was the  
Womyn of Color conference,  
organized by undergraduate students at UCSB  
Three friends and colleagues and I were  
facilitating a workshop that day on healing

There were now seven dead bodies,  
including the killer  
And thirteen wounded  
An entire community traumatized

A tear or two rolled down my cheek  
when in one of those articles I read  
a comment from a student describing how  
they saw the shooting from their balcony

The day of the conference  
I drove to campus  
The day was grey and I felt fear

The pain on the side of my stomach was still there  
But I couldn't feel it as much anymore

I was going numb  
I was feeling slow  
Not able to react  
Zoned out  
I felt my emotions stuck in my skin  
Unable to come out and manifest themselves  
I was not in Isla Vista when it happened  
I don't live in Isla Vista  
I don't know any of the people who  
died or who were injured  
Yet, the shock was real  
I suppose that's what triggering events do

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I could feel it in all of my body  
The tension, the fear, the anger

My stomach was in less pain  
I don't know if I went completely numb  
If the pain went away  
If it was trying to tell me something  
If it was trying to tell me that  
something painful was about to happen and happening  
I will never know

I pray for everyone's healing  
I pray that we are able to grieve and mourn  
I pray for those who are no longer with us  
for those who are healing at the hospital  
for those who lost their friends and family members  
for the immigrant families who became  
invisibilized once again in these tragic events  
and who have to re-live trauma every time a tragedy happens in IV

I pray to my ancestors. I pray.

<sup>1</sup> IV: Isla Vista. IV is a community right next to the University of California, Santa Barbara, where most undergraduate students live. Many immigrant families live there too.