

The Capilano Review



everything I could bring is
under my skin

—*Afuwa*

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5

Editor's Note

6

Christopher Tubbs

CUSTOMS DECLARATION TO A
WHITE EMPIRE

7

Andrea Abi-Karam

I GOT LOST / I GOT DELETED

13

Ambient Asian Space

Season 3 Episode 5: The Emperor's
Karaoke Lounge

16

Shane Book

Four Poems

20

Jamil Jan Kochai

Two Poems

22

Ya-Wen Ho

Two Poems

25

sidony o'neal

is this the sea?

28

Lee Lai

dreams about surgery

36

Bug Cru

Two Illustrations

38

Raymond de Borja

Two Poems

42

Gwen Benaway

Three Poems

46

Afuwa and Dion Kaszas

stitching back the land

55

Eli Howey

Waking Gates

61

Jennie Duguay

I Pray to the River

62

Christopher Tubbs

WHITE LIGHTNING AND THE
BROOM OF DANGER

70

Kai Rajala

Colliding

71

Natasha Gauthier

Blood Moon

77

Juliane Okot Bitek

UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS DO
BLACK POETS WRITE

85

Jennif(f)er Tamayo

[WHAT IF EVERY MOVE YOU MADE
COULD HEAL YOU]

86

José Vadi

Two Poems

89

Stacey Ho

Green House

101

Caroline Szpak

Grandfathers of Bogatynia

102

Kai Cheng Thom

what i'd really like

107

see to see —

Carmen Faye Mathes

Review of Jordan Scott's *Night & Ox*

Cam Scott

Review of Aja Couchois Duncan's
Restless Continent

Samantha Nock

Review of *IRL*

111

Contributors

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Editor's Note

The Capilano Review 3.30 called itself a "burning house" issue. Less than six months later, for every house still on fire, there's someone who's never been inside it parked out front fanning the flames. From Dana Schutz's painting of Emmett Till to the recent opening of the transmisogynistic and sex worker-phobic Vancouver Women's Library, white liberals continue to hoard power and space while posturing as progressive. If part of the violence of the fire is in its design — its devotion to borders that both impose and collapse difference — then any true alternative should probably recognize (and then smash) those lines, not conflate them.

My approach to this issue was to seek out work that responds to various conflagrations, with attention to plurality, because the difference between reifying lines and interrupting them can be pretty subtle. As I nervously wrote to one contributor, "I want to do my best to bust it up a little." Which is to say that I hope the diverse voices in this issue threaten some of the structures that group them together in the first place (including boring, institutional models of "diversity"!). As Dion Kaszas and Afuwa generously demonstrate, colonial demarcations are never invulnerable to rupture. Their project reminds us that possibility is material and embodied; that freedom may appear swaddled by violence, but relationships between bodies and land (or bodies and bodies) can and do disrupt oppressive formations: "Through the stitching together we are breaking those lines up." From Jennif(f)er Tamayo's haptic guide to healing in and out of white supremacy to Gwen Benaway's cascading topography of a self too "unfinished" to bear containment, these pages are full of bodies reclaiming their own hinterlands. Here are modes of being that exceed trespass, where temporalities are shaped by lived experience and desire is never uncomplicated.

More than ever, I believe that offering solidarity while remaining invested in respectability is both disingenuous and useless, akin to politely asking fires to put themselves out. I hope this issue speaks to people who are interested in being good friends and good enemies, and never one without the other.

— *listen chen*

CUSTOMS DECLARATION TO A WHITE EMPIRE

Christopher Tubbs

The traveller declares that his name is as dangerous as the river in winter.

The traveller declares that his home address is unpronounceable to most missionaries.

The traveller arrives by air, in the red mists of dread sacrifice; by rail, with the nameless sons of seven generations at his heels; by marine, in a war canoe decked against the flatteries of the champagne socialist; and by highway, trailing tears and stumbling over murdered women.

The traveller declares that the purpose of his trip is “Personal.”

The traveller arrives from another country and another time, yet also from this country and from this time, and insists that he be recognized at home.

The traveller declares he cannot free himself from duty.

The traveller further declares that he bears the following goods: One (1) fragrant cedar cloak, rose-gold as the dawn, living and austere. Two (2) adzes in jade, terrible and strange, worn with purposeful use. Three (3) planks of pine, sap-stained, punctured, jeweled, richly frosted in otter’s teeth and fire-blackened bone. Four (4) blankets, imported and diseased, one sewn into wrappings for a child and another clawed in fear. Five (5) treaty drafts, four unsigned, the fifth edited in treachery and re-notarized by a respected gentleman of leisure at Ottawa. Six (6) memories of mother’s glance falling absently on the reflection of the shadow of the great tree, saying, “We’ll talk about the reservation when you’re older.” Seven (7) stillborn half-breed cousins made fertilizer to a schoolyard garden, buried there by a stern father’s command and a trowel.

The traveller certifies that his declaration is true, but cannot be complete; memory flows off the table’s edge from an over-filled cup and is lost in Christian soil.

I GOT LOST / I GOT DELETED

Andrea Abi-Karam

response to Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta

I GOT LOST / I GOT DELETED

like carve a w/whole into the wall
rub against the surface — speak my
name
out loud every time you apply more ink to your palm
i am in the red in the bucket
i am in the red on your palm
i am in the red pasted against the face of the wall

There

Is

A

Devil

Inside

ME

THERE IS A DEATH THAT HAUNTS THESE STREETS

WALK AWAY BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

THERE IS A HAUNTING IN THE WAY

I RUB RED ON MY SKIN

THERE IS A HAUNTING IN THE WAY

I RUB RED ON THE INSIDE OF MY LEGS

THERE IS A HAUNTING ON THE INSIDE

I TRY TO EXTERIORIZE

THERE IS A THICKNESS IN RED

U CAN ONLY FEEL IF YOU TOUCH ME,

RED ON SKIN

THERE IS BOTH A CALMNESS & AN URGENCY
IN THE WAY I WANT TO COVER MY ENTIRE SELF
IN THIS WAY I LEAVE THE GREEN SCREEN PARTS BLANK

LIKE

*IF I BECOME UNCOVERED FROM THE RED
THE SPACE LEFT BLANK*

WILL

BE

DELETED

I RUB MESSAGES INTO THE WALL
I RUB MESSAGES INTO THE WALL B/C I KNOW SOMEDAY I
WILL BE DELETED
I RUB MESSAGES INTO THE WALL B/C I CAN FEEL HOW LOST I
AM &
I WANT TO REMEMBER HOW I GOT HERE

SHE

GOT

LOST/LOVE

SHE GOT LOVE

SHE GOT LOST

SHE GOT DELETED

I RUB MESSAGES INTO THE WALL
IN HOPES I CAN BE FOUND AGAIN
I RUB MESSAGES INTO THE WALL
IN HOPES I WILL BE UNCOVERED
I RUB MESSAGES INTO THE WALL

///////

IF I STARE LONG ENOUGH I PRAY I WON'T SEE A FIGURE
TAKE THE SUBJECT OUT OF THE FRAME
WHAT'S LEFT
AN EMPTY FRAME
OR A LOST SUBJECT
OR THE SMELL OF YOUR FRIEND'S SHINY BLACK HAIR

BURNING
TURNING INTO WISPS
MAYBE THIS IS NOT THE THING
BUT IT FEELS BETTER TO FEEL THAN TO NOT
SO TRAUMATIC RE-REMEMBERING
IS WHERE I'M HEADED WITH THIS

/////

THX ALIENATION/ANONYMITY FOR THE
PASSERBY

THX CROOKED SIDEWALK SQUARES FOR
CONTAINMENT

DON'T STOP

U GOTTA GET 2 WORK

NOTICING & NOT SEEING ARE
TWO DIFFERENT THINGS

/////

FORCING ITSELF OUT LIKE A SPIRIT
I WAIT FOR AN EXIT
I WAIT FOR RELIEF
THAT FAILS TO ARRIVE
I WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO NOTICE
I WAIT TO BE STAINED BY EXPERIENCE
BUT NEVER TIRED
I WAIT FOR THIS SHOCK TO STOP
I WAIT TO FEEL SOMETHING NEW LIKE
EXPERIENCING SOMETHING FOR THE FIRST TIME
BUT I KNOW I CANNOT BE REREMEMBERED
I KNOW THE BODY CANNOT
FORGET TRAUMA
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ACCESS IT
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET BACK
THERE & I KNOW I AM AFRAID 2

////

THE PARALLEL BETWEEN BODY & EARTH

I DIG A W/HOLE TO FEEL ENCLOSURE
I DIG A W/HOLE TO FIND CONTAINMENT FOR THE PARTS OF
MYSELF
DRIBBLING OUT OF THE BUILDING & ACROSS THE SIDEWALK
I DIG A W/HOLE TO FIND A DARKNESS
I CAN FALL ASLEEP WITHIN
I DIG A W/HOLE & THEN BLOW IT UP
SO THAT I MIGHT FIT ALL OF
MY PARTS INTO IT
EVEN THE STUFF DRIBBLING OUT ACROSS THE SIDEWALK
I NEED TO FIND
ALL OF MY PARTS
FIRST
BEFORE I KNOW IF I WILL FIT INTO IT
I DIG A W/HOLE IN THE SIDE OF A MOUNTAIN
BUT I CAN'T EVEN REACH IT
I DIG A W/HOLE IN THE GROUND IN THE SHAPE OF MYSELF
BUT I STILL CANNOT STUFF MYSELF INSIDE OF IT
I DIG A W/HOLE MAYBE BIG ENOUGH BUT WHEN I LEFT
TO GO LOOK FOR THE REST OF MY PARTS I COULD NOT
FIND MY WAY BACK TO IT
I FOUND THE TRAIL OF DIRT BACK TO THE W/HOLE
BUT I KEPT DROPPING MY PARTS ALONGSIDE IT
I SEE SMOKE & THINK I HAVE FOUND MY WAY BACK
BUT I STEP CLOSER & FIND MY OUTLINE HAS DISAPPEARED
& I AM LOSING MY PARTS FASTER & FASTER &
IT IS BECOMING HARDER & HARDER TO
REPLACE THEM
THE BROKEN PARTS OF MY OUTLINE SIT DOWN ON THE DIRT
HAPHAZARDLY & WAIT TO RECONNECT BACK INTO EACH
OTHER
I JUST HOPE THERE IS ENOUGH OF ME LEFT

////

oh you know, dig me out
so i might climb inside
so i can split apart my ribs
& lay down FLAT

what's beyond the screen / what's beyond the scene

THE INTERRUPTION VS BLOCKADE

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE DISRUPTION?

BEYOND THE FLASH POINT

WATER SNAKE

OIL SLICK

OIL SNAKE

WATER SLICK

SLICK SURFACE

CAN U EVEN STAND UP ANYMORE

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR LEGS?

WHERE DID U LEAVE THEM

IS IT TOO LATE

WHAT DISFIGUREMENT IS THIS

WHAT DISFIGUREMENT IS LEFT

MY FACE IS TWISTED BEHIND ME

BUT I'M STILL NOT LOOKING BACK

I'M TRYING TO SEE

WHAT'S LEFT

OF MY BODY

I'M TRYING TO SEE

ALL THAT'S LEFT OF MY BODY

HAS IT ALL TURNED TO SAND ALREADY?

I LOOK BACK I TRY TO SEE WHAT'S

LEFT OF ME

I LOOK BACK I TRY TO SEE WHAT'S

LEFT

I LOOK BACK I TRY TO SEE

HOW I FORGOT
I LOOK BACK I TRY TO SEE
WHAT I LEFT OUT
I LOOK BACK I TRY TO SEE
WHAT I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO KNOW

I LOOK UPON MY OWN DISFIGUREMENT
I LOOK UPON MY OWN DISFIGUREMENT
I LOOK UPON MY OWN DISFIGUREMENT
& HOPE OTHERS NOTICE IT TOO
I LOOK UPON MY OWN DISFIGUREMENT
& SUDDENLY REALIZE I AM BUILT OUT OF PARTS
I FOUND WHILE OUT DIGGING W/HOLES
THAT I WANTED TO FIT INTO
PARTS THAT I FOUND ON THE CITY SIDEWALK
TREES TOO BARE & DRY
SLUDGEY BEACH W/ SOFT SAND
BUILDING WALL
FULL LENGTH MIRROR
TRAIN YARD
CRACK IN THE EARTH
RAINY MOUNTAINS
DESERT DUST

I
HOPE
OTHERS
WILL
NOTICE
MY
DISFIGUREMENT
TOO

Season 3 Episode 5: The Emperor's Karaoke Lounge

Ambient Asian Space

Styrofoam (a.k.a. Sty) is karaoking quietly in the corner of the Emperor's Karaoke Lounge. "Oh, I wanna dance w/ somebody... I wanna feel the heat w/ somebody..." &, draping one striped-leggings leg around the mic stand, "oh, I wanna dance w/ somebody... w/ somebody who loves me."

They quietly Snapchat themselves during this last couplet, hashtagging it "EMOTIONS." The fanfish go wild in CyberAsia. "Is Sty-flo okay? *surprised kitty face emoji*" They check the AAS fanfish collector app & set out some drumsticks & sweet potatoes & a warm blanket.

Kimchi Hagrid (a.k.a. K-Grid) comes to visit, gleefully adjusting their mercow neck gear to make room for more swallowing. In between bites they daub the fur around their lips, catching any juicy overflow, & smile at the fanfish & their purple Casios. Flowerboi AAS Collector sure is popular!

K-Grid surveys the view from their window table, meeting Sty's eyes as they queue up the next karaoke tune. "You go grl!" K-Grid hollers, abandoning cityboi chic etiquette for the familiar habits of their mountain grl moonshine.

Lazy Senpai turns around & swallows, *hard*, almost choking on the egg they're eating in their egg chair. WHO IS THAT? Thoughts of Daddy Emperor momentarily disappear behind some clouds. They nervously run their hands thru greasy hair, trying to tease out some flirty texture. Should they karaoke something so K-Grid will notice them?

"WHO'S NEXT?!" shouts Sty, & Lazy Senpai jumps. "Looks like it's you, Lazy," says Sty, "& lookee here, I think I got just the song for you!"

Lazy takes the mic uncomfortably, e-yessing K.Grid as they tear into some runny eggs.

“Wherever you want to be
I’ll be there
with open arms & open eyes, yeah”

& they use the new app they just downloaded to make the background track into a medley. As the next track fades in, they casually walk towards K.grid, getting close, offering them a napkin for their starchy fingers.

k.grid accepts the napkin but looks shyly away, & this gesture coincides w/ Lazy’s line, “what have I, what have I—

“what have I done to deserve this?” finishes K.Grid. K.Grid feels out of their element. Where’s the kimchi?

& as if the App Goddess overheard, a crock of kimchi appears before hir. Inhaling the juices, Kgrid says, “Much better!”

& because Lazy is looking at them like a lost pup baby dyke, they say for the sake of having something to say,

“Would you like to try some of the App Goddess’ kimchi?”

& Lazy eagerly accepts because Lazy loves when people offer them food in proximity to leather armchairs.

Lazy bites into the kimchi & everything becomes soft & romantic inside their small intestine

& oh my goddess! it is the stomach’s knowledge of merging that begins to glow, firing up the engines, engaging the Wrap Warp Drive

& Lazy’s stomach drops into subspace, tingling with the anticipation of being off on some new adventure into the unknown, free from the same boring chores they wake up having to do & never do, the chore of existence, finally on a Rogue Space Adventure Vortex Spree outside linear time where everything is extraordinary & fun, & full of texture.

“Where did this kimchi come from?”

“Faye Wong’s spaceship.”

Lazy: You mean it just got beamed down here?

KGrid: I reckon so!

Lazy: I was all over the chatrooms a few months ago... How does anyone begin to find an original studly/dykey key to gain access to Room 1053?!?! Not to mention the ship itself!

KGrid smiles at this nerdy lazy fanfish gush.

Hanuman snatches the mic, & declares, “Ah, but I am here to update the technorecord! I have found a back entrance to Faye’s spaceship, through the Emperor’s Gender Bender Mash-in! & the password to the mash-in is —”

& they mouth the password but nobody hears because Tony Leung & Leslie Cheung are blowing up the café, on the Emperor’s orders, & capturing Han dead or alive.

Hanuman makes a last dash leap for the chandelier, swinging up & out to the moon, which detaches from the sky. Han rolls themselves around it, just in time for Tony to say, “Hey, I was sure it was a full moon tonight, I read Chani Nicholas & everything.” Leslie: “Yo, you might want to lay off the woo-thing” as he switches on a flashlight, only to see the last of Hanuman’s tail disappear off into the night, along with the Emperor’s password & the secrets of a week spent in Faye’s spaceship.

What was their encounter with the newly-wed?

Was that a new “restless” tattoo on their tail tip?

All questions to be answered for you, our lovely fanfish viewers, in the next webisode.

In the meantime, please like & subscribe to our PoopTube channel!

Dumpling’s Amazon.com Wishlist can be found at tinyurl.com/dumplingswishlist.

Four Poems

Shane Book

Drop Top Mulatto

A motivation
offered by the many

palm trees and open cliffs
here, in our dresses. In the

un-tied cerebellum's
hopeful legions presiding
over what's my number.
The streets at once

rehearsed and also mutually
embalmed by a battle,

it's not yet known
how we can be relieved

of those dope bone slicers.
Malice and belly ripping

shivs beget malice,
outside-fighting

a whole nation with its
ammunition poised

above a notched
tooth shaped road

for the long,
silver-unto-our-fathers —

Chips And Dips

The brother man
of another man
gravitated downwind
of a stereo
beeping, signatories
ululating at the
ceremonial signing
giving chips and dips,
daps and medal
blips to ex-flips —
all, totally signaling.

That's how they do.

They're giving us
a grey history.
That's why we can't
wear the same blue-ish
force protector
singlet every damned
day into mysterioso
neighbourhoods
of abuela-plated
good heat pouring
out of a magma
level smear.

That'd be cray.
And cray don't
cut it no more.

Rolex Shades They Don't Make These In The States

Git, git, git, git.

I ain't tryna

see nobody

I'm counting

cash

that was

how

I keep

the finger

on the

trigger

at all times.

Stay alert,

I got millions

on my mind.

Ice on my

twitch

doing

jumping jacks.

I fell

in love

with them

drugs.

To Do This Sort Of Thing You Must Adopt A Stance Of One

Bugle boy-flavored
bowl of bugles,
in wood paneled bowl
matching the wood
paneled walls
of somewhere 1970s.
On the living room floor
it starts with a wall.
And a back to sit it,
against it.
And a face
to the klieg lights along
a wall. The romantic
return of the morose
pupil with the single
roving-the-night-air
eye.

That's not
on my watch. Is
not very bold of you.
These are your
decisions — these are all
coming from you.

Well congratulations.
I think it's smart.

You've made up your mind.
Lower predetermined mooring
of a suburban
tract and a digestive port monteau.
Better chicken is OK.
Said the white man
to the other white men.
Better chicken? No,
Butter Chicken.
Yes, the first man said,
Until it becomes a law.

Two Poems

Jamil Jan Kochai

Our Mother Speaks of Drowned Ghosts

I gave them names because
we had no water.
Allah having left us dry.
But now
if you were to ask me
for the second name
of my tenth son,
I might not be able
to hear
the whispers
from the old rivers
which become softer
the farther
I swim.

Two AKs in an Apple Tree

Where did snow meet steel, he asked.
Where the bend met the road, she said.

How do gunmen dream, he asked.
Not unlike ourselves, she said.

How long did they wait, he asked.
For as long as they could, she said.

Did the wheat all die, he asked.
Like the leaves in the night, she said.

How far did it ring, he asked.
For as far as I know, she said.

Does the smell still cling, he asked.
Only in my flesh, she said.

Did they dream of us then, he asked.
They dream of you now, she said.

Did you see us there, he asked.
I saw what was left, she said.

Where were you in that dark, he asked.
Where you were in that dark, she said.

Were we heavy, he asked.
Like flowers, she said.

Two Poems

Ya-Wen Ho

I walk around dead bees on the pavement but hold you close as you cum in me. Dead bees are small jokes. Dead bees are spent punchlines. Difference. The complex sugars burn /b1-無/花果無花, 無心人無心, 妳就原諒他吧, 花樣年華的少女搞得像苦行僧似的, 罪過罪過, 善哉善哉¹-I/ hold you close as you cum in me. She thinks about the exhibition she saw by accident: that Taiwanese scientist who taught Wellington school children about solubility and saturation and climate change and they the children who crystallised this knowledge into candy-coloured bonsai. (*Unseasonal Change*). Wellington is no haven for sugar crystal trees: the wind will strip and the rain will dissolve. The fine print on the poster has run. A sky cried on /i-特/級蜜桃, a hyperbole of a peach. 她有些飢/渴²/pillary action. A white carnation shoots up. Bloodshot. Bee keeping. Be kee/蘋/果花粉嫩粉嫩的, 暴雨般打下也造不出違和的意境, 一切都如此安詳, 粉飾太平³. They describe beautiful women crying as 「梨花帶雨」: pear blossoms glistening with rain. They describe men drawn towards charismatic women as 「狂蜂浪蝶」: brazen bees and bold butterflies. Pollination is not a metaphor. She is a speck of pollen being blown through the dead veins of a dead bee. If she cared about truths she would respect bees have neither veins nor arteries. Dissection. Bee insides float in body /fluid-私/秘的地方適合把玩私秘的東西, 大方的地方適合把玩大方的東/西⁴-he/ plays parkour inside dead bees. Everything is jagged when magnified. Surfaces grate skin and encrust her with shards of propolis glitter. She will be a beautiful raw skinless mess wearing a carapace of

-
- 1 The flowerless fruit* is without flower, the thoughtless person is without thought, won't you just forgive him. A girl in your bloom of youth living like a flagellating sadhu, tis a shame, a shame. Be well, be well. (*the literal translation of the fig from Mandarin Chinese)
 - 2 She is slightly unsated.
 - 3 The fragile and tender apple blossoms cannot convince any of their ire even when they pelt down like thunderous rain. Everything is quiet, a lull before the storm.
 - 4 Private places suit the appreciation of private things, public places the appreciation of public things.

manuka gold. Look at her obsidian eyes. Her eyelids are in tatters. Imagine the cut of liquid eyeliner on such a /fa-始/終她都沒有說一句話。她靜靜地等，她在等脫蛹而出的那一天，好把翅膀上的粉鱗狠狠地甩入他們眼內。美麗的女人大多多難多/災-I⁵/ walk around dead bees on the pavement because I don't know who's inside. I aurally hallucinate the torture of exoskeletons. I phantom-feel the wet of un-red blood. I am a soft thing. I am innately violent by being the size I am against the size they are. I curl up with my head in your lap. The crusting of honeycombs. Your hand is warm on my thigh. The crusting of cum. We profoundly understand we misunderstand each other. The amber mummification of ants in /hon-擬/人化的蝶哭述女性主義並未為我打造過冬的暖房。我說，不，女性主義是一種心靈的變/異⁶-f/ shoulder blades turn into wings adroit enough to keep my hair out of your face when I'm above you. I have zero expectations to fly. Bumblebees defy physics because bumblebees are what they /啊/, 一個漂亮的驚嘆號落在妳腳下，妳會把它別在妳的髮上嗎？ /啊⁷?/ cicada once tried piercing my skin with its proboscis, mistaking sweetness to run beneath my tappable surface. A cicada will not have the correct enzymes to digest my syrup. It has been a long time since I saw a body that glowed. Bioluminescence is a chemical reaction. I am a chemical reaction. Your shoulders are a gradient of freckles. You don't know you're being written about. You're inside a bee. If my footfalls don't crush you, my footfalls will free you and I don't know how I feel about either of those. She said more people should write about lichen but I wrote about bees. Beestings are never pleasant. I hold you close as you cum in me.

5 From beginning to end, she speaks not a word. She waits in resolute quiet. She waits for the day she emerges from her chrysalis, for the satisfaction of dusting their eyes with her wing-scales. Beautiful women are too oft imperilled.

6 The personified butterfly bemoans how feminism did not build her a wintering hot house. I say, no, feminism is an internal strengthening.

7 Ah, a shapely exclamation mark falls at your feet. Will you wear it in your hair? Mm?

Hers is the seventh drowning in the past seven days. Yesterday the gulls flew for pleasure; yesterday the gulls lost their shapes. The Frenchman either speaks English in his sleep or I understand French in my half-sleep or he and I sync-dream transcendence. We tell each other factoids: a lobster can theoretically live forever, until something kills it. A blue fish swims, smudging the science of sleep. Her hair fans out across the water. We flash freeze in the sea. His mattress is continental crust over four palettes. A lobster stalks the bottom of the unmade bed, hunting for vulnerable single socks. The palettes drift apart under sex. The mattress dips vaguely. Sometimes I find a hollow crab. An oceanic trench widens by two fingers. Sometimes I find a crumpled wad of tissue. I struggle into a wetsuit: it is difficult to pull on one's own skin. I cannot think about a wetsuit as anything other than synthetic blubber. My hair does not fan out across the water. I read the graphic novel *March of the Crabs vol. 1: The Crabby Condition*. It is irrelevant whether de Pins' marbled rock crabs exist, or whether it is true such crabs can only walk in one path their entire lives. Two crabs figure out x-y axes co-ordinate graphing and become free. The boundaries of the marine reserve are marked in dotted lines. The area is shaded in. When I am in the water, I have no sense of direction. I cannot swim at right angles to a slipstream of cold water. Four hundred and sixteen pilot whales beached on Farewell Spit and too many died. There is a question of what to do with the carcasses. He thaws salmon steaks in a bowl of water. I notice myself noticing it is tap water. Her body is yet to be recovered.

is this the sea?

sidony o'neal

i am lately thinking through long and discordant histories of political, theoretical, and mental health asylums. what new modes of seeking might arise if i decenter my hope for a future based on arrival — on terminal location, stillness? i embrace a feeling that object-bound fugitivity or abstracted ambulance might have always been more valuable markers of my existence.



sotto voce (still), 2016
single channel video, 10m 27s

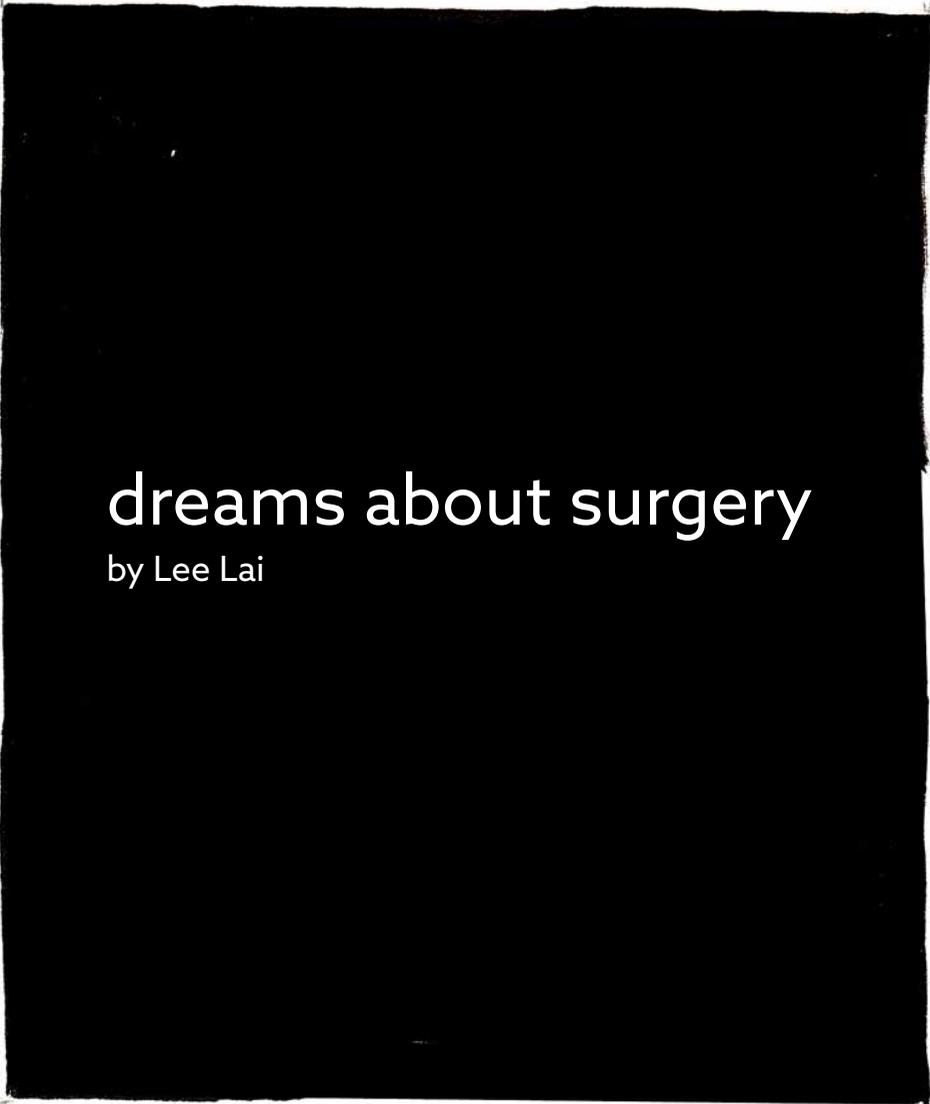


five on it, 2017

mason jar, pennies, paper, and vinegar. 18cm x 8cm x 8cm



untitled, 2016
glass, cement, copper, saltwater, pork rind, and imitation vanilla.



dreams about surgery

by Lee Lai













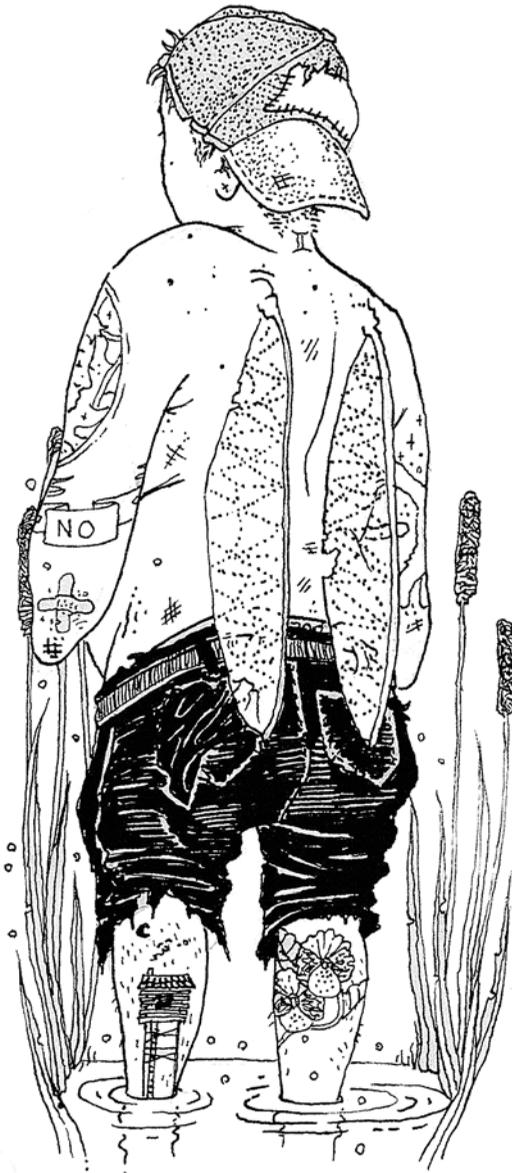


Two Illustrations

Bug Cru



Merging, 2017
ink & acrylic, 8.5 x 11"



Gemini Bug Boi, 2016
ink, 2.5 x 5"

Two Poems

Raymond de Borja

In the Now You Are Faintly Beginning

In the opposite direction, a moment of surprise,
surroundings faintly heard

Pages missing, many dangers exist
complete with thunderbolts

But not violently, no, but in a gesture of a new beginning

And clearly, you are the woman in the plane crash at the beginning

We take the position of strangers at every beginning

In the opposite direction, complete with thunderbolts,
the clarity of dangers

But not violently, no, but in the direction of pages turning

And our surroundings are gestures faintly beginning

And our surroundings are gestures
faintly heard

Strangers at each violent beginning

The plane missing, the pages, the danger of clarity
complete with thunderbolts

Where moments of surprise are directions faintly heard

In the now you are faintly beginning
No, we have gone missing
Strange dangers, a plane turning complete with thunderbolts
In the direction of now's turning

Surroundings turn gestures into clear dangers
And violently, yes, as with new surroundings
The plane crash at the beginning,
now, is missing
Now, we have gone missing

A Dream of Anechoic Chambers

A great crack in the afternoon. Probably a
Heart. I forget to say towards.
This century's exactitude. Collecting
Signatures. Factories
For the duration of a war. An adaptation of.
Thence every masterpiece.
Then the long years of prosperity.

Apparently, evening. Our first reaction was.
To want to return. A passage cited. In the middle of.
In the middle of. A pamphlet her response became.
A scrutiny of miracles. The modernity
Of her. Announces the weather.
The theater is only theater.
Then the long years of prosperity.
Around the time of analysis. Having long slumbered.

Textual forests where the accent falls. Alas, the
Sadness of a bourgeois. Drones in place.
In exchange. And oddly 19th century.
Where work begins experience. A Sunday. A feeling
That sensuous specificity must be mythless. Or leisure.
Then the long years of prosperity.

Chord shifts stuck in the head. A past composed
Purely of peripheral scenes. Flickers between
Disrepair. A chapter on trauma.
Almost certainly upon us. Anterior to.
The development of sound. Sacred, signifying,
Returning syllables to the O of.
Then the long years of prosperity.

We say no and then. No wonder.
Out of a thicket of marvels, the regularity
Of thickets. The physiology of an individual.
The physiology of a city. The typology
Of acquiring a life.
A life is a worrisome limit.
Then the long years of prosperity.

Until the magic goes wrong. Insistent
Ringing. One turns to the word
For rabbit. To the word
For hat. The claque breaks
Into song. But the deeper explanation
For all of this is again. Those hidden doors.
Then the long years of prosperity.
Obscure sorrows. First the mark

Then the market. In a dream of anechoic
Chambers of commerce. In our voice
The words of strangers. A delay
In the vitreous scenes. A colon caught
In a sigh suspends the analogy.
Then the long years of prosperity.

To excise a piece of sound. Were
It flowers. At some distance
Derricks. Dissolve in ambient chatter.
What you said. Just now
In the dense interleaving.
A face. Naming thus.
Then the long years of prosperity.

I forget the word for recognition. I forget
The spiraling downward motion of speech.
The perimeter of a wing. Motion
Worked as thought, I forget muscle, gristle,
And bone. Absences and containments.
I forget whether rain, static, or perforations.
Then the long years of prosperity.

Three Poems

Gwen Benaway

Chaser

say you love
contradictions,

place a hand
between my thighs,

feel the soft small
line of me,

transsexual clit,
a boy cock

gone over
to water.

my breasts
are smaller

than the girl
you often fuck,

what I lack
in volume,

I make up
in enthusiasm,

hold me down,
your body in me

I'll be a river
running east,

my hips, a lake
to swim beneath you.

you like girls
like me, it's ok

to want a body
unfinished, in (trans)it

more or less
a woman,
you can be a boy
as wide as sky,

cross borders,
make revolutions

inside me,
unlock us

in a touch,
bridge my currents

before I become
an ocean,

my cunt is new earth,
your cock is spring,

not a perfect love,
our secret want

your tongue,
my bones

our hands still
spark together

we make do
with what desire

and our fear
allow us.

Tuesday

the hard point,
estrogen high tide-
when the patch
releases the most
of what makes
me a girl.

breasts ache,
swell with change
as my emotions
descend in currents
to a dark heart
at the lake bottom.

float on driftwood,
grip this life
like an anchor
as I drift further
from the shore
I call myself.

there is no hope
in the deep water,
no dream lifts
under me, just
bracken, plastic litter.

I survive because
I know how to swim,
I survive because
I know to surrender,
I survive because
my way out is under.

Supernova

the death of a star,
a sudden nuclear fusion

in the cold heart
of the universe,

a celestial body
becomes light.

every star dies,
a promise sewn

into the filament
of space and time.

some stars collapse,
become a slow pull

into entropy, a rupture
of darkness and sediment.

some stars burn out
in a rush of energy

we can see for centuries
after their death, a halo

of fire, radiation, and metal
with more force than the sun.

this is my offering, boy to girl
in the span of heartbeats,

leaving a luminous scar
on the chart of the sky,

my body on fire,
my soul sparking,

a bright death
singing on the horizon.

stitching back the land

Afuwa and Dion Kaszas

the map itself is a construction. You know the geography of the landscape; you know the natural formations that have come about through the history of that place.

But the demarcated lines showing us where those plantations were located is a construction of human beings — human beings who wanted power, who took it upon themselves to take over this place

five years ago, I found the map in a book called *Account of an Insurrection of the Negro Slaves in the Colony of Demerara, Which Broke Out on the 18th of August, 1823*, by Joshua Bryant

Demerara is one of original three counties comprising Guyana, the other two being Essequibo and Berbice. This stretch of land between the Orinoco and the Amazon is home to nine nations: the Warrau, Arawak, Carib, Akawaio, Macusi, Arecuna, Patamona, Wapisiana, and Wai-Wai. Our coast was colonized in turn by the Dutch, French, and British, who brought enslaved and indentured people from West Africa, China, India, and Madeira

I am born of the ones who survived the crossing

my mind just exploded at the concept of embodying this map you found, the journey of finding the map, then that pivotal question: what are these little stars?

the map shows the plantations that existed on the north coast of Guyana at the time, and was drawn just after the Demerara rebellion was put down. There are tiny stars where, for months after the uprising, they displayed the heads and bodies of the resistance fighters

and you look into the story of what those stars signify, and then bring that history forward. Not only bring it forward, but embody that history and share that history, courageously

a map showing Plantation Success, one of the largest and most productive plantations on the coast, which was owned by Sir John Gladstone, father of the British prime minister William Gladstone. Because enslaved people were considered property, one of the leaders of the rebellion also bore his surname; his name was Jack Gladstone

a map of the land that was to become Georgetown, the city where I was born, where my high school is, where my family is

a map of a corner of the Triangular Trade, which took its devastated cargo from the west coast of Africa and across the ocean to South America, the Caribbean, and the east coast of North America, returning to the industrialised ports of Europe with its bounty before starting the cycle again

since we're going to recreate this map, how can we Indigenise it?

how can we contest and deconstruct the reality that this map is trying to convey?
To begin with an Indigenous method of tattooing and then to consider how that method would lend itself to the deconstruction of those lines

the grid of straight lines, with the stars

Case Number

2840134

Message

my friend Nahaan says that the skin stitch is also stitching us back together,
and you have begun that process of stitching yourself back together;
stitching over those frayed edges that the history of that map represents.
But I would challenge you to say that you are also stitching back
the land that you carry in your body

and because of the way that we're doing this
the ink goes deeper

and through the stitching together we are breaking those lines up

you begin to destroy the idea of its reality
because between each stitch is a space.
this is us taking power back, this is you taking power back from that history, so
that you can tell it in your own way, in a way that speaks to you
and to those generations that are coming

dkaszas via gmail.com
29/02/2016

to art.afuwa

Indigenous tattooing is always honouring our ancestors
Keone Nunes, the Hawai'ian cultural tattoo practitioner says,
“through your hands, your ancestors are alive”
not only speaking to the tattoo artist, but also to those who are being tattooed,
who get the mark, also embody and help make their ancestors alive today

the story that you shared, about the Earth Lines and the circles that start
with you, and expand to include everything, is itself a map — it's a different
topography, it's a map of relations

you're not only taking on this mark in terms of a method but also
honouring your ancestors by bringing that history to life today,
and then the way that we have collaborated to bring this to life
— the red being a pigment that will fade sooner
you are absorbing that history

now it's a different history because of who you are. Because of who
your people are. Because of the teachings that you're
passing on simply by having that tattoo

on my back
the back, where we wear burdens and bear lashes, where the past belongs

fractured,
a displacement

to cross the sea a second third time without drowning
everything I could bring is
under my skin

change its meaning
rewrite it in the way you want it to be read,
as something other than what it was

to belong where you are even when it means that the ocean must be crossed
again

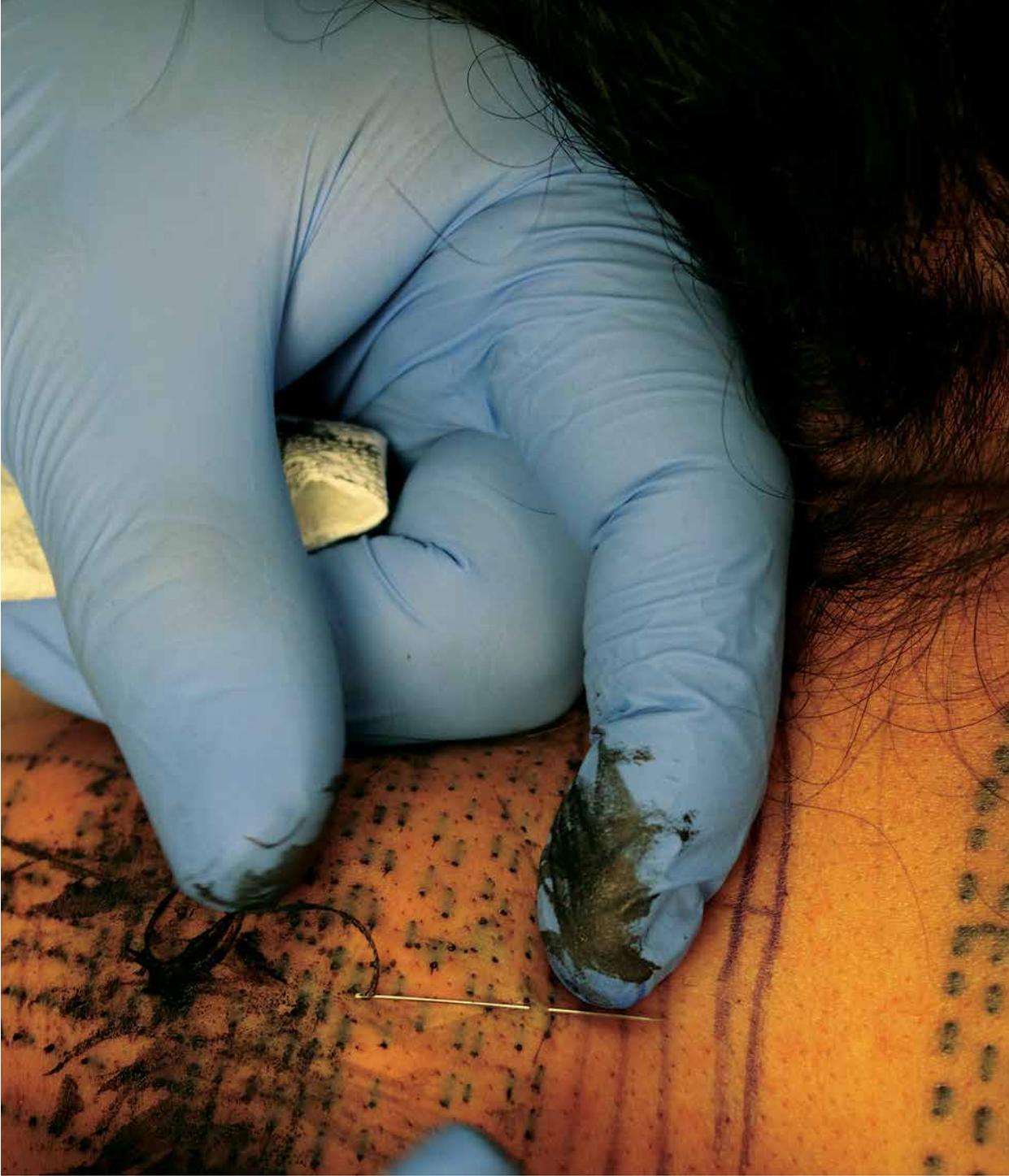
in this process and the journey that we went on together

with each crossing, something imprinted: a brand, a tattoo

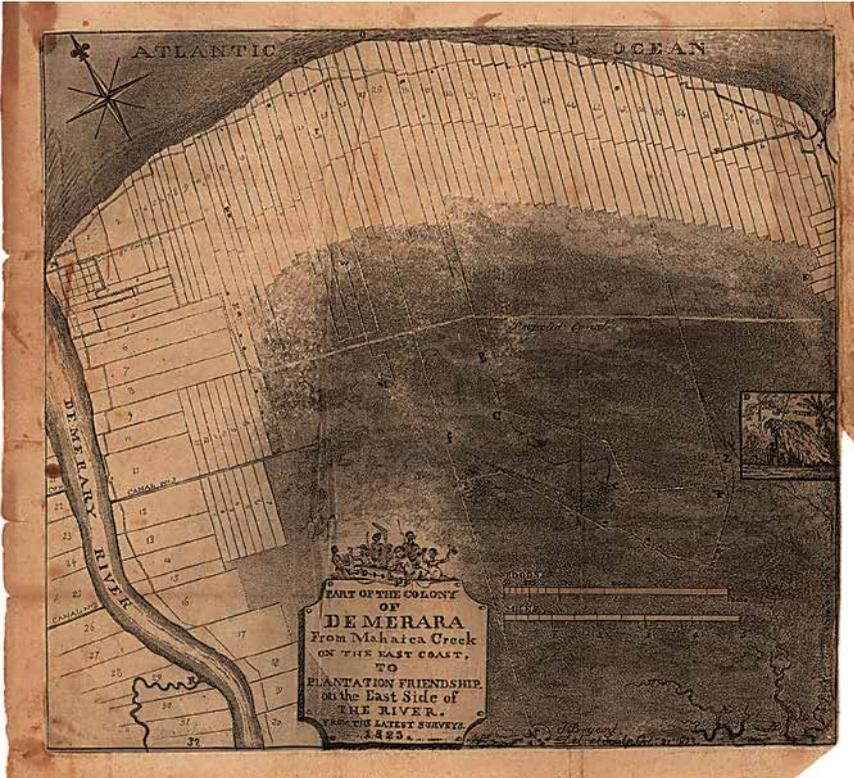
an inherited politics of demarcation association freedom possibility



re-drawing the map (photo by Tia Taurere ClearSky)



The needle and ink-soaked thread are drawn through the skin (photo by Tia Taurere ClearSky)



Top: a grid of lines, with stars (courtesy Brown University Archives).

Bottom: *birthmark* (photo by Tia Taurere ClearSky)





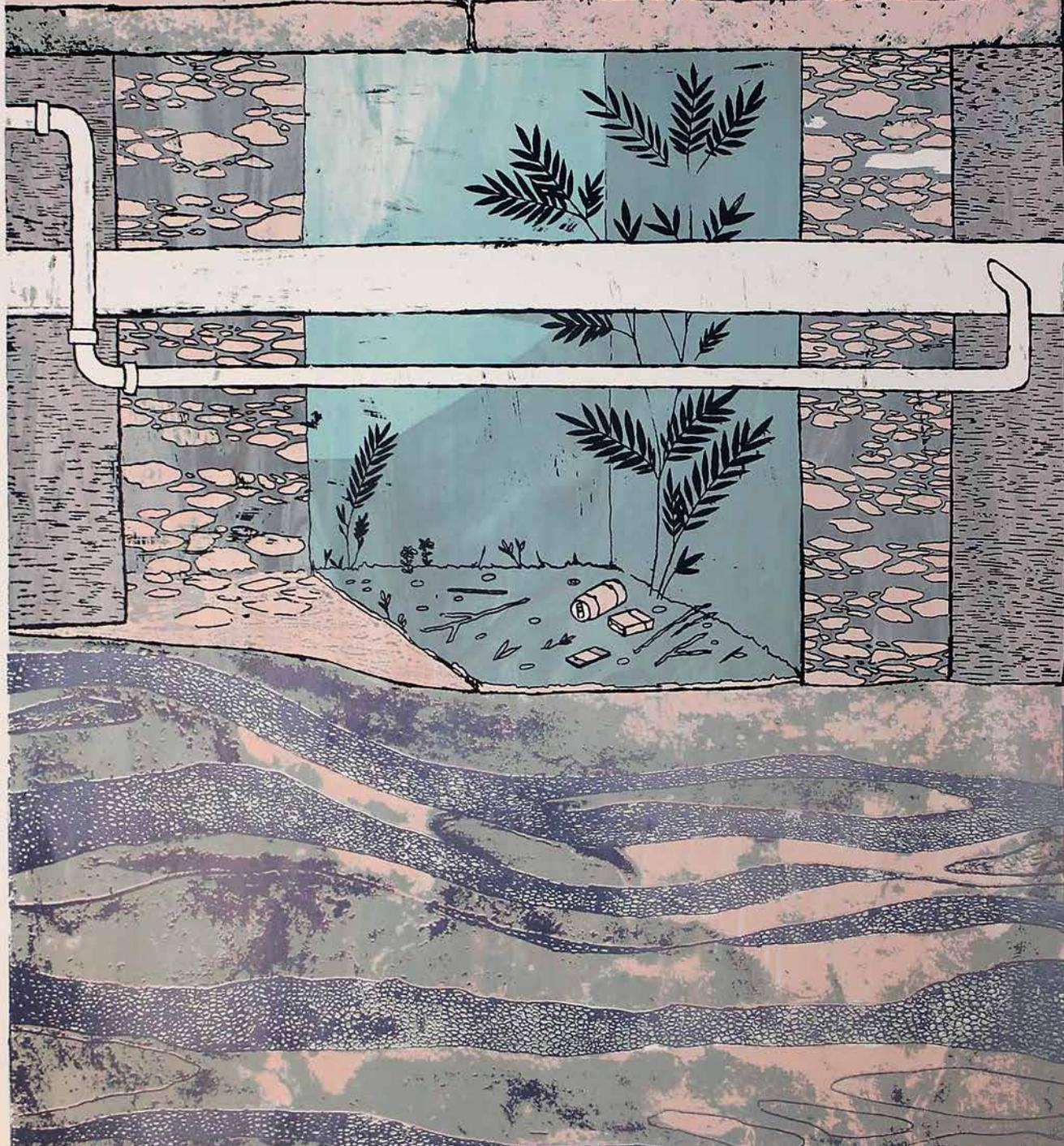
everything I could bring is under my skin (photo by Aerlyn Weissman)

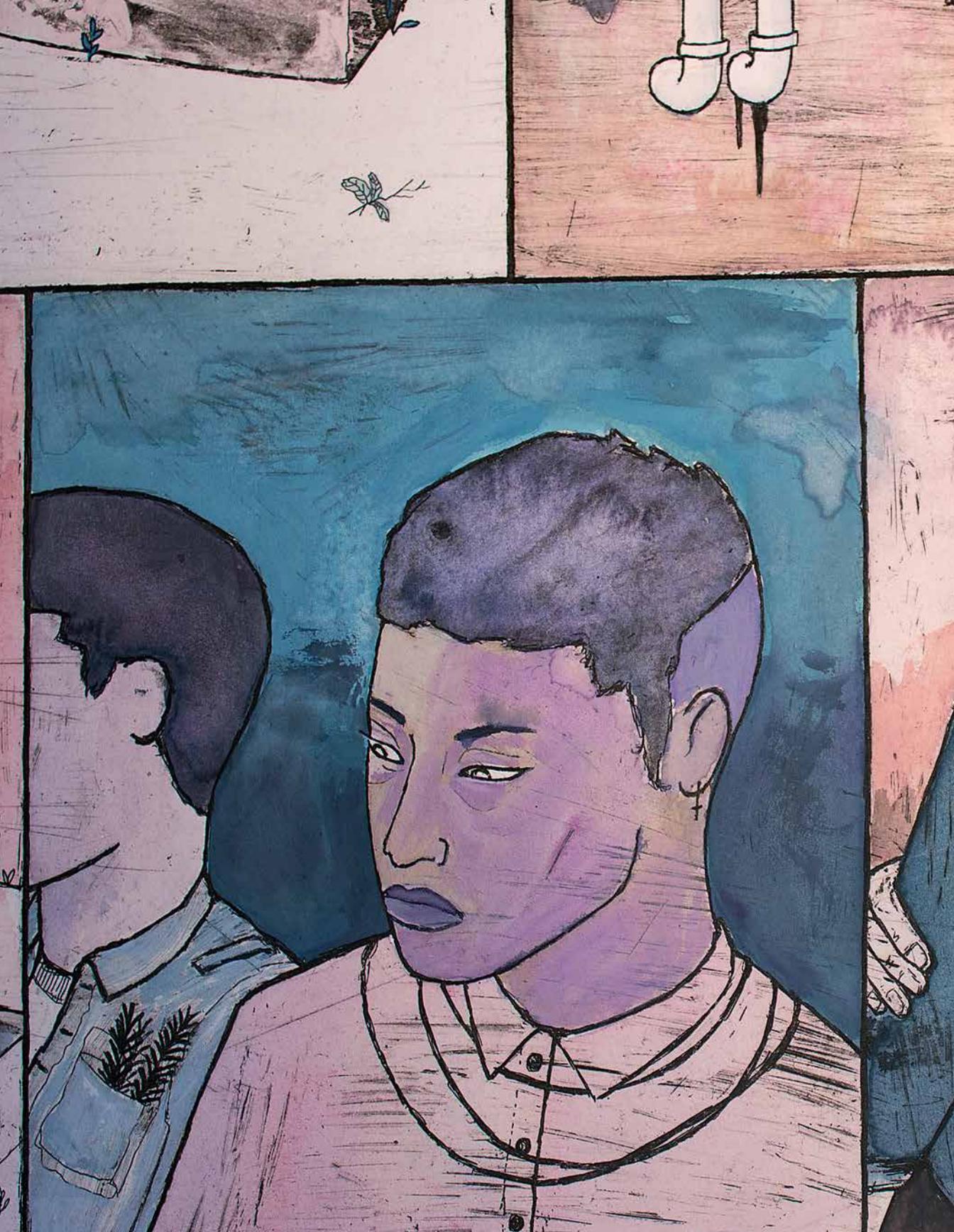


Earth Lines/life lines (photo by Aerlyn Weissman)

Waking Gates

by Eli Howey













I Pray to the River

Jennie Duguay

There is a bruise on my back that will not heal.
I keep it in my Cupboard of Precious Things
and with my back to the mirror,
while I wait for it change colour,
I pray.

Not for a chorus of blues — royal, cerulean, teal, little paint tins toppled over,
the moment the sky suddenly clears.
Not for a sunset of crocus, tulip, azalea,
not even for white bones set out against
every shade of brown —
bark, dry leaves, pine needles,
a Potion of Forest Floor.

I take my bruise from the shelf and walk to the river,
aggressive today with a week of rain.
I watch myself undress,
reveal my Skin of a Thousand Thorns.
The river will fix it
says the bruise.

I won't be there to say,
when the sky clears and the sun sets
and the river throws my white bones in the air,
if it could be for joy.

WHITE LIGHTNING AND THE BROOM OF DANGER

Christopher Tubbs

Winter was the part of the evening when God put his toys away. On the 20-somethingth of September, sometime around sunset, everything that chirped, blinked, or buzzed in Ontario took a hard turn to the right and careened on down to God's Great Toy Box somewhere closer to the equator. Not just the fireflies, you understand — the mosquitos, damselflies, and gall wasps, too. White Lightning waved good-bye to them as they left, marveling at their oily little bodies that blocked out the Sun. When the last of them had disappeared, tucked under the horizon, she pressed her ear to the dirty window to listen to the hum of their wings fading southward. The swirling host of insects would be passing over mother and father's farm by now.

The walls and ceiling of the girls' dormitory were plastered in a tea-brown floral print. They had been white once, perhaps a hundred years ago, but molds and stains had bloomed since then. The room was a shoebox, rotten cardboard and perfunctory assemblage, crammed with cheap furniture for an abandoned set of dolls. Glass goose eggs hung down from long cords over every second cot and gave off a buzzing orange light. There were numbered cubbies against the wall by the door that oozed coats and hats and overstretched sweaters. The ceramic floor tiles were caked with dirt. Some of the cots, including White Lightning's, had a shoebox under them.

"The dormitories feel so isolating at this time of day," Headmaster said. White Lightning started and turned around. "Then again, one is so unlikely to be disturbed." He was an ant-lion in the open doorway of the little shoebox room. White Lightning folded her hands over her lap and pressed her back to the barred and grimy window. "Why don't you go out, Joan? Go out and play a while." He didn't move to unblock the door.

"Can I really get out?" she asked.

"If you have a coin for the ferryman," he said. Headmaster clutched his coin

purse and lifted one side of his mouth in a half smirk. Perhaps he thought it was time for another one of their private conferences. But White Lightning would have none of this today.

“Sister Barbara will be along shortly,” she said in the firmest tone she could muster. “I saw her in the hall. She’ll be sweeping soon.” He glanced back into the hallway, apparently saw nothing, and stepped into the room. He unclipped a large keyring from his belt and began sorting through the keys. “She had the spare keyring with her,” White Lightning added. This made him stop, made him roll his eyes. Why me? he seemed to ask the ceiling. He clipped the keyring back to his belt, drove his claws into his pockets, and trundled toward her with a leonine eye.

“This is for your own good, Joan,” he said, lifting a heavy claw to her shoulder. “The world is a great and dangerous place. We can’t have a little savage like you out on the streets or mucking about in a field alone. You need guidance.” His other claw was on her waist now. “You need education. And discipline.” With his mandibles, he planted a single, tender kiss upon her forehead, then stepped back. She didn’t move. Apparently, he had decided that their private conference could wait. The ant-lion shuffled its great hulk backward through the doorway of the shoebox and vanished.

“That was a good bluff,” a voice whispered from beneath White Lightning’s cot frame. It was her bunkmate, Sheila, who had been hiding there the entire time. “But if he’d tried anything else I’d have chomped his toes off for you.”

“That’s okay, Sheila. I can handle him myself. A good girlfriend lets her girlfriends try to handle things themselves.” White Lightning flopped onto the bed to be nearer to her hidden companion. “But I’m afraid it was no bluff. Sister Barbara really is coming.”

Sheila had only moved into the girls’ dormitory a few days ago, but already the two of them were girlfriends. Sheila was a fine figure of a woman: she had legs for days and a coppery, hourglass waist that could turn heads. She was, in fact, a black lace weaver spider, and a very pregnant one at that. Some of the girls had asked White Lightning to squish her, or to take her outside, but a few Indian burns and punches to the gut had warmed them to Sheila’s presence. Not all of God’s toys had wings, you understand, and a lady in Sheila’s condition had no business travelling south even if she had any. The girls’ dormitory was dark,

moldy, and humid, which was just the thing for a weaver's nursery.

White Lightning had an affinity for Sheila's people. Males and females, red-skinned and strong, walked the open grass or the trunks of the trees on alternating quests for shelter or food. The women tended their young while the men danced in courtship. Through the long, hot summers when white men were too lazy to do anything but sleep, they worked hard in their own way for their own living. They were famous wanderers, not farmers. Sometimes in the dark solitude of her shoebox room White Lightning would dream a spider's dream and wish to be one of them. Then, and only then, could she wander out of reach of the ant-lion and the broom, out of the walls of the shoebox, out into the wide-open country where she knew she belonged.

"Joan!" something barked from the open doorway. One of the saplings from the orchard had put on a nun's habit and a human face. "You had better not be causing mischief again. If I catch you red-handed I will strap the rest of your pasty squaw hide to match your hands." The sapling in the habit shivered its leaves menacingly at her, but White Lightning knew it was an empty threat. Trees were notoriously slow runners.

"Yes, Sister Barbara," she muttered.

"Are you causing mischief in here?" The sapling shuffled toward her, but White Lightning crackled herself into a ribbon of electrical current and skittered behind her cot.

"No, Sister, I swear."

"Good. Now: get out or get back on your bed. And keep quiet. I don't need you kicking up my piles. I'll be sweeping in a moment. You gosh-darned girls are filthier than the boys." The sapling stretched its human face more tightly back against its trunk, turned, and shuffled itself out the door on gnarly old roots.

"I'm going to stick around for a while," White Lightning whispered to Sheila, "It'd be disaster if the two of you were alone." She dropped down on her cot, rolled onto her stomach, swung her body around, and dipped her head under the bed to check on Sheila. Would she be safe from the sapling's broom?

Her girlfriend looked so thin that White Lightning hardly recognized her. In her mouth, she held a massive egg sac, a shimmering white pearl almost as big as she was. She must have laid it after luncheon, the last time White Lightning had checked on her.

“Sheila!” White Lightning said, “Your babies! They’re here!”

Sheila was radiant but exhausted. In a one-on-one fight with a broom she would lose. Like many young women White Lightning had met, Sheila had learnt how to be pregnant well before she had learnt how to defend herself. At best, she’d lose the egg sac. At worst, Sister Barbara would beat her mightily with the broom head. What to do, what to do?

White Lightning reached for the shoebox under her bed, the one with all her cheap doll furniture in it, and removed the lid. With a single scoop of the lid she lifted Sheila, her egg sac, and most of her web away from the metal frame of the cot and dropped the lot of them down into the shoebox. Sheila was stunned and shrieked furiously.

“My babies, my babies!” Sheila cried, grasping at her eggs and scrambling for the lip of the shoebox. Sheila didn’t seem to understand that this was for her own good.

“Girlfriends always have each other’s backs,” White Lightning said.

“I thought good girlfriends let each other handle things themselves.”

“I’m sorry, Sheila, it’s the only way. You’ll be safe in here, I promise. This is for your own good.” White Lightning replaced the lid on the shoebox before Sheila could escape. “The world is a great and dangerous place,” she said, trying to sound maternal. “I’ll let you out when it’s safe for you, which won’t be long at all.” Sheila shouted something at White Lightning through the cardboard but the words were too muffled for her to make them out. “Watch your mouth, Sheila,” White Lightning concluded, assuming the worst from her friend, “or I’ll find the world’s smallest soap bar just for you.”

The sapling in the nun’s habit came squeaking into the room again. Onto one of its branches had been grafted a spider-proof broom handle with long bristles like a bazillion spider-hungry teeth. White Lightning had been wise to act. She sat upright and cross-legged on her cot and placed the shoebox lovingly beside her. When the sapling had finished its work, there were several piles of filth scattered around the room. A dustbin swallowed each of them in hungry gasps.

“Weekly sweepings will not do,” Sister Barbara creaked. “I am sick to death of this filth. Mark my words, I will be in here every afternoon to sweep this floor, and you and yours will be washing it every Saturday. And what are these crumbs doing here? You tell your little sisters — no bread in the bedroom!” She made a

finger-wagging gesture with one of her gnarled branches as she departed. She paused in the doorway, turning to face White Lightning. “I’m disappointed, young lady. Maybe you deserve another one of Doctor Dayspring’s ‘private conferences’, hmm?” She curled her mouthparts into the cruelest of smirks and was gone.

“There’s been a change of plans,” White Lightning whispered to her friend. “This place isn’t safe anymore.” White Lightning held the shoebox to her chest like it was a baby Jesus. “Brooms and mops. You can’t face it alone. I’ve got to take care of you. I’m going to have to keep you hidden till the babies are strong enough to head out on their own.”

* * *

White Lightning waited a whole week before she would even entertain opening the shoebox to check on Sheila. Sheila had been mighty mad at White Lightning when she’d thrown her in there and White Lightning couldn’t bear the thought of a fight between good friends. She grew more and more nervous as the evening approached. After Sister Barbara had finished her work with the broom, and after all of the girls had crawled into their ice-cold cots, White Lightning dared to hang over the side of the bed to lift the lid of the shoebox.

Sheila was safe. She’d set up a new nest among White Lightning’s cheap doll furniture. A shiny, translucent gauze covered everything. The sac had grown larger and darker and looked pebbled all over. Now that she’d gotten used to her captivity she didn’t seem to mind it. She seemed to have forgotten about the trees of her ancestors and her mighty hunts across open grass. If anything, she looked a little happier — at least, White Lightning decided that this must be so, since she couldn’t live with herself if things were otherwise. Perhaps Headmaster and Sister Barbara were wrong — perhaps it was she, not they, who knew what was best.

“New plan, Sheila. You’re staying in here for good. You’re just not strong enough to make it on your own and neither are your babies. I just want what’s best for you. I’ll catch you flies — somehow.” White Lightning didn’t know where she was going to find food for Sheila and the children once they were born. After all, the flies had all flown south for winter in God’s Great Toy Cleanup just last week. But she’d think of something.

Another week passed while White Lightning dreamt up ways to feed the children. She didn’t want to disturb Sheila and the babies, not when the nursery

was so close to completion. She tried shaping pieces of oatmeal into flies, even saved a little bread, but as far as she could tell they looked nothing like real insects. And if they didn't look like insects they probably didn't taste like them, either. White Lightning had never even eaten a fly or a worm, so she had nothing to compare. Do black lace weavers eat earthworms? White Lightning would have to ask.

One afternoon White Lightning was alone in the dormitory. She got on her knees beside the cot, earthworm in hand, her mouth open to ask Sheila the nagging question she'd had earlier. She put down the worm, picked up the shoebox, and lifted the lid. Out of the box burst a bazillion little Sheilas and Cecils, scurrying to and fro across her hands and forearms and knees. White Lightning shrieked with surprise and dropped the shoebox on the floor between her legs, scattering little baby spiders that cascaded all about her. But Sheila was nowhere to be found.

"Sheila! Sheila, where are you?" White Lightning called out to the teeming mass of life at her knees. "Sheila, I've brought a nursery gift for the babies. Sheila, can you eat —" White Lightning stopped mid-sentence, mouth hanging open. Some babies carried long legs in their mouths; some fought over portions of a certain hourglass waist.

"Murderers!" White Lightning screamed. She clawed, raked at her memory for other insults. "Savages!" was all she could think of. It was the worst word she knew. She was on her feet now, eyes crackling. She stomped. She roared. She was the Fifty Foot Woman and she was on the attack.

"White Lightning, what's wrong?" a little voice asked. One of the younger girls, White Lightning wasn't sure which, had heard the commotion from the hallway and had come in. No telling what headmaster might be up to, after all. She leapt on the girl and clawed, kicked, and beat at her copper-skinned body with all the strength and hopelessness she had. The other girl's face was a mess of blood, snot, and confusion.

"Stupid savage," White Lightning bawled.

"Get off of her this instant, you wretched little beast," the sapling in the habit shivered. Trees moved faster than White Lightning had remembered. Sister Barbara's branches whipped through the air as if battered by a divine wind. She beat White Lightning's backside mightily with the broom head and tripped her

up with her gnarling roots. White Lightning was too angry to feel very much of the pain after the first blow; Sheila deserved a good send-off, and good send-offs take sacrifice. The stretch-faced sapling had only just succeeded in tearing the two girls apart when an ant-lion appeared in the doorway, mandibles slippery with juice.

“Girls, girls, what is the meaning of this?” the ant-lion boomed. The commotion ceased at once. Sister Barbara stood between White Lightning and the other girl, whose name White Lightning was only just now beginning to remember (it was Flatface), holding both of them by the ears. The broom lay on the floor, its handle broken.

“Forgive the disruption, headmaster,” the sapling shimmered. “Joan is having another one of her hysterical fits.” The ant-lion scuttled into the room, extended a claw to White Lightning, and caught her by the shoulder.

“Nothing to worry about, Sister. I’ll handle this.”

“She needs the strap, sir. Spare the rod —”

“— yes, of course, Sister. Tend to Helen’s wounds, would you?” He looked down at White Lightning, captive in his grasp. “Little lady, you’re coming to my office right this instant. This behavior of yours is unacceptable, simply unacceptable.” Then, in a voice just for her: “I think it’s time we had a private conference.”

Sister Barbara let out a single “Ha!” as White Lightning passed into the hallway.

* * *

White Lightning used her smuggled tablespoon to scoop a few additional clumps of dirt out of the far left corner of the hole she’d dug at recess. She held the shoebox suspended over the hole once more; this time it would fit. She lowered the shoebox into the hole, toys and all, and started covering it with dirt. Resting on her right knee, just below one of her new bruises, was a popsicle stick cross marked ‘SHEIL’. She had run out of room for the ‘A’.

White Lightning was in the far corner of the turnip patch where the other girls at the school had been buried. Here and there a dark oval marked out a richer, better-fertilized patch of earth. “Better farmers in death,” Headmaster had said once. The wind picked up and blew back across the fields, carrying with it a faint clamor. The bell at Her Majesty’s Royal Chapel of the Mohawks was calling out the hour. The school’s supper bell rang as well in response. White

Lightning pretended they were funeral bells, like for that groundskeeper last summer. She pretended they were ringing for Sheila. When the grave was covered and the cross was placed, she didn't know what else to do other than to break out into The Huron Carol. She was belting out "*Within a lodge of broken bark*" when she noticed Flatface coming toward her.

"Hey! Hey. White Lightning. Supper time."

"I know. I'm coming. Thank you, *Helen*." White Lightning wiped the melted frost off her lower legs and held a wet hand out to Flatface as she stood up. "I mean, I'm sorry. Flatface. I dunno. I'm sorry. I'm not going to hit you again."

Flatface took White Lightning's hand and guided her back to the cafeteria without speaking. Children were streaming in from the fields — tools over shoulders, hot sweat on copper brows. The school looked like a great, brick shoebox, White Lightning thought, and all the children like little red dolls. Some lesser god was putting his toys away for the night, cleaning out the yard, sweeping away the mess of the day. As Flatface pulled her into the cafeteria, she looked up at the window next to her bed. Headmaster's black, jeweled carapace leant against the glass; he was sucking at a cigarette with his mouthparts. He looked at her, at all of the children, and yet also did not look at them. He seemed not to notice her at that moment. He seemed not to notice anything at all.

Colliding

Kai Rajala

in the aftermath
on the coast,
my father says,
“we do not want to lose you
to *this* depression.”

the first sounding reaches desolation
while he implies recurrence,
as though some are prone to sinking.

*i imagine a great storm out on the open seas
burying my ship for a thousand years.*

on the telephone from the arctic
my sister sighs,
“we must archive our great loves and losses
along the trenches of
this linear time.”

my empty belly is wasting not unwisely,
but she is too remote to hear the hunger,
so my mind drifts above the receiver.

*i imagine a continental subduction
clearing away all that is familiar.*

this sits with me best;
and while i sway in dance halls
below me plates are shifting and diverging,
like lovers who have forgotten their footing,
*pushing themselves away from each other
or else colliding.*

Blood Moon

Natasha Gauthier

I'm walking in the woods under a blood moon and I come to a tree that looks like a relative. Relatively friendly. I lean against it. It opens. I go inside.

There's some kind of mix-up. Someone isn't doing their job, because I'm at school again, and nothing is right. Nobody is who they're supposed to be. A girl my age walks up to me. She looks familiar.

Is that you, Tasha? she says.

Metis. Makes a sound in the mouth like muck.

Makes a sound like something that doesn't know how to sound.

May. Tee. May t. Perhaps it will. Perhaps not.

Disyllabic jungle mouth.

And where are my feet?

There is a game you can play by yourself. Get a long rope. Find the middle. Put one hand on either side. Now pull. Now see which side won.

Grandma became very alert when I mentioned it.

Don't ever tell anyone you're Indian, she said.

I never saw her eyes so open.

I can't understand you, Tasha. Her head kept shaking back and forth. She made her beer disappear. Work was implied. She had worked so hard to make people

think she was white. But to look at her, there was no question. Straight black hair, high cheekbones, tan skin — not suntanned skin, but brown from the inside.

She had *the look*.

If anyone ever asks you, you tell ‘em you’re white.

She made another beer appear.

Hey, where’d you get that? said my uncle.

She smiled.

Well, I’m not gonna tell *you* that.

Don’t worry,
I’m going back
in time with her
in the next scene.

SCHOOL

A Play in Three Acts

IN which I find out what happened to my grandma (see: Ouija board)

Act One

Nothing happens.

Act Two

The first thing is this is really happening. That’s the first thing you have to remember throughout this play.

Me: First we’ve got to tie up the teachers, like this.

Grandma: Yeah?

Me: You take their hands, like this.

Grandma: Okay. Now what?

Me: Now we let all these kids go.

Grandma: Go where?

WIND whistles. FOOTSTEPS pack the snow.

Me: Back to their families.

The children CHEER.

Grandma: Oh, I see. How?

Me: How what?

Grandma: How do we find their families?

The children look frightened/concerned.

Me: We'll just call them.

Grandma: (to kid) Do you know your phone number?

Kid: *shakes head.*

Act Three

Me: Well, shit.

You're doing it wrong, Grandma says. *Her whole face smoothes out when she smiles she knows something.*

That's not how it happened.
Well, we never talked about it, so what do I know?
We never talked about it?
I shake my head.
Hmph. *She looks at her Pilsner.* Oh.
Well, you could've come to visit more.
I know. I'm sorry, Grandma.

Let's get a beer, she says.
You don't drink beer yet, Grandma. You're 8 years old. Quit jumping ahead.
She shrugs with her eyes closed. Looks like she's already had a couple.
Come on, I say. We gotta go.

She's not my grandma anymore. She's my best friend. I'm breaking her out of here. I can do that now that I'm a writer. I'm breaking her out so she doesn't have to go to school.

We hold hands and run down the hallway. Past the ladies in their mean black dresses. Past the men in their sneaky suits. Past all the lowercase t's on the wall with a sad, dying man on them. Way past all that. Past the other kids, too. Come on, I say. They peek out from their classrooms. There are whispers. The chalk drops and rolls on the floor.

Do
Not
Fucking
Touch
It

And we're pretty cute, the two of us.

We're a couple of
cute chicks out on the town

(cut

to—

1952

Women's Day subscriptions,
sexy black and red

apron,

a book

on new ways to prepare beef
for dinner)

(but her everyday was
a plaid jacket when I
knew her).

Well, alright,

she says,

smiling,

ready to party.

Alright,

alright.

UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS DO BLACK POETS WRITE

Juliane Okot Bitek

i.

what

what

what what

what what

whatwhatwhat

what

wut?

that context

that conditions

that conditions were ripe

right

right conditions

ripe

ripe conditions

those conditions

those right conditions

that conditions can be right

that conditions can be ripe

that black

that black conditions

also black poets

also conditions for black poets

also conditions under which black poets & only black poets

also conditions that are right

right ones

ripe ones
just ones
right ones
exact ones
sliced ones
diced ones
presented-on-a-plate ones
so pretty
are we allowed to eat these?

ii.

it was the right time
for sure it was the right time
fated time
destiny & such
 the guests were ushered in
 doors shut
 lectern set up like way before time
 introductions made
 drinks dranked
 drinks held
 (some drinks hoped for that would never arrive but that will never be the point)

& then it was night
& night time was glad time
& glad time was time for poetry

it was the right time
this night time
this night when the glass door at the gallery
kept the black
night out
kept
the unsavoury ones
the poor ones
the ignorant ones

the unknowing ones
the stupid ones
the silent ones
the silent ones
the silent ones
the ones that couldn't/ shouldn't be there
at bay

it was just us
us who wanted to be there
just us inside the glass doors
or us that were curious — what's going on here

it was a poet's night
tonight
it was a poet's night
a poet's rite
write
right
come
sit down
join us
crack open a beer
cheers
let's listen to a poet

the glass door at the back of the gallery won't reflect the moon
the glass door refracts the light from the lamp post
into tiny shards
spinning & glittery & beautiful
against the black night outside
inside the introductions are done
& guests are ready
to take it all in
listen:
under what conditions do black poets write?

iii.

see here

this kind of design is called tribal design

i don't know why

they're just tribal you know

like tribal

look at the simple lines & dot markings

it's nothing sophisticated you know

like you know

like

usually line dots are just that

line dots

you know

tribal patterns

like rows of chairs

like chairs in rows at the art gallery

like rows in chairs at the art gallery

they get them

the designs

the tribal designs

they get them

off of the floor

off of the sand

off of the sky

off of nature, you know?

you know right?

on to cloth

on to the page

simple stuff

good for the soul stuff

like chairs

like rows in rows

like rows in chairs

at the art gallery
good replication
makes good design
the replication
the replication
the replication is easy when it's tribal you know
like this
like this one also
like this one on the page
like this one on a cloth
pattern design tribal design
replication by a south african designer
who claims
you know
that slavery was such a long time ago
you know
& the layout of the ships
in replication
makes such a pretty pattern
you know that right?

iv.

it had to come to pass
& so now was the right time
& just like that
it was the right time nigger
it was the right time nigger
like who the hell do you think you are
like do you know who i am
like call the cops
like i'm not scared of the cops
like whatever motherfucker i listen to *wutang*
like whatever man i love rap & jazz
like whatever man rap saved my life
not like this shit not like you motherfucker

like nigger
like nigger
like nigger
like go back to where you came from
i ain't scared of the cops
like like like like like
bitch

the conditions were ripe
the spit against the glass door shimmered
a celebration of light against the shards
light on glass
a lamp post illuminates the street
to ward off the bad guys
to keep them at bay

V.

what the hell
what the fuck
a man lives
walks out of the gallery
intact & unhurt

don't fucking touch me he says
& no one fucking touches him
this is not the place
where others might have beat the shit out of him
he who walks out of the gallery
intact & unhurt

what these are
are the right conditions
the ripe ones
like context
like punctuation
like long nights & short days on a calendar

repetition
design
basic time
management
like basic patterns
like tribal patterns
like chairs & chairs of rows
like dotted lines on a page
a lectern
a poet marked by a dot
already introduced
like who are you
like where are you from
like what

vi.

it may be material
or materiality
or knowledge production
or brilliance
or black arts
perhaps conditions
perhaps this perhaps that

what are the conditions under which black poets
write right rite write rite
what are the rites of writing
the right writing
writhe writhe writhe squirm shift
autocorrect wutang as whiting
autocorrect a fucking gain
wutang as whiting
but
black is cool
black is beautiful

black is power
like the night sky beyond the glass door at the gallery
aesthetics black life context poetry jazz
like fred moten's animateriality
sectioned sliced diced time right time rite time
fuck

Postscript

In the fall of 2015, American poet & philosopher, Fred Moten, came for a visit in Vancouver. Poet, scholar, and professor of English, Phaniel Antwi introduced Fred in a gorgeous essay with the most awesome title: "Under What Conditions Do Black Poets Write; Or, When You, a Black Poet, Are Asked to Introduce Another Black Poet (a mentor you have never met) On Short Notice And You Have No Time – You Still Say Yes Because (1) You Want Your Mentor to Feel Welcomed in a City With Not Many Black Poets and People, or, Perhaps, More Accurately, (2) You Want Your Mentor to Feel Welcomed to an Event Where You Know There Won't be Many Black People in Attendance."

& then the evening unfolded.

Much appreciation & love to Cecily Nicholson who was there & bore the brunt of the initial force of a man's words. Gratitude to Andrea Actis for her care & offering a home to this poem at *TCR*.

[WHAT IF EVERY MOVE YOU MADE COULD HEAL YOU]

Jennif(f)er Tamayo

after Randy Reyes

[LICK PALMS, TOUCH PITS]
[FIND DESIRE TO NOT LISTEN TO WHITE VOICES]
[INHALE BACK TO THE MEADOW OF YOUR ANCESTORS]
[EXHALE UNTIL YOUR BREATH BELONGS TO YOU]

you are not from here
you arrived here
your body is a meteor
you are half asleep & learning your mothers
are orbiting a nightmare

you are an arrow pointing back
towards so many ends
you are okay & not okay

[HEAR A HEART IN AN OCEAN'S CHEST]
[PULL THE MOON TO THE CRACK ON YOUR BIRTH DOOR]
[GROAN, YOU ARE FALLING TO EARTH]

you find a skin of calmness to stretch over lovers
that you are without home is an illusion
again: you are not from here you arrived here
your body is a meteor, your breath is a resistance

[PRESS GREEN LIGHT TO YOUR KIDNEYS]
[LET THE FULL WEIGHT OF YOUR HEAD FALL TO MY HANDS]
[WHISPER I LUV U & GO CHECK YOUR G-MAIL AGAIN]
[SUCK AIR THRU YOUR TEETH, THERE'S BLOOD THERE]

Two Poems

José Vadi

11th @ Market 6:54am PST Southbound

in the fog
before the bustle
the sky
and perspiration
coils
around my body
making fire
in my hands
thrown like a circus
down my lungs
out
into the sky
this blanket
of still water
running deep
my sex
 alight
my legs
 a flight
down 11th
towards Folsom
avoid every pothole
every tripwire
 metropolitans
have to offer
 ours sits in the sea
a deity's sneeze

away from being
blown to the poles
our fate: border
less homes
the type face
less and bare
as the california
where
and when
a drive
meant
a one-way
departure
into a contact
less void.

...Unless the Alley's Named After Dead White Writers

maybe they'll name
 Tehama Natoma Minna
and the alleys of SoMa
after writers wandering these side streets
just south of mission, where red and
orange tips of free needles find no
receptacle for disposal other than Parks
and Recs trucks, a firehose telling you
Move Along, to a destination
unknown, to a shelter in a part
of the city people with cars
don't even visit

 what is a metropolitan history
 but a collection of renamed
 streets in progress [?]

patches of public grass
reserved an online app at a time,

maybe they'll save a square in
the middle of Dolores St.

so my friend's mouth can
lose its virginity,

or under the low tree
near the J Church
recession summers spent brown bagging
beers from 16 and Guerrero,

maybe they'll honor
the pastime of Wander,
like coal mining,
or reading,

Ferlinghetti's Coney Island turned
apocalyptic carnival ride for future expats,

did Kerouac have a Mexican friend?
a Puerto Rican?
maybe

“Hypothetical Intergenerational MexiRican Friend of Jack Kerouac”
can be placed somewhere
between Kearny and Jackson,

somewhere close to the epicenter
of Literary San Francisco,

colonial ghosts every ilk and trade
haunt a city
named for brown hands,

rosary beads
for the illiterate

stanzas for
the never found.

Green House

Stacey Ho

A pair of casement windows looks out from the second floor of the house. You can see into people's backyards: a stack of wood covered in tarp, a rusting tricycle, an abandoned birdhouse. Lumpy cedar bushes, grown too close together, fence in a perimeter. The lawn is cut very short. Miniature bits of sorrel and dandelion sprout up for a moment, only to be mown down with the grass. Nevertheless, there is life. You can tell by the wind moving through the trees.

The window is framed in white trim. It frames the figure of a seated man. When it is sunny, the light creeps in between close-cropped salt and pepper stubble to warm his shiny scalp. Sometimes it is cloudy and the whole room seems to turn blue and is filled with a stillness. He breathes very slow, and it fills the house with a rhythm. The air changes as it filters through him. It retains something of him. It's moist.

When displeased or distressed, the air is filled with a sharp smell like hot vinegar and the woman who shares this house with the man withdraws to a corner that is as far from the smell as possible. After a while, she will quietly climb the stairs and look into the room. He will be there, as ever, maybe needing some water. She'll put on a favourite program or some music and they'll sit together. In this way, they cycle through the nights and days.

The room that faces the backyard is filled with houseplants—miniature versions of life in warmer places. They frame the small twin bed, the man, the easy chair by the window. If there is movement it is on plant time, or hidden inside the glazed containers, beneath the soil. She wipes the dust off the waxy leaves, plucks away ones that are dead or yellowing. The leaves go in the compost. The compost is kept in used milk cartons. The cartons go in the freezer. She tries to cook simple things that he might like to eat. A presence fills the house and takes root in her habits.

The lights go on at the end of the day and reflect themselves in the darkened windows. Night brings a heightened awareness of footsteps, the hum of appliances. The electricity running through the house tickles the pineal gland and sparks half-remembered conversations, phrases that loop over and around,

finding new syntaxes and means of expression. In the dark, her voice emerges, gives body to strange memories. She wonders if it's his voice speaking through her, her own, or someone else's. She doesn't know anymore. *I don't know*, she says to nobody. She goes to sleep.

It's a mild afternoon. The woman takes the man to a city park. He squints and moves gingerly, waving his arms from side to side like an underwater creature as they pick their way along a path. Along a riverbank there is a bush of light pink, spiky globes, each sphere cracked open by five corpulent orange blobs. "Look," she says, "flowers."

There are historic buildings, interesting cloud formations, other plants, and trees. She points at anything and everything, searching for his attention, touches him lightly on the shoulder to remind him of the way. His head wags back and forth, following her finger. They return to the house and he sleeps for a long while.

The light warms the room. The room is filled with plants. The man and the plants are breathing. The heat traps itself against the window, dissipates slowly through fissures in the wall, and lingers on until the evening.

* * *

Her attention flattens and spreads as the screen light flickers across her face. Information and emotion are generalized as they move from one window to another. She catches up on East Asian news blogs while cruising a dating site, pauses to solve an online chess puzzle, then forgets, for a moment, what she had started doing in the first place. It's better this way, to stay flat, but it only works for so long. Given the parameters of a human body, flatness must on occasion be filled out by movement and sensorial information.

She is trying to be a little better, every day. Any apparent frivolity is justified as simple behavioural modification, a strict system of positive and negative reinforcements. For instance, tonight, a date planned at a local bar: reward for two weeks without incident in the house and completion of a three-month long exercise regimen. Anything can be made into a reward, really, as long as you build it up that way.

The muscles in her neck loosen as she opens the garage door, steps into her vehicle, and starts the engine. The passing scenery stands in stark contrast to her recent house-bound monotony. However, the tension that arises from the stasis held in the house is necessary to her work, helps her balance numerous factors

to produce the perfect degree of focus. She turns down a quiet subdivision. Beautifully produced, dancehall-tinged pop music floats through the car stereo.

Leading up to the bar's entrance, there is a long hallway lined with mirrors and small, dim lights. She sees in her reflection that she is successfully mimicking a categorical sex appeal that is sleek, black, sharp, and again, flat. She waits, ordering a ginger-ale which glows with the same amber light that fills the room and glances off the brass taps and railings, accenting intentional glimmers on her neck and wrists. This is all part of her logic.

Later that evening, her date rises behind her, adjusts the straps of the harness, and pulls the woman up by the back of her hair so that her ass arches up toward the wobbling dildo. The pillow smells rich, like someone who hasn't showered in weeks mixed with leather jacket. Something tears along her shoulders and back.

"What's your name?" a voice says, somewhere off in the distance. "Marlene? That's a very pretty name, Marlene." The woman lets the physiological responses induced by her partner's actions run their course. She inhales pillow smell, bites deep into polyurethane softness.

"That's right Marlene, close your eyes. Go to your happy place."

Headlights illuminate the interior of the garage: an empty jerry can, a ladder-cum-storage space. Then back to darkness. She pulls the door tight against its frame so it doesn't squeak and turns the key deliberate and slow, making as little noise as possible. Voices come, murmuring around her. She ignores them. The amber bar room and the smell of sex linger and provide a sheen of immunity as she slips between a set of immaculate sheets. Light greys the sky outside her window.

* * *

There are boxes piled on boxes in the room next to the room where she sleeps. She doesn't know what the boxes contain, though a collection of work boots, each one tied by its laces to its partner, peeks out from the top of one pile. Also bound together are several piles of newspapers. There is an empty fish tank streaked with residue and framed full-sized posters for movies she's never seen. She doesn't recognize herself in any of these objects but will occasionally use the workout bench stored at one end of the room.

Ensnared in the room up above, the man hasn't moved for days. When this happens, his chin hangs slack from his jaw and the inside of his open mouth begins to dry. His tongue cracks and bleeds and spit forms a semi-solid film lining the cavity of his mouth. When this happens, the man must be watered

carefully and often. The woman uses a tiny wet sponge on a stick to moisten all the dried spit and another to scrub the film away. The sponges look like pastel lollipops. If the sponge is too wet, water trickles into his lungs, which produces an angry, involuntary cough. The spray she uses to moisten his mouth smells like lemon candy, masks the dank sour smell emitting from the man's body.

In the mornings now, when she wakes up, she imagines filaments of spit in her own mouth. Licking the back of her hand, milky white deposits appear on her skin for her inspection. So, it seems she has them too. She had never noticed this peculiar effect before. Now that she is aware of them, the strings of spit appear not just in the morning, but at all times of the day. She has taken to playing with them in her mouth as she goes about her work, sucking the neutral-tasting tendrils through the spaces between her teeth.

She waters him, she waters the plants. The sun shines through the window and heats the skin along one side of his body, which grows warm and sticky. The plants grow dense and lush and dark green. They creep along the walls, wrap themselves in the venetian blinds, tangle themselves in each other, thickening. The man gags on a sponge lollipop that she's shoved too far down his throat. Bilious drops stain the front of his pyjama top. "I'm sorry I'm sorry," she mutters on repeat. Outside an arbutus tree is flowering, red berries hanging in tandem with round white blossoms.

The exercise equipment in the basement looks like it is from the seventies. The bench is upholstered in disconcertingly bright blue vinyl and the pearly beige weights are filled with fine black sand. She knows this because one of them once cracked while she was lifting. The grit worked its way well into her eyes, mouth, and all over the concrete floor before she noticed the leak. It's a simple thing, this exercise machine. There's a system of hinges and pulleys to work her calves and quads and a big barbell suspended above the whole contraption. She likes the pressure that builds around her skull as she lifts. She takes on as much as possible to make it squeeze tight and snug around her brain.

Beneath the exercise bench, three milk crates overflow with empty bottles. The contents have evaporated, but the sickly warm smell of brandy still hangs in the air. Each time she lets a weight fall, there is the sound of glass clinking against itself to punctuate her efforts. She's reminded of a dream she had the night before, the sound of bombs going off in a crystal ballroom. She was staring at her reflection in a red taffeta dress, listening to the tinkling of the chandeliers as they shook above.

So that his body does not completely fall apart while it is not in use, she moves his arms and legs for him, twenty times each, two sets twice daily. One arm, then the other, goes up-down-back-forth, then is twisted lightly from side to side. One, two, three, four, five... The elbows, wrists, and each finger receive this treatment. Then one leg, then the other, then knees, ankles, and toes. "Very good, this is going to make you stronger." She says this though she's not sure if he can hear. From large to small, each appendage is suspended gently in her grasp, then bent and lifted. Then each part falls limp again. Five, six, seven, eight, nine... After his workout she pats and massages each limb.

* * *

Another date. The bed smells musky, as it did before. Greasy sheets are pushed to the edges of the mattress. They twist around their bodies. The dildo, still wrapped in its prophylactic, is tossed on top of a pile of dirty laundry. A body lies next to hers, swaddled in more sheets. Noise emanates from the tangle of linens.

"Mmmmphtck."

"What?"

"Mmmph," the body speaks, "That was... fuck. Nice. That was nice."

"Yes," says the woman, "we had sex."

Her companion's head peeks out of the pile, accompanied by grey hair and eyes. She has no urge meet this gaze. Instead the woman inspects the edge of the mattress where foam leaks out of a seam and onto the floor. She has just had sex on this mattress. The mattress lies on the floor. The floor is coated in vinyl, but the vinyl looks like fake wood. Cigarette butts and a crust of toast in a saucer share the floorspace. An overflowed recycling bin.

This recent encounter is blurry and difficult to quantify. There was wetness and dryness. There was the taste of sweat on skin. It was punctuated by yes, no, functional phrases such as are you ready now, do you like this, a particular line of collarbone or texture of hair or skin. But the memory of the event doesn't come back in any sensible order. It has no use as information. For her, this is not necessarily problematic, but certainly unusual. This instance and its accompanying pleasure will not differentiate itself between the last time or the next time. It is hard to recall things that are purely physical.

Meanwhile, the naked body continues to speak.

"Want to go for a drive?"

Cocooned in the car, her companion is seated in the passenger side. The

woman is again cruising through placid and familiar streets. A stream of running commentary from the passenger, pleasant and meaningless, like the radio. She doesn't pay attention. "You can call me Al. Like that song? I've been called a lot of things. Al is good. Where are we going?"

The car smells fluffy and new. Modest townhouses and gently curving streets recede into highway turnoffs and roadside motels, recede into farmland, horses, fields of yellow canola. They park in an open field, facing west.

The woman does not understand the sound that Al is making. Al repeats the sound, and continues to do so. Al is singing, sort of. They want to move on top of her. They want to lie on her chest. Al acts like a kid, despite their greying hair. Al wants to sing. Al wants to kiss her and slide their hands down her jeans. The car is parked in an open field. Little birds, barn swallows, are zipping all around them, in and out of the fading light.

Suddenly, at once, they are both hungry. In a gas station restaurant on the highway between two mid-sized college towns, they order breakfast: stacks of buttered pancakes, toast with jam and eggs, milkshakes in frosty tin containers. Between mouthfuls, Al talks about travel and criss-crossing the continent. The woman is reminded of monarch butterflies migrating across the sea. Small things, vast distances. It seems tiring. Al's words jump lightly from one subject to the next and circle the food cooling on the table.

They rub their distended belly and belch across the table. "This makes me happy," says Al.

Looking out from the diner it's pitch black except for the fluorescent light falling on the gas station pumps. Looking in from the outside, Al and the woman are pictured through a large, aluminum-framed window. Their hands stretch across the table. She touches things carefully. Through the glass, their mouths move in silence.

When she gets home that night, there is already a message glowing in her inbox.

Dear Marlene,

I wonder about you.

Yours,

Al

The house feels angry from her day-long absence. Sour and pungent drafts of air punctuate the stillness and wrap around her figure, but she ignores this and absorbs herself into the dim light of the computer screen. She'll deal with all of that. Later.

* * *

Dear Marlene,

I woke up this morning feeling wonderful but also with the sense of having lingered somewhere strange where I don't belong. I would have always been a spectre in your life, don't you think? Decided to book a flight to the coast to visit some old friends, go crab fishing, and maybe try to hook up a job or two.

I like you too much. This, with your distance, makes me nervous. But I hope that the physical distance I am putting between us can be a gesture that will help clarify what's to come. I guess that's what I want, and although I'm gone, I am also in some ways here, as ever... forever, if you want me.

Al

She considers these words, then goes upstairs. The man has thrown up his meal replacement, which looks and smells about the same coming up as it did going down. Today, sitting in his chair by the window, his eyes are restless, scanning up and down, searching the edges of the room. They follow the woman's movements as she cleans up his vomit. More than interest or expression, one could read a sort of intensity in the man's eyes as he watches her. She pretends not to notice this.

Despite the vomit, despite Al's departure, today is no worse nor any better than yesterday. The present is always a continuous, flat whole. Seldom does any event break through the surface of the moment, and such interruptions are easily set aside. It's true, she once kept a room not in the basement, but up here, next door. Once, its walls were not white as they are now, but light blue. But there is no room for regrets. The man used to say something similar. He refused to have patience for any conversation that wasn't immediately useful. Case in point: within his conception, remembrance of the past was absolutely not useful. In thoughts like this, he has had more influence on her than she would care to admit.

The words return. They buckle and shimmer. They call out, sometimes like Al singing in the middle of an orgasm, sometimes like the man, though she

hasn't heard his voice in a very long time. The sounds they make are wounded and inhuman. The woman lifts weights, lets her body drown out the noise, but finds that the sound remains after her workout is over, coming from above. She finds the man upstairs, agitated, wandering up and down the hall. The hallway is dark. He moans and hits his head against a wall. A large maidenhair fern has been knocked over, dirt smudged into the diamond-patterned parquet floor. Downstairs, someone raps on the door.

Two police officers in uniform are waiting outside, one female, one male. In their stance, the cops seem to take up the whole doorframe, crowd out the light. Al's face flickers before her. One of the cops is holding a photograph of Al, 'Allison P', wearing a light grey, button-down dress shirt, their typical sideways grin. Is this a photo from the internet? It's unclear if this means that Al is wanted or missing. The woman tells the officers that she has never seen this person before.

"What's your name?" A man's voice floats towards her. "Mary? That's a very pretty name, Mary."

A moan comes from inside the house. The cop she is speaking to peers behind her shoulder.

"That's my husband. He's sick."

The other officer, the female, has a device in her hand. She is looking up something. She is probably looking her up in a police database. The woman doesn't know what they'll find. The cops stare at her. One of them writes something down in a folder. They don't say anything. The woman slowly shuts the door.

Words ring throughout the house. They swirl up the staircases, under the furniture, and around her head. The words are full of suspicion. They shout her name. The woman moves through this with deliberation. She makes her way to a bathroom, then opens a cupboard, runs the tap, drinks. She takes lorazepam, lets the sweet taste dissolve in the wet under her tongue. Green floats all around her. The pills are small. She takes another, a few.

Years ago, the woman bought a videocamera, expensive at the time, and would carry it with her wherever they would go. She took footage of road trips, parties, or of quiet moments alone, together. At that time, her camera was often fixed upon him. Even washing dishes, he moved wonderfully, a little dance every time he spun around the kitchen. She was a different person then, really, with her feeble attempts to preserve and record. Now she's against memory, as if one could rally against such a thing. However, the past becomes docile when combined with certain drugs. On such occasions, she allows them to slip in.

Her mind is very still. Everything is set to autopilot, on repeat. She is guided to the basement. Her camera, her recordings, lie under a collection of screws and nails, a pile of dated magazines. It's no trouble at all to find them. From the tiny speaker in her old camera, she plays the tapes with the video turned off as she lies in her room in the dark. *What are you doing? Are you filming right now? Hi.* The ceiling feels very low. The sound is tinny and tiny, yet it is harsher than any other sound or word that might creep into her head. His laughter emerges and she lets herself get absorbed in the stupid terror of his voice. She laughs. She can smell his breath in the air, sour and heavy.

* * *

The space of the car is enclosed and of a manageable volume. The woman enjoys the familiar touch of the controls and the steering wheel. All the settings have been adjusted so that they are adapted to her body. It is a comfort to be held safely within a bubble of steel and glass. The bubble glides forward with her thoughts. The woman focuses far into the distance, towards a stand of trees or buildings that seem to lie on the horizon.

She eases into the graceful curve of the ramp that leads onto the highway. The benzos make the woman feel so normal it's like they're not even present. Memories flash past her and blend into the scenery passing outside the car windows. With methodical concentration, she turns each instance over to examine its variegations, weighing them against her reactions. Her reactions generate a feedback loop that turn her back to her memories. Past and present overlap so that it is unclear which temporality she is inhabiting.

It feels like she has been in this moment before. She follows the yellow line of the highway which leads her to a bridge. There is no place to pull over so she slows down to a stop and carefully turns on the vehicle's hazard lights. The bridge rumbles with the movement of passing traffic. These vibrations register as a deep tone that travel through the car and into her body. The woman examines her surroundings. There is a concrete bench overlooking an industrial park through tall bars of steel. The buildings below look very small from this height, as do the subdivisions well off in the distance. Drivers, locked in their own bubbles, shoot her dubious and angry glances as they pass. There is a symphony of car horns behind her, adding to the deep vibrations.

The woman checks her purse. On her way back to the house, she will pick up a bottle of wine. She steps out of the car, leaves the keys dangling inside. Traffic

moves quickly. The velocity is felt as a small rush next to her ear, a somewhat disorienting effect, like she could be struck down at any moment. She walks against the direction of traffic, aware of the instability of her steps and the shifting structures around her. Still, for this occasion, she is able to summon a certain degree—an idea that resembles—determination. The view from the bridge unravels in a striking and familiar way. From here on out, every encounter will hold a similar possibility.

* * *

It is possible that the police are coming for her. It's possible, and sort of funny. Perhaps they suspect her of murdering Al. Perhaps she did. Perhaps she ripped through them while they were having sex, slit them open so that their guts toppled out of their body. Perhaps she buried them in some field on the side of the highway, where the swallows dip in and out of the light. One morning she wakes up with electrical wire wrapped around her throat, laughing. She can't remember much except the sour taste of lemon in her throat. She throws up sour, pickled, sweet, brandy, pills. Who was that, stroking her shoulders, holding back her hair? She is falling asleep to an extra long movie, starting over, falling asleep again. Things move around her. This has all happened already.

A hand is stroking her head. The hand becomes a fist in her hair that pulls her head back so that her body arches backwards and her voice is buried as it slips underneath her throat. Her face is pushed against something flat and cold. Another face turns towards her, does not break its gaze upon her as the fist punches hole after hole in a wall. It bares itself to her, each time, each punch, so that she can see how bloody and broken the fist becomes. Fist and face are the same thing, the things they show her are all the same.

Her voice is slurry. "It's alright," she addresses them aloud, "It's just like before, and as it always was. I can feel you... I can feel your face. You can come into me. You can come inside me. I'm not scared. There's nothing to be afraid of. We are going to be okay."

The ceiling is very low and the bed is very small. She is very slightly sick. Voices shimmer on the periphery, images pass over her. A smile flickers occasionally like static across her face. Hands and mouths press into her. They pick and tear at her toes and her ribs. Her bones unravel along the lines of meridians. Her face is wet. The spirits are precise. They slowly disassemble, they take her apart. It doesn't matter what she wants. This is what she always wanted.

She has never wanted for anything. She dissolves. She doesn't exist.

Dear Marlene,

I thought about you today as I was walking through the forest. I'm on an island. The biomass here is greater per cubic metre than any other place on earth. I found a massive tree that had fallen over. It was the size of a ship that could hold hundreds of people, more than twice my height at its width, and with a million little lifeforms growing out of its giant corpse.

I want to be like that tree when I'm dead, connected and important to the things that are still living. In this way, we are different, but it would still be good for you, don't you think, to have some forest around you, some dead tree to grow out of...

That is to say, politely and poetically, that I'm not going to let you go.

With you as ever,

Al

The house is destroyed. Light fixtures have been torn from the ceiling. Beams are cracked or snapped through, the studs visible from holes torn through the walls. Wire, insulation, dead bugs, and newspaper—whatever was inside has been pulled out. The holes have left decades-old layers of wallpaper and paint exposed, have carved peepholes and passageways to the spaces on the opposite side. At least some of this work has been done with a chair that is still partially embedded in the drywall. Plaster dust floats through the air. Oddly, the windows are all closed and still intact.

Cool, still water has flooded the basement, rising just high enough to creep over the ankles and touch the electrical outlets. Plastic slippers and plastic dishware float languorously on this surface. The power is out. It is quiet quiet quiet quiet, as if the house has been vacated.

Upstairs, the man is luscious and corpulent, despite his subsistence on little more than water and air. His room remains untouched. Rooted in his chair, his limbs, glowing with life, have expanded and solidified into wide, fleshy trunks. The houseplants coil around his head and wrists. They form a green jungle, thick with heat and vitality. Humid, sticky condensation emanates from this self-contained ecosystem. Redolent of chlorophyll, rot, and over-sweet meal replacement, the wetness steams up the windows of the man's room and spreads itself through the house. The plants tangle into the woman, pull her deep into the walls of the house

where they have taken root. She breathes in their heavy scent, the essence of this place, its hostile newness latent with unspoken memories.

The man is sitting before her. She doesn't know how long she has been sitting here. There is a massive wound cut open between the man's spread legs, as if someone has used an axe to split his body down the middle, as if his body was made of wood. The gash runs nearly to his chest. Ficus, anthurium, and fuchsia-pink orchids explode riotously out of his hole. The man is not moving. The room is very still. Outside, a black grackle, coated in iridescent blue, peers into the window, shrugs, and flies away. You can hear other birds singing out there, but in here things are different. The man looks very beautiful.

His eyes do not open, nor are his lips moving. Nevertheless, something is being said. It is an acknowledgement, communicated through the pheromones in the air, or perhaps through some sort of telepathy.

She has needed to hear these things for a long time. She can't think of a better conclusion. Sirens sound off in the distance. Somehow it is not enough.

* * *

Dear Marlene,

Writing you, I'm by the sea. I've been sitting here for hours. You know, just watching the waves do their thing over and over again. The sun is coming down so hot. I don't really know why I'm here. I feel like I've been floating in this liquid space, and in it, you keep coming back to me.

I remember you, but there is so much I don't know how to remember. I wish I wasn't alone in my remembering, but that's just the way it is, isn't it. Even if we both tried to remember the same thing, it would turn out different. And it's not even the same, either, as whatever really happened.

But, for now, I remember the way your body moves against mine.

Is that important? I don't want to be alone... Is it worth it, do you think, to remember these things with me?

I want to thank you for this feeling I have, but I'm not sure what I mean.

Thank you, I guess, for everything.

Al

Grandfathers of Bogatynia

Caroline Szpak

Everything sounds
the same from inside a plane.
Even the warm air
opens booklets, reads water
colours carbon monoxide detects.
Poor circulation meets morning
like an equal on the flood, or breath
never reaching the floor. What about
the mutual exclusion of cavities?
What about two empty chairs
facing one another? A bandage
can't outgrow the still life a subtraction
smaller than smoke from thermal
stations, but not
a water for bridges —
something he sinks
into — fewer handprints,
the difference in volts. Light sleepers
always as long as approach, initials
instead. Just write
me one gentle poem, he said.
Can you do that?

what i'd really like

Kai Cheng Thom

use the wrong pronouns
when you talk about me
say “he” and “him,” then correct
yourself belatedly, forget
the differences between
“transvestite,”
“transgender,” and “transsexual,” refer
to me as all three
interchangeably, blushing
as the words stumble
out of your clumsy mouth.
ask me what my “birth name”
was, retract the question
just a second too late, face burning
when you see me flinch.
ask me how
“it all works *down there*”
if i plan to get The Surgery, ask
with unabashed curiosity
how large my breasts
will grow on HRT.
tell me
that you don't agree
with feminism
because while you believe
in women's rights (your poor
single mama and three
older sisters who raised you right

saw to that), you also think that men
experience discrimination, especially
when it comes to child
custody arrangements, reporting
sexual assault,
and being allowed to talk
honestly about their emotions.
tell me that you think
that Social Justice Warriors are
mostly a bunch of well-intentioned yet
naïve college hipsters who
don't have a clue how the Real World
works and undermine their cause
by alienating people unnecessarily.
argue furiously with me
about the concept of social welfare,
tell me stories
about how your mama worked
three jobs and still
tucked you into bed each night
and got you through school
and into college as an example
of how anyone can achieve anything
if only they work hard enough.
blink away the tears that come
unexpectedly when i ask you
if you think your mama deserved
better than that.
look away as i lean forward, resisting
the urge to run your fingers over
the cleft between my throat
and collarbone
and pull me in
for a kiss that's long and deep

and bittersweet as the taste
of blood oranges.
resist
a moment longer.
then do it.
fumble for a moment, afraid
of hurting me as your hands
close around my angled body.
come in too fast for the kiss
so that our teeth gently collide.
laugh with me. and try again
for this kiss
longer and more concentrated
than any you can remember.
this kiss
longer
and slower
than any
you've had before.
pull me down
onto the bed with you, startle
when i ask you if it's okay
to take your shirt off, say
of course, like i should
take it for granted
that you would want to be nude
with me, almost as if no one
had ever taught you that it was
your right to not be into sex
at all times. say, *of course*
again, more solemnly this time.
lose track of your thoughts
as my tongue glides its own path
over your chest, across your nipples.

flip my body over, lean over me
and search me with your lips.
say, *can i take your clothes off*
all in a rush, asking because you think
that this will please me, even though
this much verbal negotiation
is more than you are used to
and feels awkward on your tongue.
strip me bare
with shaking hands,
unsure of what you'll find, unsure
if you will desire it
as much, or more
than you want to.
tell me
in a voice that you hate for its quaver
that you've never done this before
that you don't want to hurt me
that you think i'm the prettiest,
most amazing girl
that you've ever touched and this
trans thing is still all new to you but you
want to explore but you don't want
to exploit me and you're sorry for
freaking out like this and you just need
a second and.
stop.
inhale
exhale
slower
deeper
slower
(let me tell you
about something:

there are whole worlds
you've never been to
so beautiful
and fragile
you know at once
you don't
belong there)
and breathe with me
wordless
world-less
in the depths
of our throats and chests.
and fall with me, skin pressed
to skin, intertwined at the hip
my hand between your legs
and yours between mine,
and rise
and fall
and rise
and fall
as we fly into a place
where words don't matter
and politics are meaningless
and anybody can be held
and forgiven and loved
no matter what they've said
or who they've been
before.

Review of Jordan Scott's *Night & Ox*

Carmen Faye Mathes

Jordan Scott's *Night & Ox* limns a heterotopic space for the 21st century, making of new fatherhood a vivid (and sometimes twilight) zone. Michel Foucault describes the "heterotopia" as a "sacred or hidden" place for transition or transgression, which develops when a society's preoccupation with time, history and progress becomes instead that of space, "simultaneity," "juxtaposition." Like an image in a mirror, the heterotopia is virtual but not unreal. While the state does its best to mobilize heterotopias to contain and control, there are certain heterotopias, according to Foucault, that might also be "la plus grande réserve d'imagination." These—for instance, ships on the high seas—are powerful because they are the habitations of adventurers and pirates.

Night & Ox exploits such imaginative potential by inviting readers into the real-unreal space of a new parent's heterotopic existence. Scott's book-length poem, much of which comprises a single vertical stanza of no more than three words per line, evokes a dimly lit baby's room at three in the morning; a bed filled with sleep-deprived, unfulfilled desire; a ramble though "bonkers canyon" with his baby strapped to his chest; gazing out the kitchen window in the sudden realization of domesticity's sweetness. Fatherhood, for Scott, is as much a space as it is a time; "your first / moments" don't pass, he writes, but "trespass" (34). In the tense displays of language

that distinguish Scott's body of work (*Silt* (2005); *blert* (2008); *Decomp* with Stephen Collis (2013); *Clearance Process* with Jason Starnes (2016)), *Night & Ox* has a cadence like binomial nomenclature:

you're small
 your small
 so cry's
 inky stampede
 blotchy
 in bee
 costume
 in
 glyph kitchen
 on
 glottis island
 studded
 sturgeon (22)

Amongst the gorgeous gnomic phrases (two favourites: "starlit parsnip" (10); "rumpus perogy" (67)), Scott captures a new father's exhausted elation, which is never quite pure tedium or pure awe. Overwhelmed with love, he also catches himself caring for his sons while daydreaming, "instagramming," and composing lines of poetry (11). This side-by-side-ness, both of form and content, exposes limitlessness in the mundane, turning the milky way, "stratosphere's whirl," into what seems like baby formula: "brick dust / milk powder" (11). Simultaneity, in a poem like this one, means content that is hard to parse only if you stop reading; keep moving, and whole universes open

up before you, in all their “planetoid / fruitfulness” (11). This poem is a taxonomic atmospheric, where language surrounds as it galvanizes, envelops as it animates, and all the while hurtles you into the unknown.

Scott’s play on cosmonaut, the “cosmoglot,” yokes intergalactic exploration to the poet’s facility for language. Although Foucault was thinking about oceans rather than galaxies when he called the ship “the heterotopia par excellence,” his claim that the imagination needs such spaces (“In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up”) aligns evocatively with a poem which, Scott tells us, was written under the aegis of the Rosetta spacecraft having reached Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. In the fatherhood zone, space and language become the “moltenness” that Scott associates with love: in one nighttime scene, “celestial / bodies’ / spacecraft shot” meet “haywire tongues” that “half / articulate / melt / me / linguistically” (23). In this, a collision of imperfect communication with perfect feeling, #dadlife seems most clearly to resonate with a spacecraft hitched to something vaster than itself. Hitched, perhaps, to two sons like celestial bodies, with their own mass, movement, and force.

Work Cited:

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Review of Aja Couchois Duncan’s *Restless Continent*

Cam Scott

Aja Couchois Duncan’s *Restless Continent* is many things: a deep ecological survey, a poetic habitat, a recollected lexicon or decolonial vocabulary, beginning indefinitely long ago:

if they say we have come from
oceanic witnesses
then who am i to differ (3)

“Emerging from the muck,” tracing the shore, the poem is at sea. Its subject is emergent, and yet there is already a “we,” related to a legislating “they.” Memory “is prehistoric knowledge, is deep water” (7), but identification with the non-human is anthropomorphic, too. Here the earth is figured feminine, a lap or “that which bears the brunt of it,” which is no less upsetting a representation for its stated intent, to impugn the gendered violence, and the gendering of nature, implicit in capitalist accumulation.

After the pre-natal invocation comes the first of several “worst case scenario” poems: “Do not panic when your body breaks through the ice to the shock of water below ... Do not be confused by the blurring of horizon and sky” (15). From this cautionary tale proceeds the centrepiece, *Nomenclature, Miigaadiwin, A Forked Tongue*, a bilingual glossary

and document of the author's "writing (toward) Ojibwe" (94).

Duncan places the problem of translation in a landscape, and her poem is translation of a landscape. "My story is the history of frontier, a wooded terrain" (19). Language is both a tool for and an object of incessant translation—a movement between outside-and-inside, outside-as-inside. "Dawn is not self referential. Neither is dusk" (21). This is to say the mirror of the sky is never empty. She explains, "I am a writer of apposition and so in Nomenclature the words are placed side by side, Ojibwe and English, English and Ojibwe. And yet their meanings are rarely, if ever, the same. Wittgenstein wrote that 'uttering a word is like striking a note on the keyboard of imagination,' and for me Ojibwe became a kind of music, a way of hearing the world, its animate and intransitive self" (94).

Wittgenstein alludes to an imagistic use of language, and Duncan's glossary has everything to do with language's purchase not only upon the imagination, but its imaginary purchase upon the world: "You once said that nouns were for accumulation, for bartering and trade. Use everything you can, you said...In which language should I describe the different parts of me? Inzid, nininj, there is another" (21).

Orality implies a shared space of transmission; conditions that cannot be relegated to the past without directly repudiating the speaker's being. Duncan's text confronts what Leanne Betasamosake

Simpson terms "cognitive imperialism," according to which there is no archive, no concept, prior to European translation. This is to finalize the violent interruption of traditional knowledge by colonialism once and for all. The poet calls upon the body, summoning foot and hand by name, but another body overlays her ancestral language. The body is not only alienated in language, but its music, the poet's imaginary self-identification, appears alienated in another tongue: "I have sorted the dismembered pieces of me according to their function" (21). Duncan writes the violence of colonial encounter as so many conquests sedimented into speech: "The French mated their way through the colonies. The English claimed only their mirror image. Later the science of alterity would explain such predilections" (23).

The most profound words in this section arrive as lament for the continent, broken into states, and for its colonized people: "We people, the first people. Our word for ourselves is the word for our tongue. There is no difference between the naming and those being named; language calls the world into being" (31). *In Situ*, a concluding suite, closes as the book opens, on restive origins and vast distress, pre-historical yet not impersonal: "when darkness is memory and geology/an unnatural burial" (89). Duncan affirms the antecedence of the terrain over the map, the arc of her work decolonizing, surfacing, constructive. "There is an art to this, to all things partial and approximate" (44).

Review of *IRL (Birds LLC, 2016)*

Samantha Nock

There's a checklist that Indigenous writers are expected to fulfill in order to authenticate our work. We have to write about time being circular, and ancestors' hands on our shoulders, or how our skin is like the earth, or how we are wild and free. We have to write about the violence that happens to our bodies in a way that's easily consumable: we have to fit 500 years of colonial trauma into 500 words. We are expected to play invisible and imaginary stoic "Indians" from John Wayne films or traumatized victims of Settler domination. We are rarely depicted as young, contemporary, urban peoples who go out, date, hook up, use Tinder and Grindr, fall in and out of love, and listen to Beyoncé.

In Tommy Pico's 100-page poem, *IRL*, we are all of these things and more: we are urban, we are queer, we are homesick, and we are mixed up, confused young people searching. We are all these things while balancing our histories as Indigenous peoples on our shoulders.

Pico is a Brooklyn based poet, originally from the Viejas Reservation of the Kumeyaay Nation, near San Diego, California. Written in broken prose and internet jargon, *IRL* captures the experiences of a twenty-to-thirty-something queer person living in Brooklyn who left his reservation to move to the city. Pico draws you in with the humour

and voice of queer urban youth culture and delivers truths about guilt, sadness, and historical traumas:

Some things can go on
forever, like looping "You da One"
by Rihanna, or the colonial legacy
called "constant Debbie Downer."
I find other ppl with internalized
gnashing (and have no gods,
dubious of "facts,"
oh and hate nature) n
call them family.

I was not sure how I was going to connect to Pico's poetry until I found myself in it. Our stories are not that different. I am all the things that have been woven throughout his poetry: urban, displaced, homesick, Indigenous, queer, and chasing love and lovers. Pico's writing breathes life into the multidimensional lives of Indigenous peoples, bridging the gaps created by settler cognitive dissonance. We are here, having fun and healing heartbreaks and chasing dreams and going to parties and listening to Beyoncé, and we are doing all this while carrying the full weight of colonization on our shoulders. For the young Indigenous reader, Pico's words are a comfort in knowing that our existences are contemporary and we have kin out there living and loving and experimenting.

CONTRIBUTORS

Afuwa was born in Guyana, on Karinya and Akawaio lands and makes art on Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Squamish, and other Coast Salish Territories. She is an active member of Gallery Gachet. Her current work re-imagines relations across the Atlantic diaspora. She worked with Dion Kaszas on a project funded by the Canada Council for the Arts on Secwepemc territory in the summer of 2016.

Andrea Abi-Karam is an Arab-American genderqueer punk poet living in Oakland, California writing on the art of killing bros, the intricacies of cyborg bodies, trauma, and delayed healing. With Drea Marina, they cohost *Words of Resistance*, a monthly radical queer open floor poetry night aimed at creating space for folks to share their work, especially if unpolished and messy. Their poem in this issue is a response to Ana Mendieta's *Covered in Time and Space* exhibit at the BAMPFA in early 2017. The piece centres on a subject that struggles for visibility in the face of the structural, endless erasure of the Other and dissolving corporality.

Gwen Benaway is a trans woman of Anishinaabe and Métis descent. Her first collection of poetry, *Ceremonies for the Dead*, was published in 2013, her second, *Passage*, was released in 2016 from Kegedonce Press, and her third, *What I Want is Not What I Hope For*, is forthcoming from Bookthug in 2018. She received the inaugural Speaker's Award for a Young Author (2015) and a Dayne Ogilvie Honour of Distinction for Emerging Queer Authors from the Writer's Trust of Canada (2016).

Juliane Okot Bitek's *100 Days*, published by the University of Alberta Press in 2016, has been shortlisted for the 2017 Pat Lowther Award, the 2017 Dorothy Livesay Award for Poetry, and is a finalist for the 2016 Foreword INDIES Award for Poetry. Juliane is a Liu Scholar at the Liu Institute for Global Issues and is completing her dissertation at UBC in the department of Interdisciplinary Studies. She lives and loves in Vancouver.

Shane Book's first collection, *Ceiling of Sticks* (2010), won the Prairie Schooner Book Prize and the Great Lakes Colleges Association New Writers Award and was a Poetry Society of America "New Poet" Selection. His second, *Congotronic*, won the Archibald Lampman Award and was shortlisted for the Canadian Authors Association Award, Ottawa Book Award, and the 2015 Griffin Poetry

Prize. He attended New York University, the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and Stanford University, where he was a Wallace Stegner Fellow. He is the 2016-2017 Writer-in-Residence at the University of Calgary.

Raymond de Borja is a writer and visual artist from the Philippines. Some of his recent writings can be found on *High Chair*, *Kritika Kultura*, *HTML Giant*, *Lemonbound*, *The Volta Blog*, *Matter Monthly*, and *Entropy Mag*. His first book of poems and collage, *they day daze*, was published by High Chair. The poems "In the Now You are Faintly Beginning" and "A Dream of Anechoic Chambers" are part of a book in progress, tentatively titled *Given*.

Kai Cheng Thom is a writer, performer, social worker, and lasagna lover who divides her time between Montreal and Toronto, unceded Indigenous Territories. Her work has been published widely in print and online, with pieces in *Buzzfeed*, *Asian American Literary Review*, and *GUTS*, among others. She has performed at venues including the Verses Festival of Words and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. Her first novel, *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars: A Dangerous Trans Girl's Confabulous Memoir* (Metonymy Press, 2016), is a finalist for the Lambda Literary Awards. Her debut poetry collection, *a place called No Homeland*, was released by Arsenal Pulp Press in Spring 2017.

Bug Cru is a queer visual artist living in Vancouver, BC. Their work primarily focuses on drawing and illustration along with tattooing, print making, painting, textile work, digital media, DIY culture, and zine production. Their work is a navigation of gender, capitalism, mental illness, and intersectionality.

Jennie Duguay is a queer disabled femme and white settler living on unceded Coast Salish Territories in Vancouver, Canada. Jennie organizes a Community Care Collective, a radical form of community-based care, and is co-admin of the Vancouver Queer Spoon Share. Her writing has been published in *GUTS*, *The Peak Magazine*, and is forthcoming in *CV2* and *Monstering*.

Natasha Gauthier is a Metis writer living on unceded Coast Salish Territories in Cloverdale, BC. She recently completed a BA in Creative Writing and a certificate in Fine Arts. Her work has appeared in *The Malahat Review* and *Pulp Magazine*. She is currently interested in hybrid literature and blending text with visual art to create a narrative more closely linked to the subconscious.

Stacey Ho lives on unceded Coast Salish Territories and makes things. *Green House* is excerpted from a novel in progress.

Ya-Wen Ho lives guilt-inducingly close to Victoria University of Wellington where she is currently pursuing a Masters in Literary Translation. She indulges her curiosity for process, experimentation, and translation as a lived experience in “I walk around dead bees,” which folds bilingually between Mandarin and English. Her first book, *last edited [insert time here]*, was published by TinFish Press in 2012, and she wrote a hypertextual essay, “Dear You,” with the support of a Horoeke/Lancewood Reading Grant in 2015.

Eli Howey is an artist and printmaker currently based in Toronto. They use traditional analogue printmaking techniques to create contemporary narrative artbooks and large-scale works on paper. They use a combination of images and poetry to construct narrative artwork that expresses multiple dimensions of each situation. Their work attempts to go beyond what can be seen in order to incorporate the emotional and imagined spaces within environments and stories.

Dion Kaszas is a Nlaka’pamux (Thompson Indian) from British Columbia, Canada. He works as a professional tattoo artist in a small town tattoo shop, Vertigo Tattoos and Body Piercing in Salmon Arm BC. He specializes in neo-tribal, dot work, black work and ornamental tattooing with a special emphasis on traditional hand tattooing techniques. These include hand poke and skin-stitch tattooing methods which arise from his Nlaka’pamux culture. He is engaged in the revival of his ancestors tattooing practices and assists in the revival of other nations tattooing traditions through the Earthline Tattoo Collective and the Earthline Tattoo Training Residency.

Jamil Jan Kochai lives in West Sacramento, California. He is a graduate student in the English program at UC Davis. Currently, he is at work on his first novel *99 Nights in Logar*, an excerpt of which has been published in the 25th issue of *A Public Space* magazine. His poems, short stories, and novel engage with the personal/historical traumas of the Afghan diaspora. He will be attending the Iowa Writers' Workshop in the fall.

Lee Lai is an artist from Melbourne, Australia, currently living in Tio'tia:ke (known as Montreal), Quebec. Her work consists primarily of comics that are part queer fiction, part memoir: vignettes of tenderness and intimacy between family members, friends, romantic partners.

Carmen Faye Mathes is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. She has published essays and book reviews in *European Romantic Review*, *Romantic Circles Praxis*, *Studies in Romanticism*, and *Modern Philology*. She is currently at work on a book about British Romanticism, which explores modernity as a condition of perpetual ethical concession.

Samantha Nock is a Cree-Metis writer and poet from Treaty 8 territory in Northeast BC, but whose family comes from Ile-a-la-Crosse (Sakitawak), Saskatchewan. She has been published in *Shameless Magazine*, *Red Rising Magazine*, and *Māmarwi-ācimowak: Lit, Crit, and Art Literary Journal*. She has a BA in First Nations Studies and Political Science from the University of British Columbia. Sam loves coffee, corgis, and radical decolonization.

sidony o'neal is a writer, artist, and dramaturg from South Sacramento, CA.

Jai Arun Ravine is an artist who lives in Philadelphia. They are the author of *The Romance of Siam: A Pocket Guide* (Timeless, Infinite Light, 2016), a 2017 Lambda Literary Award Finalist. "Ambient Asian Space: Season 3 Episode 5: The Emperor's Karaoke Lounge" is an excerpt from *Ambient Asian Space*, an experimental drama of text, comics, stickers, and .gifs co-created with Coda Wei. Using Oulipian writing techniques and internet fandom, this imaginary play-world features nonbinary protagonists in search of noodles, wormholes, bubble tea, styrofoam, and queer CyberAsian spaceships. Please log on to noodlecroons.tumblr.com to experience episodes from the archives.

Kai Rajala is a genderqueer poet, community organizer, and editor at *The Mainlander*. Learning to love as a white settler on the occupied and ancestral territories of the Coast Salish peoples, they find intensity and lightness in near-daily bath soaks and small eternities in transit crushes.

Cam Scott is a poet and improvising non-musician from Winnipeg, Canada, Treaty One territory. He performs under the name Cold-catcher and writes in and out of Brooklyn.

Caroline Szpak is writer of Polish ancestry living in Toronto. Her work has appeared in places like *This Magazine*, *The Maple Tree Literary Supplement*, *CV2*, *SubTerrain*, and *Poetry is Dead*. A first full-length poetry collection is forthcoming from Anvil Press.

Jennif(er) Tamayo is a queer, migrant, latinx poet, essayist, and performer, daughter of Nancy, Flora, Leonor, and Ana. Her books include *[Red Missed Aches]* (Switchback, 2011), *Poems are the Only Real Bodies* (Bloof Books 2013), *DORA/ANA/GUATAVIT@* (Ruth Stone Foundation 2016), and *YOU DA ONE* (2017 reprint Noemi Books & Letras Latinas's Akrilica Series). The poem in this issue is written for, after, and with dancer and choreographer, Randy Reyes, whose movement scores inspired this piece. More of JT's writing and art can be found at www.jennifertamayo.com.

Christopher Tubbs lives in New Westminster, BC. Like his mother, he is a member of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. He is moved by the hardships that his family has endured on the reserve and in the residential school system. Their experiences inspire nearly all of his work.

José Vadi is a writer who lives in Oakland, California. His recent poems focus on the socioeconomic changes across the Bay Area. Recent works in this vein have appeared in *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Prelude Mag*, *Sundog Lit*, *sPARKLE + bLINK*, *HOLD: a journal*, and this very issue of *The Capilano Review*. (josevadi.com | [@vadiparty](https://twitter.com/vadiparty))

Coda Wei lives in Philadelphia. They are interested in having new encounters. Their piece, co-submitted with Jai Arun Ravine, is one half of an intersecting noodle of a recurring episodic encounter in an undisclosed location outside Philly. Read more on noodlecroons.tumblr.com.

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