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# ARTIFACT #2

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## DOCUMENTARY READING: A SCATTERING

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### Process

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This artifact is both creative and ambient. Unlike Artifact #1, it does not ask you to engage with the poetry through quantitative or analytical lenses. Instead, it asks you to take seriously the process of engaging with difficult questions in intimate ways. My argument is that this kind of engagement with *Schizophrene* is no less critical or revealing. In some ways, you will be recreating the ephemeral movements of Kapil's book, engaging with her formal dispersals. I expect you to treat this creative-critical process with respect. Like *Schizophrene*, this artifact traces a series of losses and entanglements. Ideas of ritual, loss, tradition, belonging, and place will be central to this work.

### Final Artifact

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Use a free website building site like Google Sites, Wix, or Weebly to construct the final artifact. Format the sections of the artifact similar to a blog and use basic design features to make a simple, engaging multimodal site. Mark each entry with its title and date. Submit the website URL to Canvas by 7/5 @ 11:59pm.

### Project Description

Students will work individually to create a photo-textual documentary—essentially a series of blog posts—that traces the act of reading and thinking through Bhanu Kapil's *Schizophrene*. As we discussed in our group meetings, *Schizophrene* is a kind of record of an impossible book, another book that could not or would not exist. In this sense, *Schizophrene* is a trace, a ghost. Facing the diasporic conditions generated by the 1947 Partition, the book confronts how postcolonialism, sexual violence, mental health, economics, spirituality, family, war, nationality, and gender are intertwined on both individual and cultural levels. These are some of the most challenging conditions of human life and help us to understand the gaps and fragments in *Schizophrene*. It's as if the book is appearing through a gauze. Formally, it reflects the tensions of communication in the aftermath of trauma—particular images linger and resurface, omissions and gaps emerge in narratives, there are simultaneous excesses and erasures. Nothing about the book is easy, which is why we'll linger in it this week in Artifact #2. "Documentary Reading: A Scattering" asks you to respond to five prompts with five accompanying photographs—one per day from June 30 to July 4.

Read the "Process" section on the left and then find the prompts on the following page. Below are two pictures of past students' engagements with *Schizophrene*.



## Prompts for Artifact #2

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*Note: There are five (5) prompts below. Each one requires you to take or find an accompanying photograph. The instructions for how to take or identify these photographs are in italics in each prompt. The first prompt is timed. For all other prompts, write at least 400 words each. Based on the prompts, some entries will naturally be longer than others. There are no upper word limits.*

### Tuesday June 30: **Letting Go**

On a piece of paper, write a letter to someone. You are not going to send or share this letter with the person you are writing to (unless you later decide to do so on your own). I will not read the content of this letter. How you chose the person you write to is up to you—I only ask that it be meaningful to you. In this letter, tell this person a secret. Share something with them. Confide. Let go. It can be “big” or “small.” You are allowed to do this in any way that is most comfortable—directly, indirectly, symbolically, allegorically. Do this in any way that allows you to share what you want to share.

When you’ve finished writing the letter, fold the piece of paper into a small square. Now go outside and hide or bury the letter in the ground. You are recreating Kapil throwing the notebook into the garden. You will leave the letter where you have obscured or buried it until Saturday when you will retrieve it. *Take a picture of the place where the letter is hidden or buried to include in your final artifact.* Now write for 10 minutes about a memory of “letting go.” This can be about a place, a person, a time, a future, or now. What you write will be the text of your first entry for Artifact #2.

### Wednesday July 1: **On Dirt and Place**

Write about a memory you have related to dirt, to earth. The memory does not have to be “important” or “profound.” Many of the things we remember are incidental, ordinary, but this is also what makes them extraordinary—that they remain in us and keep their shape. Whatever the memory is about, focus on describing the dirt in a very detailed way. What was this place? Like Kapil, use descriptive language to create vivid images but also allow space into your writing. In other words, you don’t always have to connect the dots. *If you have a picture that somehow corresponds to this place or memory, include that picture in the final artifact. If you don’t have a corresponding picture, use Google Maps or Google Street View to access an image—however strangely—of this place. Be creative.*

### Thursday July 2: **Belonging/Disbelonging**

Write about an experience of belonging or disbelonging. It could involve you, a group, or community that you are or have been a part of. What does/did it mean to belong or not belong? What are the implications of your belonging/disbelonging? *In the final artifact, include or take a picture that in some way corresponds to the subject of this prompt. Be creative.*

### Friday July 3: **Being Against**

Write about a tradition in your family, community, or other spaces of belonging. Describe the tradition and its material conditions—the actions, purpose, dress, color, tone. Allow the reader to see it happening. What is celebratory or joyful about this tradition? Then write about a tradition in your family, community, etc. that you

are against. What does it mean, in this instance, to be against? Is there also joy in being against? *In the final artifact, include or take a picture that in some corresponds to these ideas about tradition. Be creative.*

#### Saturday July 4: **What is a Ritual?**

This week's writing prompts have been a series of rituals to re-encounter that ideas that animate the background of *Schizophrene*. The final step is to return to the letter you hid/buried on Tuesday. *Take a picture of the now unhidden/unburied letter to include in the final artifact. Take the picture in such a way that the text of the letter is illegible.* Write about the changes to the letter from its over 72 hours outside. What does it look like, feel like, as a material object? What's happened to the words and what you wrote? While the letter was gone, did you think about it?

Final questions: After this week's processes and with the immediate retrieval of your letter in mind, how has your idea of ritual been altered? What is a ritual, to you, now? What is a ritual a recognition of? What have these rituals exposed you to about yourself, your thinking, your feeling? How have these rituals allowed you, potentially, to think differently about your self?