

# november 20

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CW: Mental and Physical Health, Suicide, and Medical Transition

Photo by [Kyrie kim](#) / [Unsplash](#)

by [Erica Rivera](#)

november 20 is the day my father dies. november 20 is the day i grieve.  
november 20 is the day i first taste pomegranate: its shell, its juice. its brittle  
seeds. november 20 is the day i eat shit falling off the curb of a complex that

didn't want us enough, my blood on the concrete the color of fruit. the living room in which my parents sleep so i can have the bedroom to myself. where i ask them one night to kill me in my sleep, which my parents claim not to remember, when i remind them about it at too old an age. november 20 is the day i take matters into my own hands. november 20 is the day i kill myself. november 20 is the day i kill myself again. november 20 is the day i kill myself a third time; if at first you don't succeed, you probably will the second time, and if you don't succeed the second time, you probably never will. november 20 is the day i take my psych meds. november 20 is the day i stop. november 20 is the day i begin to pray, to all the people who helped me survive. november 20 is the day i stop praying at all. the list got too long, too cluttered by names i was no longer sure of—had they kept me alive, had they almost killed me. the difference is the difference between night and day: gradated, blurry, certain only to a fool. november 20 is the day i begin to transition. november 20 is the day i give everything up. november 20 is the day i come out to my partner. november 20 is the day i choose my name. november 20 is the day i first put on makeup. november 20 is the day i learn estrogen's wail. three pill bottles before me, triangle formation. one pill in the center of each of the lids, taken in order, left to right. what a western tradition. what a silly compulsion. so november 20, instead, is the day that i flew. november 20, instead, is the first day of school. november 20 is the day i wish i'd stopped going. november 20 is the day of my birthday, or the day before, or the day after. november 20 is the day that i die. november 20 is an attempted bettering of the self. november 20 is november 1. november 20 is new year's day. november 20 is christmas eve. november 20 is a tuesday, then a thursday, then a sunday afternoon. november 20 is may 6. november 20 is june 3 and june 4. november 20 is september 11. november 20 is judgement day. november 20 is the day the bombs fall. november 20 is the day of the earthquake. november 20 is the book of genesis. november 20 is two centuries old. november 20 is a lie told by a gun. november 20 is the day they invented the word: the first day of the last day of the rest of our lives. november 20 is the day my breasts begin to swell. we measure breast size in

cups, and mine are the size of my small palm, curved like the crescent of a moon. held flesh in my hands like softened clay. november 20 is a joke. november 20 is the punchline. november 20 isn't real, but this and you and maybe i are. november 20 can be the day you were born if you want, or the day you die if you prefer. both, if you're greedy—if you want more than the raw deal history offers. november 20 is what my identity's become, but that's okay because i'm all right-now, all present, like the place in which the narrator of your story resides. november 20 is the day we move in. november 20 is the day we'll move out. november 20 is the trailhead for a forest of plenty. november 20 is where you meet the love of your life. it's where i met mine. it's when i met mine. "when" and "where" are the same word, which should have been the first sign that letters and numbers are not what they seem. november 20 is the day i hear the song of the midnight owl, and when it finally finished singing, we could see that it was dawn on november 21.

Erica Rivera (she/her) is co-editor for *Art, Strike!*, an online art/literary publication unique for paying collaborators what they ask for out of a shared fund-pool. Her work appears in or is forthcoming from *beestung*, *Sophon Lit*, *en\*gendered*, *manywor(l)ds*, and *The Emerson Review*. For fun, she likes to watch TV and pretend all the characters are trans.