



Diamond Stingily:
Doing the Best I Can

I am at home in my bedroom.
I think about my childhood home.
Regardless of whether the dream is good
or bad I am there.

My parents changed the carpet twice.
I remember dark colors.
There was a fireplace, big screen TV. At
one point we had a fish tank. Eventually
we got a wooden desk for the family's
computer. A large glass door led into the
backyard, and in the corner were the
children's trophies.

I pretended to be upset when my team lost
a volleyball game.



I never cared too much about winning
when I knew it was just a game.
We were all underdogs but some of us
were more under than the others.

Where was our validation?

All the experiences were explicit and
uniformed.

Even if I forget what happened someone
remembers.

Some people are better than others?
Everyone is good at something?
Luck?

Hard work.
Am I a hard worker?
What makes a hard worker?
Sweat?
Is it sweat that makes a hard worker?
Does sweat show that I am giving it all I
got?
People are so dramatic during hell week.
I wish we could've taken a different
approach to the pain we were
experiencing.
It's the older girls' duty to push the
younger girls when they want to give up.
They want to give up because they've
never experienced the pain they
volunteered for.

Even if the older girl is tired it looks regal, responsible, and stoic to push the younger ones.

They cry. Some vomit.

Some of the younger girls decide it's not for them.

Others have nothing else.

We all want to be a part of something.

Everyone wants some form of validation.

We have to be up early to do it all over again.

Why does a person still feel lonely if they are a part of something?

I am an animal.



All I want to do is win, eat, sleep, and shit.

Aggression is animal. It's natural, organic, and free.

Controlled chaos like my bedroom.

And I love it because we all do.

It's not like how it is on TV.

You have to see it in person.

In a stadium on a field.

I can hear grown men yell

"Come on you, pussy!"

"Do better tomorrow and get them back next time."

Disgusted that they lost they are no longer my favorite team.

It's a science.

It's a fandom.

The baby is born, and we're trying to see what she will be good at.

I have a relative who plays soccer.

They didn't have those type of sports in my neighborhood but we wanted them too.

It looked expensive.

I got older and found out it's an international sport.

My cousin's sister had a crush on a hockey player. I've never been to a hockey game but I like the jerseys.

If it pushes the physical body, it's a sport. "If you do it again again with effort, it is a sport," the little boy said. He finishes his hot dog. He walks to an empty wrestling mat. He wrestles with himself. I was the little girl underneath the bleachers at my brothers' tournaments.



Sometimes I would make a friend. America is rural, and there's not much to do in most towns but play these sports and hope they get you somewhere, anywhere but where you're at.

I twisted my ankle a few times and started to wear ankle bracelets.

I can't slap a ball like I used to, and I don't know if I can get it back.

They all listen to baseball on the radio, all the details explicit with fun facts about each player.

At breakfast with my dad in my early 20s I asked him how he knows a player is a good player. I forget his answer, but I remember he put his paper down and thought about it. He responded, and we talked about baseball. We talked about the Olympics, and I told him I liked it. Some sports I've only seen on TV. "Where they do that at?" I have asked that a few times.

Not every player gets to play. I asked my dad about that, and he shrugged his shoulders.

It's true.
Not every player gets to play.
It's like what my friend said when I
stopped playing sports.
I decided I was a writer.
I didn't know what I was doing and maybe
I was scared.
I wasn't practicing like I should've been.
I wasn't working.
My friend had more discipline than me.
She probably will always, and it's
important to have people like that in your
life.
They push you to work harder.
They make you feel lazy.
It's good to rest.



It's important to not die.
I hate how the body can betray a person.

Everything in our city is grey, it's the
orange street lights.
"Some of us aren't going to make it and
that's okay."
I want to show her all the stretches I did
when I threw shot put.

I remember my father told me I could've
been a great basketball player when I was
in high school if I started when I was four
like he wanted me to.
I got hit in the face with a basketball when
I was toddler.

We practiced karate.
My brothers were better at it than I was.
They competed in competition.
I can't remember if any of them placed.
I was too timid to fight in front of people.

I played softball.
I was the catcher.
I loved my position.
I was good at staying low, and I didn't
mind wearing the equipment.
I wasn't afraid of getting hit.
People can get the words wrong, but the
actions are explicit.

Moments like this go down in history
even if no one saw.

We'll cry when it's over, but right now
we're animals.

We'll give it our all even if we're going to
lose.

You love us. We remind you of when you
were young.

Documentaries of old men discussing
what they once were.

Jawlines are sharp. The eyes are still the
same but I'm tired.



I could be a shy child.
What was in it for me to be outgoing?

I hated being a cheerleader.
I became co-captain.
I wasn't the best cheerleader, but the
adults viewed me as someone who was a
leader.
My title didn't entitle much.

I wanted to belong to something other
than myself.
A family of athletes.
Eventually I had to belong to a team.
The teams weren't like the movies.
We didn't have much funding either.

I hated high school.
Scouting started before that.

It happened for my brothers and my sister.

I wanted to belong to something like the
boys belonged.

My grandma played basketball when she
was in high school.
I remember she played basketball with us
outside a few times.
She won't throw away the basketball
hoop she bought for the children when we
moved in with her.
It was something to do.

Sports are something to do, but at the same time they're much more.

Maybe I realized not everyone could be a star when I played a sport, and that's okay. I found what I was good at, and I played my part.

Winning was never a big deal to me. I pretended to be upset after a volleyball game but it was pointless. It is true that how much effort you put into practice will affect how you perform in the game. I don't think I gave it my all in practice. It depended on circumstances.



I am competitive.

I don't think I was a sore loser. Once I pretended to throw a fit after a volleyball game. Other people were upset, and I felt like I didn't want to be left out. My attitude wasn't vengeful. I played a sport to be a part of something. I also played sports for potential scholarships. I was never told by my parents I wouldn't be able to play a sport if my grades were terrible. I never got bad grades.

The girls on my basketball team were older than I was. One of the girls busted my lip on the court. I cried, and the school trainer took me into the bathroom to clean it off. He made me uncomfortable because I thought he was attractive. I laughed and the more I laughed the more blood came out of my lip. He laughed too. I watched a few soccer games in high school. The girls on the field were aggressive and tried to fight the opposing team. My dad played basketball in college.

He enrolled us in karate at a young age to teach us discipline, self-control, and self-defense.

I imitated the female characters in the video games my brothers played.

I got into my first fist fight.

It was never what it was like in the movies.

I don't think I ever had a heart-to-heart, or I can't remember.

It could be darker than that.

"To learn to operate with other people."

There are such things as favorites.

—Diamond Stingily, 2019



Diamond Stingily: Doing the Best I Can is on view at CCA Wattis Institute from January 15 to March 30, 2019.

Diamond Stingily (b. 1990, Chicago, IL) lives and works in New York. Her recent solo exhibitions include ICA Miami (2018), Freedman Fitzpatrick in Paris (2018), Ramiken Crucible Gallery in New York (2016) and in Los Angeles (2017), and Queer Thoughts Gallery in New York (2015). Her work has also been featured in recent major exhibitions such as the 2018 Triennial: *Songs for Sabotage* as well as *Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon* (2017), both at the New Museum in New York.

Diamond Stingily: Doing the Best I Can is curated by Anthony Huberman and organized by Leila Grothe. The exhibition is made possible thanks to generous support from the Harpo Foundation and the Westridge Foundation, as well as the Wattis Institute's Leadership Circle and Curator's Forum.

The CCA Wattis Institute program is generously supported by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and San Francisco Grants for the Arts; by Wattis Leadership Circle contributors Penny & James Coulter, Jonathan Gans & Abigail Turin, Gina & Stuart Peterson, Daniel & Manizeh Rimer, Steven Volpe, and the Westridge Foundation; and by CCA Wattis Institute's Curator's Forum. Phyllis C. Wattis was the generous founding patron.

