

AMBER

1500mm D

Acrylic, ink, spray paint on canvas
2018

Amber and I knew each other in Shanghai. I have since followed her Parental Leave fight with the US government since losing her 3 month old son. It was his first day at daycare. Amber didn't want to go back to work so soon, but with rising living costs and no government support, Amber had no choice. The United States is one of two countries in the world that do not have paid parental leave.



WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

Vancouver, BC, Canada

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

New York City

WHERE IS HOME?

Brooklyn

WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE ON EARTH?

So many! Hmm. Tie between London and Salt Spring Island, BC

WHAT LANGUAGES DO YOU SPEAK?

Mandarin, English

WHAT ARE YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS?

Something magical out there, not sure what

WHO IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON/PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE?

My daughter Sevi and my son Karl

HOW DO YOU FEEL TODAY?

I feel good! It's 70 degrees suddenly in February, that helps.

WHAT ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH IN LIFE AT THE MOMENT?

I miss my son, I have two kids but one is missing from the world

WHAT IS THE WORST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU IN YOUR LIFE?

My son, Karl, dying the first day I left him with someone.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST FEAR?

Losing another child.

WHAT ARE YOU CELEBRATING AT THE MOMENT? WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR?

I am celebrating every day I have with Karl's sister, Sevi. I am grateful that I was able to have her, even though it doesn't make losing Karl any easier. I'm also grateful for each day I am alive; for nature, for beauty, for having a free mind to think about and ponder things.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR?

I hope that I have a long life with a happy family.

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST MOMENT?

I think becoming an activist for paid family leave in the US was a satisfying moment for me, when so many people responded to Karl's story, and I was able to help Karl live on in the world through telling people about his story.

Also, I left a really highly-controlled, apocalyptic religion in my 30s, and though at the time it was very difficult and the surrounding circumstances very turmoil-filled (I was being shunned by friends and family, and had to deprogram from my indoctrination), at some point along the way, years later, when I had rebuilt a life for myself, I had a moment or two where I felt proud of getting out with my "self" intact. For being able to relearn how to live and be a person participating in society, and enjoying it.

WHAT ARE YOU SCARED OF PEOPLE KNOWING ABOUT YOU?

The devastation that is inside me, that my son does not get to live his life. How much all of your problems seem frivolous compared to losing my child. Yet, I have to swallow it and try to care.

WHAT IS YOUR SUPERPOWER?

I never, ever give up.

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE ON EARTH?

To find the ways that I can make the world a good place, even if it is just for one or two people around me. I really think that given that there are so many of us, if each of us can even make a small dent of good, the planet will be a better place.

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

Paid family leave, activism, writing, being a person of good character.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SHARE? A STORY? A CONCERN? ADVICE?

Maybe some advice that I would have given to my former self. Had I known this, I would have enjoyed things more, even in stressful times. And that is that things that you are finding difficult or unsolvable will change, in time. You may not see how they will work out at a given point, but if you do not give up, and just keep taking steps forward, you will find a way through difficulties. There was much wisdom I learned during the many years I lived in China, one of which was this Chinese proverb, from the Dao De Jing: A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

