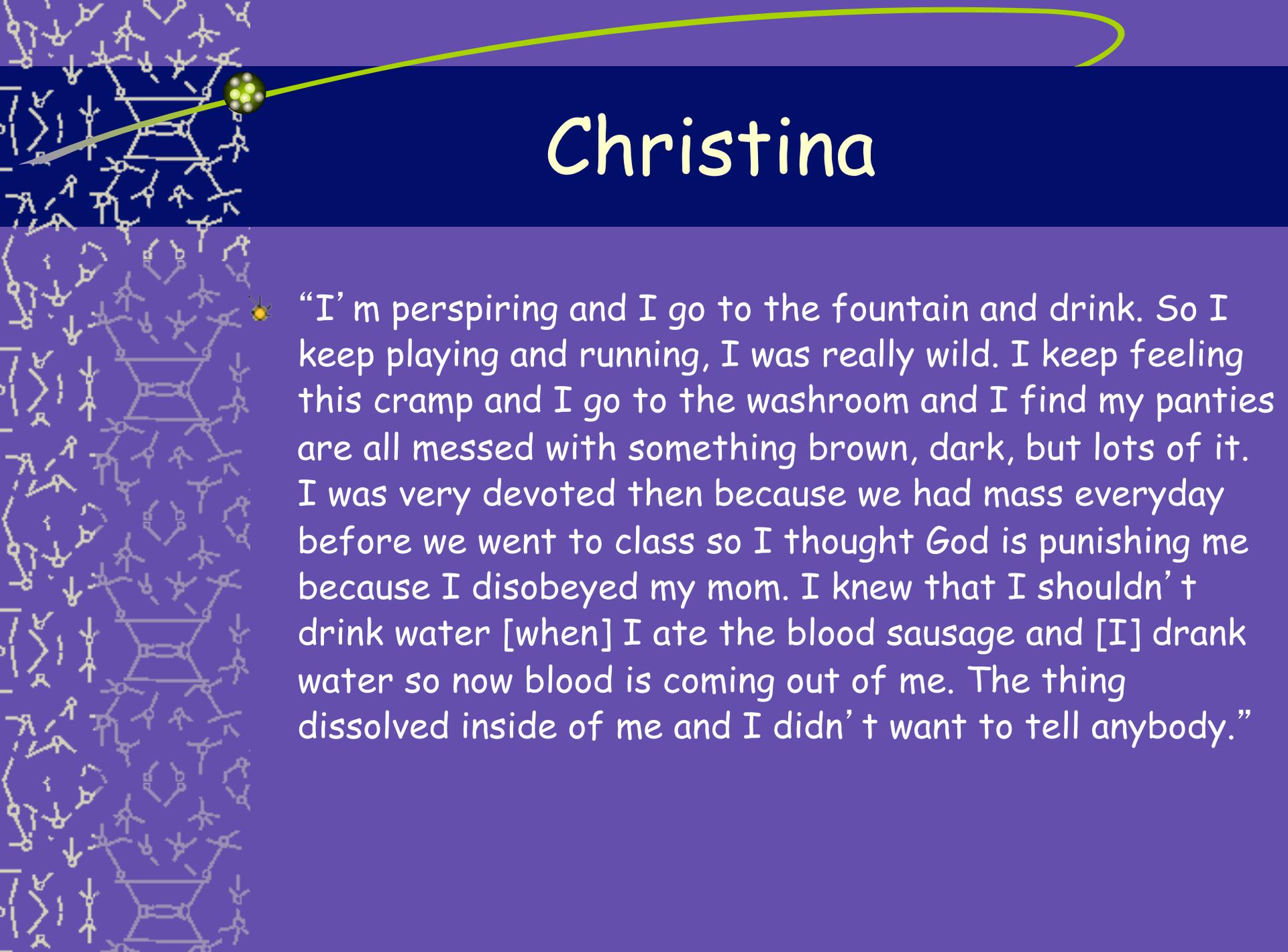




Menarche and Menopause: Transnational & Trans-Generational Journeys

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Christina

“I’ m perspiring and I go to the fountain and drink. So I keep playing and running, I was really wild. I keep feeling this cramp and I go to the washroom and I find my panties are all messed with something brown, dark, but lots of it. I was very devoted then because we had mass everyday before we went to class so I thought God is punishing me because I disobeyed my mom. I knew that I shouldn’ t drink water [when] I ate the blood sausage and [I] drank water so now blood is coming out of me. The thing dissolved inside of me and I didn’ t want to tell anybody.”



Introduction

- 🐛 Somali, Chilean and Chinese Canadian migrant women
 - Impact of immigration on menopause and aging
 - 33 life stories, 11 from each community
- 🐛 Body as site of being in the world
- 🐛 Inscription and agency

Menstruation in Chile

- Menstruation hidden, shameful
 - Menarche generally a surprise
- Luz:

“Everything was so private, even menstruation, nobody talks about it. Everything is so hidden from the youth, from the girls, about anything sexual related.”
- Don't go near boys!
- Alienation of self, shame of out of control, messy bodies

Menopause in Chile

- ☀ Menopausal mystery

- ☀ Marta:

“Everything is so secretive around young people; they don’t talk about menopause. So what you hear sometimes is just whispering. From my mother, I never hear anything.”

- ☀ Women at 50 considered decaying, asexual



Crossing Boundaries

- Migration: *Greater latitude or rigidity?*

- Budgeon (2002:50):

“Bodies then can be thought not as objects, upon which culture writes meanings, but as events that are continually in the process of becoming-as multiplicities that are never just found but are made and remade.”



Menstrual & Menopausal Musings in Canada

- Menstruation
 - An illness?
- Myriad products for leaky bodies
- Medicalization and menopause
- Reductionist view of culture



Marta

- 💡 “We have to support her when she has the period. . . I don’t want her to have this pain. I want our daughter to be proud of herself as a woman. So has soon as she has her period, we have to support her and teach her how much blood will come out and how we have to act and it’s not an illness . . . So the first day she got the period, she came to me and said “Mom, I’m bleeding.” I hug her and told her, “Oh I am so proud of you. Oh, it’s so great.” Then I told Jorge and Jorge went and hugged her too and she still remembers. She said, “I felt so great the way my father talked to me, the way he said, ‘Oh congratulations Lilly, you are a woman now and I am so proud of you’ .”



Menopause among Chilean Canadian Women

- Amplifying whisperings
- Common topic of conversation
- Symptoms read through context of lives
- Women not old or decrepit
- Christina “We’ re perfect, we’ re beautiful, we’ re everything.”



Transnational & Trans-Generational Journeys

- ✿ Making sense of the body
- ✿ Migration and competing discourses
- ✿ Public talk and commodification
- ✿ Bodily dissent
- ✿ Situating complaints in the context of immigrant lives and undermining messages of shame