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SO FI ZINE
EDITION #10

~~DECEMBER 2021~~
FEBRUARY 2022

CREATED & EDITED BY
ASH WATSON

PUBLISHED BY FRANCES ST PRESS

ISSN 2209-3028

SOFIZINE.COM
#SOFIZINE

Hello! I (Ash) usually write an editorial that goes on the next page, about what the world has been like while the zine was made and a musing or two on sociological fiction, followed by a guest editorial from someone I've invited to be part of the edition. This time, for #10, instead I opened up the editorial to anyone who wanted to share some words and contribute—anyone who has ever written for the zine or read it or newly stumbled upon the call. I have collaged their words together on the following pages for *So Fi Zine's* first community editorial. Their words say more than I could so this brief note is it from me this time.

Reaching #10 feels momentous. To everyone who's ever sent work or read this and shared it with others, all I really want to say is: thank you. #11 is coming soon.




Creative social inquiry

a community editorial

means that I can look at the world from the perspective of what could be rather than what is. I can experiment and play with ideas, rather than having to have them fully formed / formalised into a 'theoretical perspective'

provides readers with fun and interesting opportunities through which to explore sociological concepts and issues in ways that can bring into question previously unexamined understandings of the social world

means embarking on a curious, humble learning journey. It requires one to withhold judgement long enough to discover something new. Social inquiry is fueled by fascination. Its reward is continued fascination



describes both an outcome and the process that produces that outcome. I think also that ethnographic research can lend itself to creative approaches since traditionally and, for some, still, it seeks to answer no particular question and aims simply to gather insight. When what one has learned is what came in through their pores, so to speak, then that may need to be thought about and transmitted in a different way than a scholarly text, full of expected conventions of expression, argumentation, and justification.

is about investigating the ways we interact, relate and co-exist in our world, both within our human communities and with our environment and non-human species. To do so creatively we are able to harness creative modes and methods in our investigation, the world is our oyster!

Creative forms of social inquiry have always had an important role in society but given the pace of technological development it now seems important for such inquiry to reach and influence new audiences

Writing creatively helps me work through “big issues” in a way that makes them go back to real human emotion and feeling,

gives me the freedom to explore the emotional impact of my research, and to present the incredible courage and suffering of the people and other animals that are the subjects of my academic writing.

Sometimes you don't realise you need the freedom of creative expression until everything important refuses to be included in a

scholarly text.

being creative in thinking about our social lives is finding ways to think about people and things that might allow something unexpected to emerge, something that helps start answering questions you were often not even aware you were asking.

Being able to tell stories as a way of doing sociology makes a critical sociological way of thinking open to all.

Creative sociological writing allows me to do what I have always known I want to do but the forces of traditional academe and my own ambition have averted me from doing: TELLING GREAT STORIES!

The creation of poetry, images and


other artistic processes emphasises the creative aspects of scientific analysis process and pinpoints the researcher as the performer actively creating the analysis.

being able to participate in writing as itself a form of research enables me to be a more reflexive, compassionate and integrated researcher.

the sociological essence must be elaborated upon. In images, poetry and beyond

it is a way in. to an eternal conversation. with an unknown destination but a strong sense there ultimately be some fundamental common ground.

the 'emotional truths'



interest stems from reading writers like John Dos Pasos and Philip Levine and watching movies by Ken Loch, Joris Ivens.

I've also hitchhiked thousands of miles overseas, so there is also a "been there and survived that" element to this.

Even as our society becomes ever more politicized, powerful voices are (as ever) admonishing us to keep politics outside art. This desire, as George Orwell pointed out almost a century ago, is itself a political opinion. As such, those engaged in creative pursuits seldom if ever have the luxury to censor or silence themselves or others. Indeed, during times of heightened sociopolitical crisis, it's often artists who assess the stakes

and communicate most clearly. We need support and passion from an engaged and informed audience, obviously, but it's up to those able --and willing-- to advocate for creative social inquiry to inspire action through words.

it is hard to think about the criminal justice issues that may emerge from advances in technology unless a creative and anticipatory stance is taken. Such a stance involves the generation of descriptions of worlds that might (but might not) become real. The construction of these descriptions requires creative steps that have a role in producing scenarios that could help with the consideration of what needs to be done now to channel

technology in a way that accords with our values. In this way creative inquiry has a role in the avoidance of passive resignation to forms of technological determinism.

I am trying to delve deeper

It seems vital, in the face of increasing distance between the privileged and the marginalised (human and more-than-human) that we have a wide range of ways to connect to the realities of often unseen lives, to move the human heart, and to recognise those least given social sanction to attest to their own experiences

It is a recognition of our mutuality,

an honour and a privilege to write

This is where I say what I cannot say in other spaces, where I make sense of feelings I haven't yet processed. This is where I capture moments of joy and sadness, so that I may look back and wonder how I moved from there to here.

the joy of being creative comes when there is an encounter with something unexpected, with something that was not intended when the work started. If things go well, this encounter can feel like having both discovered and created something that feels true to whatever it was that was on your mind before starting the work,

often something you were not even aware of.

Standard academic knowledge. Dreadful. Intolerable. Coining new terms, tallying citations, making arguments, counting deaths to make lives count. Still.

We want more. We want.

As writers, poets, and artists we so often think about the space we take up within creative communities that we don't think about the creative communities themselves. How do they function? Who are the insiders? Who are the outsiders? What does it mean to be a creative? What does it mean to belong in a creative community? Creative social inquiry begs these questions.

Life, laughter, rage, recognition, uncertainty, clarity, heartbreak, betrayal, description, fragments, desire, incomplete sentences, made up words, pleasure, prayer, movement, open hearts, pain, care, beauty.

An invitation.



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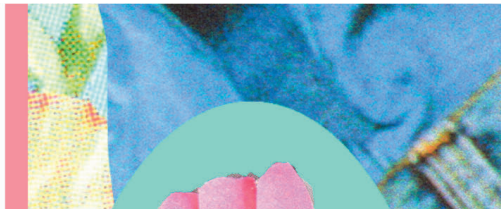
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The Anintelligence

Andrés Porras

On Jun 9, 2580, at 13:54. Stan Still
<stanstill@anintelligence.sol> wrote

RE: Statement in Support of the Painted Centurions

Jinx,

Thank-you for bringing this issue to the attention of upper management. As a Painted Centurion yourself, I'm sure it can be devastating to watch the actions of Torment Corp on the intergalactic news nets. Anintelligence strongly opposes violence of any form, especially when it affects our valued customers. I speak on behalf of our Board and CEO when I say that you have our complete support.

However, while we believe in the importance of making a statement, we would prefer to avoid becoming political. We don't want to run the risk of offending any of our happy customers. With that in mind, we've made some amendments to your initial statement (it served as a fantastic starting point, thank you!), and have attached it here with our justifications.

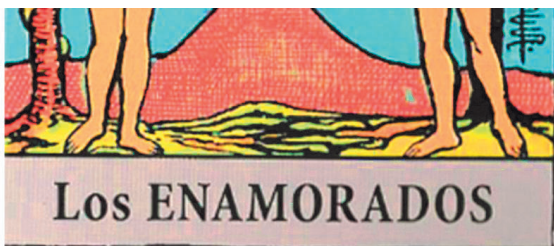
*Anintelligence stands in solidarity with the Painted Centurions of Velmont 5 in their fight against injustice. We strongly condemn the violent **alleged** actions of Torment Corp ~~on peaceful protests, and join fellow organizations such as Primamedia, Driftwell, and Griffin Systems in their boycott of all Torment Corp services.~~ **and ask for calm from both sides.***



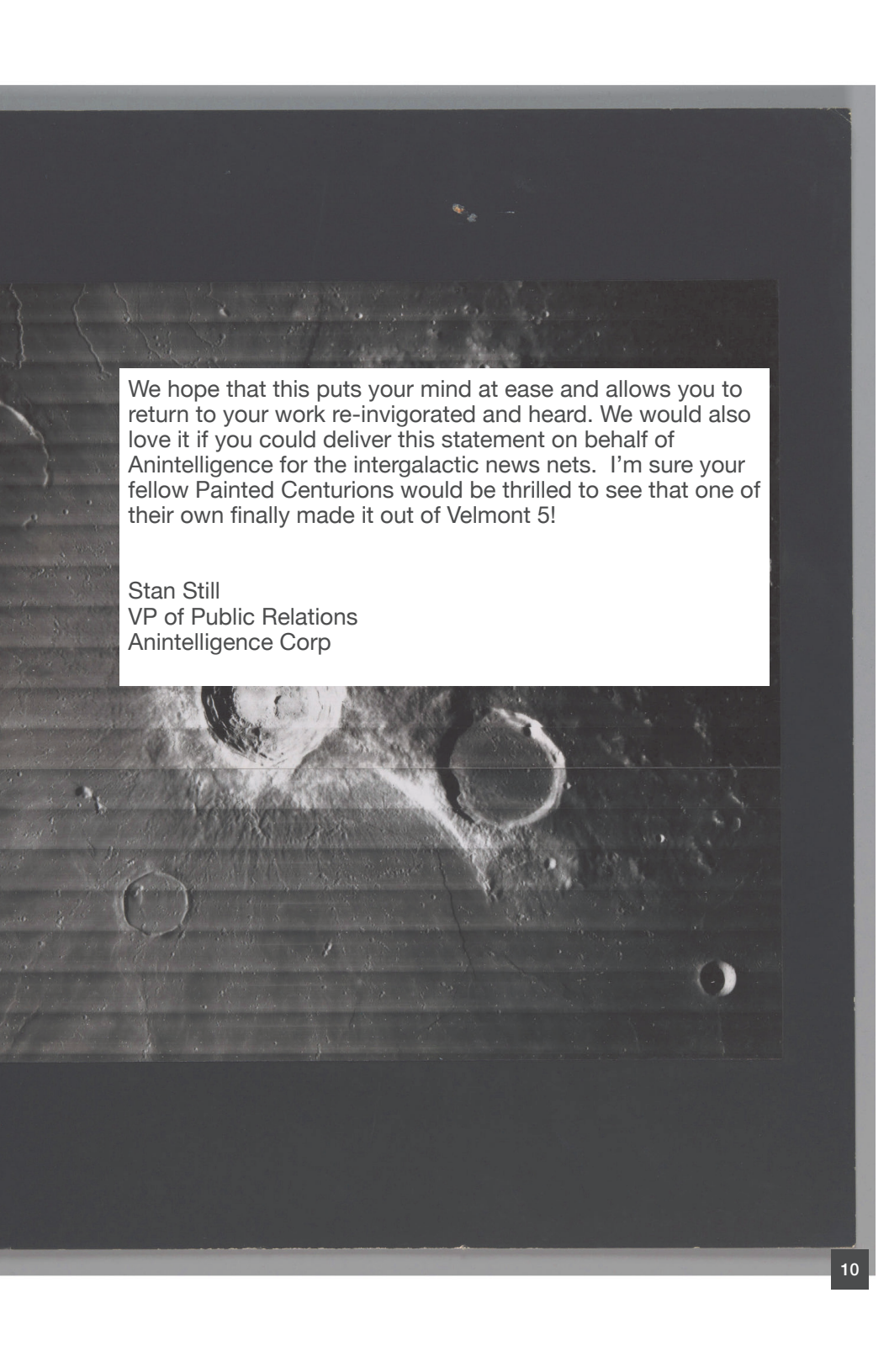
*Anintelligence values the dignity of all species and we are taking this time to evaluate our internal practices to increase the species diversity of our workforce. In the future, we will only partner with organizations that uphold high standards of sentient rights. **as we continue to improve our high sentient-rights standards.***

*We encourage our customers to take this time to confront their own bias and privilege, to improve support for ~~Painted Centaurs~~ **all sentients**, and to take tangible action against speciesism.*

- We felt it was important to avoid the use of the words “violent” and “peaceful” as it may offend citizens of the planet Torment who believe that Torment Corp’s alleged actions are justified.
- We wanted to ensure that we don’t make promises that we can’t keep. Boycotting Torment Corp’s services is just not feasible as it would cause disruptions for our customers.
- We can’t be certain that we will only partner with an organization that upholds high sentient rights, and we don’t want our customers to be offended if we can’t follow through.
- As we had already mentioned the Painted Centurions earlier in the statement, we felt that it was important that we explicitly stand in support of all sentients in order to make sure that the citizens of the planet Torment feel included as well.



Los ENAMORADOS



We hope that this puts your mind at ease and allows you to return to your work re-invigorated and heard. We would also love it if you could deliver this statement on behalf of Anintelligence for the intergalactic news nets. I'm sure your fellow Painted Centurions would be thrilled to see that one of their own finally made it out of Velmont 5!

Stan Still
VP of Public Relations
Anintelligence Corp

St Kilda Islands

Jack Redden

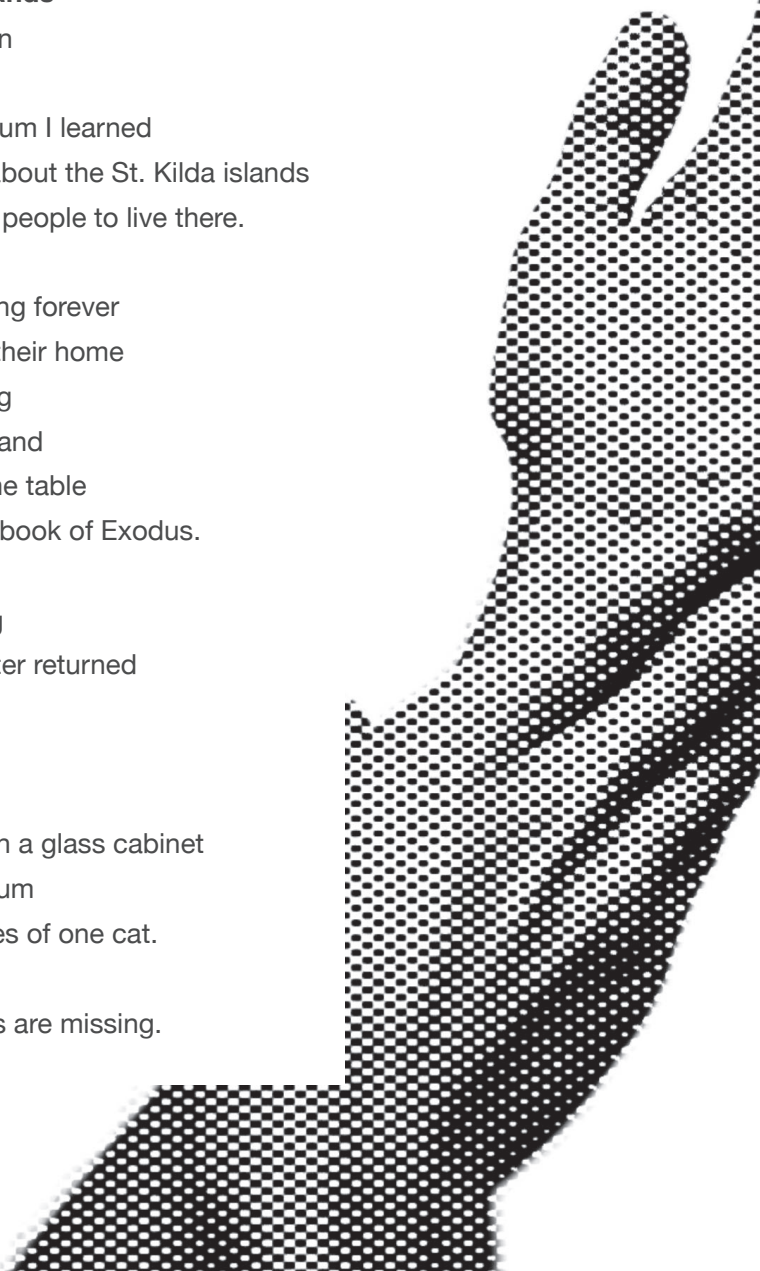
At the museum I learned
two things about the St. Kilda islands
and the last people to live there.

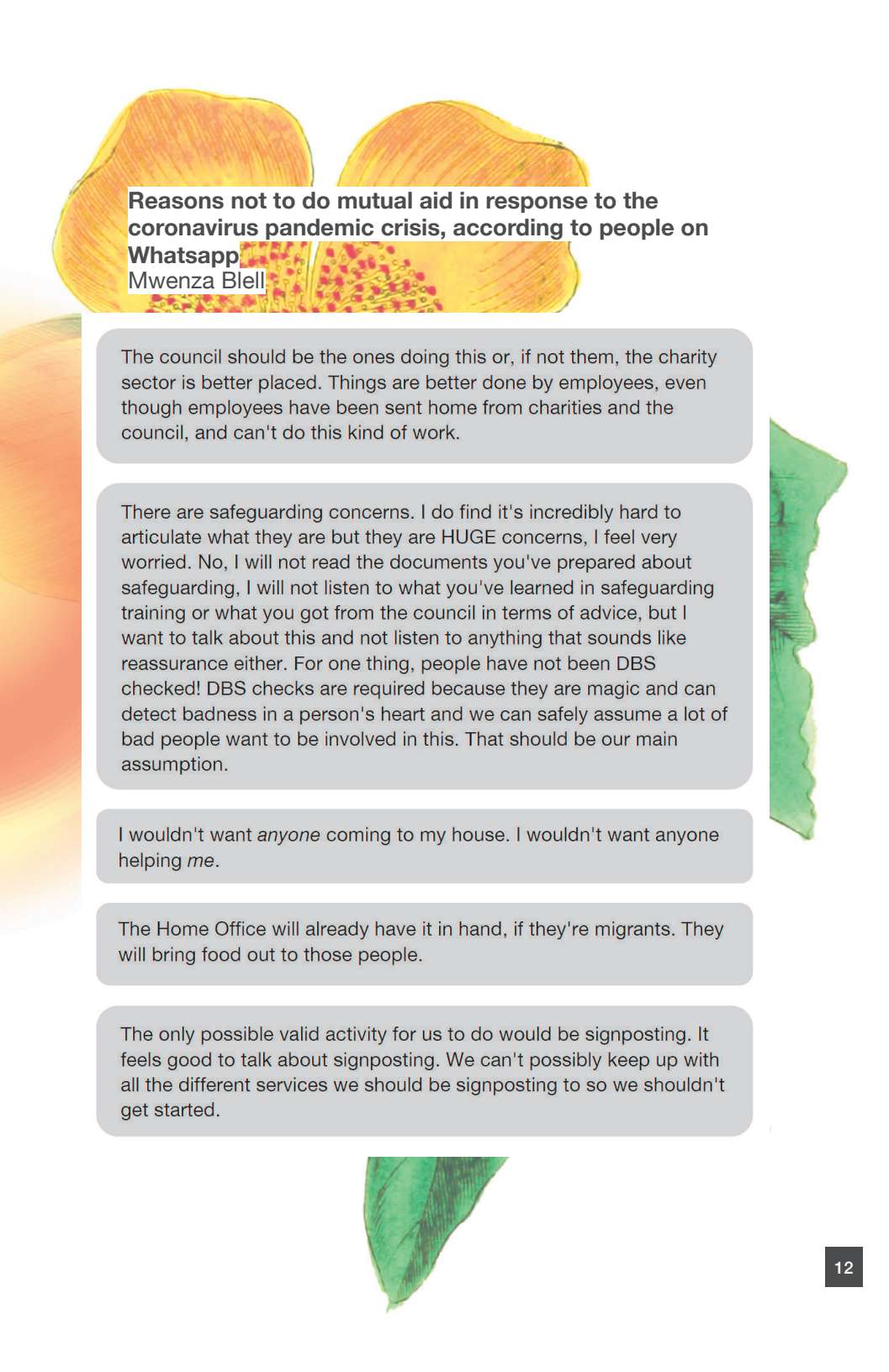
Before leaving forever
each left in their home
a fire burning
in the grate and
a bible on the table
open to the book of Exodus.

After leaving
someone later returned
to shoot
the cats.

On display in a glass cabinet
at the museum
are the bones of one cat.

Some bones are missing.





Reasons not to do mutual aid in response to the coronavirus pandemic crisis, according to people on Whatsapp

Mwenzu Blell

The council should be the ones doing this or, if not them, the charity sector is better placed. Things are better done by employees, even though employees have been sent home from charities and the council, and can't do this kind of work.

There are safeguarding concerns. I do find it's incredibly hard to articulate what they are but they are HUGE concerns, I feel very worried. No, I will not read the documents you've prepared about safeguarding, I will not listen to what you've learned in safeguarding training or what you got from the council in terms of advice, but I want to talk about this and not listen to anything that sounds like reassurance either. For one thing, people have not been DBS checked! DBS checks are required because they are magic and can detect badness in a person's heart and we can safely assume a lot of bad people want to be involved in this. That should be our main assumption.

I wouldn't want *anyone* coming to my house. I wouldn't want anyone helping *me*.

The Home Office will already have it in hand, if they're migrants. They will bring food out to those people.

The only possible valid activity for us to do would be signposting. It feels good to talk about signposting. We can't possibly keep up with all the different services we should be signposting to so we shouldn't get started.

There are GDPR concerns. The fact you've asked a solicitor to look at your processes for GDPR compliance means nothing because I don't know that person and I don't know any of the specifics of GDPR requirements either.


These people asking for help are taking the piss, some of them are asking for things that I don't consider essential. I should be able to interrogate and denounce them but I don't want to be involved in helping, no.

I'm in a high risk category myself, of course. Yes, you've explained a long list of things I could do which are urgent, apparently essential, and involve no leaving the house or physical contact with other people but I really don't like the sound of those things.

We shouldn't be doing these kinds of things. If we do, the Police might bother us. And we might cause a further lockdown if we do things to make the Police angry, which might cause the military to get involved. Actually, the military getting involved might be good, that will show them.

There might be scammers. We have to do everything to protect people from scammers. We shouldn't be allowed to contact with vulnerable people, vulnerable people are a real group of people, none of us are in that category so we can be paternalistic about this. It's clear that we can identify who is vulnerable and no one should have contact with them and, now I think about it, we *should* identify them so we make sure that we don't have contact with them and then we can pass their personal data on to the council just before we shut ourselves down. The fact you're telling me that people among us who used to receive care services (and could be classed as vulnerable) are not getting care and really need emergency help changes nothing.





I don't think people on the estate even think of themselves as our neighbours, this is a different area here, these terraces, I'm sure they have their own groups there.

I heard that this crisis might cause domestic violence and we should NOT approach people dealing with domestic violence, that is for specialists, I can't believe you think we should do mutual aid when the people we give food to might be suffering domestic violence! It's too complicated. No, I don't feel comfortable with signposting in this case, no.

Everything should be done by established organisations. If you can prove to me that established organisations aren't doing anything or leave people out then, well, I don't personally care about the people being left out by established organisations, including by the council.

This crisis is temporary and will be over soon. If it's not over soon the proper authorities will have it in hand by then. If they won't help everyone, I don't want to hear about that. No, I will not be involved in putting any pressure on anyone more powerful to stop people dying, that is *political*.

This is too political. I'm not interested in being involved in political things. I only want to help. Supporting the local council or big charities or the Police in all their actions is not political. The only thing that's political is criticising these kinds of organisations. Criticising individual strangers is not political, especially when I do it. I could lose my job if somebody saw me being involved in something political!

We should refer people to different parts of the council, if the council are referring people to us, we should tell the council to STOP THAT. I am not concerned about what it means that they are referring people to us.

The version of history I've been taught has the benevolent agents as more powerful people than we are. Groups like this are the bad guys and they lose. This kind of organising never really results in any positive change, nothing ever changes, nothing has ever changed. No, the things that changed just changed naturally over time, not because people did things! How ridiculous!

I feel sad. I can't keep up with things or do things because of my sadness and anxiety. I do not believe you would suggest that connecting with people to offer a hand could reduce my suffering, what a stupid thing to say!

Someone else from somewhere else might pretend to be us. And we can't stop them pretending to be us. So we shouldn't be us. Especially because those people might have something bad in mind or might make a mistake.

I don't really believe people are that much in need. Why don't they have money?

I've seen some of you that are in the group and you don't seem like people with good ideas, I have a lot good ideas but I don't want to share them.

People should know how to get food from foodbanks, they should know where the foodbanks are, they should know that the process for getting a voucher isn't functioning and find a way around it, they should know even if they don't read English, they should know even if they have no laptop or smartphone, they should know even if they have run out of mobile credit and can't google it, people should walk for over an hour each way to get to the foodbank because the nearest one is closed due to coronavirus. Surely, they should know there's no way to get food from foodbanks on a Friday or Saturday or Sunday so they shouldn't walk down there on *those days*. I really don't see why you would try to create any alternative provision, you're trying to reinvent the wheel here!



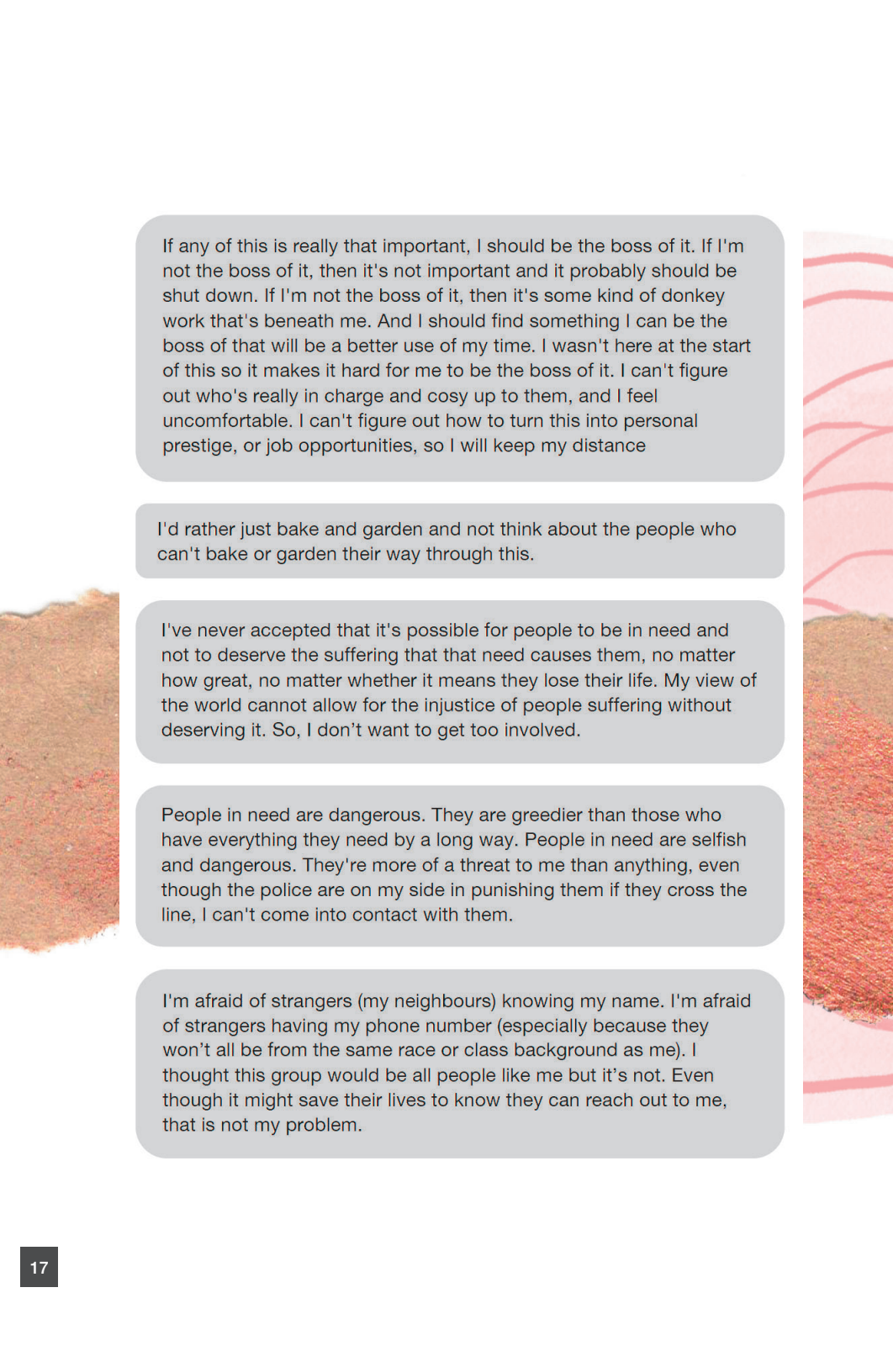
We can't be helping people. Because if they're really poor, we'll be creating dependency. And that's the worst thing of all.

I prefer things to have no structure, no expectations, more just totally free, and where I don't have to discuss things, or listen to others, or plan anything, and where I can cancel at the last minute without telling anyone. We shouldn't do this if we can't do it without communicating with each other.

Some people in the group actually criticised me for calling the Police! I only do that to keep everyone safe! I saw some people standing too close together on the street at the greengrocers, it was disgusting! And I saw a group that was so big I can't believe they were only one household, there were so many kids! And I saw Romanians in the alley by the bins (and they were up to something!). You know, there were teenagers playing with a moped on this street, no helmet in sight! And children ran away with my neighbours doorbell. And you know there are too many people coming and going from that one house. A neighbour's parcel was misdelivered to some asylum seekers and they didn't answer the door later even though they must have been in, that's theft! It's not my fault people might be deported after contact with the Police, how is it my fault if they are the ones doing wrong? Anyway, next time someone in the group chat tells me not to call the Police, I'm going to call the Police on them.

People might have food allergies.

It's too dangerous. Even flying is too dangerous. I won't read the documents that explain how to do things safely. I demand reassurance from public health people and the Police and I will not accept those reassurances. It's not just that I won't do things, I think *no one* should do these things, because I think it's unsafe!



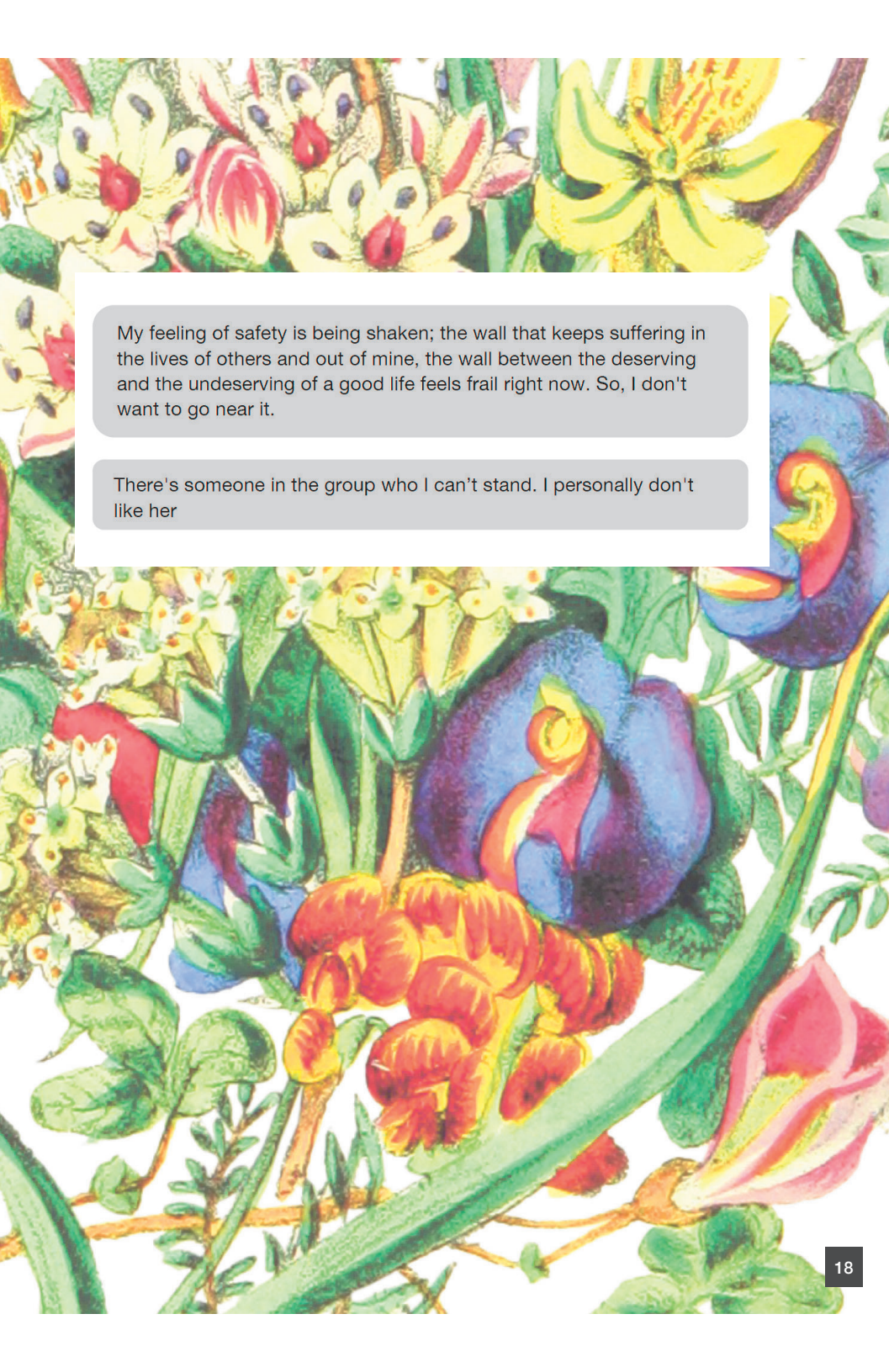
If any of this is really that important, I should be the boss of it. If I'm not the boss of it, then it's not important and it probably should be shut down. If I'm not the boss of it, then it's some kind of donkey work that's beneath me. And I should find something I can be the boss of that will be a better use of my time. I wasn't here at the start of this so it makes it hard for me to be the boss of it. I can't figure out who's really in charge and cosy up to them, and I feel uncomfortable. I can't figure out how to turn this into personal prestige, or job opportunities, so I will keep my distance

I'd rather just bake and garden and not think about the people who can't bake or garden their way through this.

I've never accepted that it's possible for people to be in need and not to deserve the suffering that that need causes them, no matter how great, no matter whether it means they lose their life. My view of the world cannot allow for the injustice of people suffering without deserving it. So, I don't want to get too involved.

People in need are dangerous. They are greedier than those who have everything they need by a long way. People in need are selfish and dangerous. They're more of a threat to me than anything, even though the police are on my side in punishing them if they cross the line, I can't come into contact with them.

I'm afraid of strangers (my neighbours) knowing my name. I'm afraid of strangers having my phone number (especially because they won't all be from the same race or class background as me). I thought this group would be all people like me but it's not. Even though it might save their lives to know they can reach out to me, that is not my problem.



My feeling of safety is being shaken; the wall that keeps suffering in the lives of others and out of mine, the wall between the deserving and the undeserving of a good life feels frail right now. So, I don't want to go near it.

There's someone in the group who I can't stand. I personally don't like her

Minneapolis Basketball Hoops

Daniel Tiernan







Sound and Fury

Julia Bennett

“Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”


Macbeth Act 5, Scene 5

Prologue spoken by the woman, dressed in a faded t-shirt and shorts, sitting up in the unmade double bed in the centre of the stage

I wake drenched in sweat. Check the clock. 4am. As usual. When they said - when I spoke to the surgeon - Ann-Marie - and she said - told me - gently - that they couldn't operate, that they would try but not to assume you'd even make it through that first night - when they said you were dying, I thought it couldn't be true. You were just fooling around, drunk as usual. Cut yourself. Blood everywhere, but we didn't realise how the glass had moved deep inside you. A borderline alcoholic literally killed by the bottle.

Scene 1

The woman is on stage, crouched with hands covering her head as others, dressed all in black, throw tennis balls at her. On the screen at the back of the stage text messages flash up e.g. 'why did you take him away from us?'; 'slut'; 'it's all your fault'; 'you drove him to drink'.



A pause and a passage of time, indicated by a calendar moving across the screen.

Scene 2

The woman is sitting now on the end of the unmade bed with a newspaper in her hands, surrounded by dirty mugs and wine glasses and plates with half eaten food on them. The obituary she is reading of a theatre director is on the screen, the focus on the screen shifts to the words 'survived by his wife'.

Woman (emotionally, angrily, partially addressing the speech to a photograph of a man which lies next to her on the bed, glass smashed):

It was all lies – our life was a lie, a figment of my imagination, you – the love of my life – was just a part you were playing. A character you'd made up.

Talk about a twist in the tale. I'd ordered a romance; thought I'd got more of a rom-com. But this is turning out to be a full-on thriller.

The woman's attention moves from the photograph to a man sitting in the centre of the third row. She starts to address him directly. The audience around him begin to look at him. He hunches lower in his seat.

Woman (shouting now):

I could never pin you down to a serious conversation. To discussions of our future. That wasn't you, you said. You spent your time with me playing the fool, making jokes, being the life and soul of our little party of two. But I am the gullible fool drowning in the dregs of merlot.

She kicks over a half full bottle of wine lying on the floor.



Epilogue

The curtains are closed, the spotlight on the centre of the front of the stage. A stagehand can just be seen in the wings stage left with a bouquet of flowers.

Nothing happens. The audience begin to shift in their seats, wondering if there will be a curtain call.

The curtain lifts.

The woman is curled up on the bed, apparently sobbing.

The curtain drops again quickly.

The man in the third row pushes past people to exit the theatre.

Organisational Transmutation

Kyla Tully

speaking about unique intentions
how the different strands work together
to aim to understand it formally
it's chaotic backstage part of its charm
because when we look back we maybe think there's a problem
we want to be universally felt even if not directly engaged
but are dragged into the season's competition
despite the aspiration to
not even be part of that kind of landscape
out to prove that we can do the previous in this format
not necessarily in a way that's official
to kind of blend those worlds
of all the many different things that we entail
this thing is happening
it's happening now
it's not just happening around you

Sort your Whites¹

Gulzar R. Charania

Private school money
Public school choices
Whites

Love us
Until we talk about racism
Whites

Call the police on a Black man
Resting on the side of a bridge
Whites²

Support diversifying the academy
After they are hired
Whites

They're just not
A good fit
Whites


I'm not a racist
But
Whites

I was a minority
In my school
Whites

Study us

1. Inspired by Tressie McMillan Cottom. "Know Your Whites," In Thick and Other Essays (New York: The New Press, 2019) 99-126.

2. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/ottawa-police-apologize-to-black-man-who-had-woman-call-911-on-him-for-standing-on-a-bridge>



But never hire us
Whites

You must be the
Diversity hire
Whites

That's ancient
History
Whites

The protestors should stop
Destroying property
Whites

Throw your change
On the counter
Whites

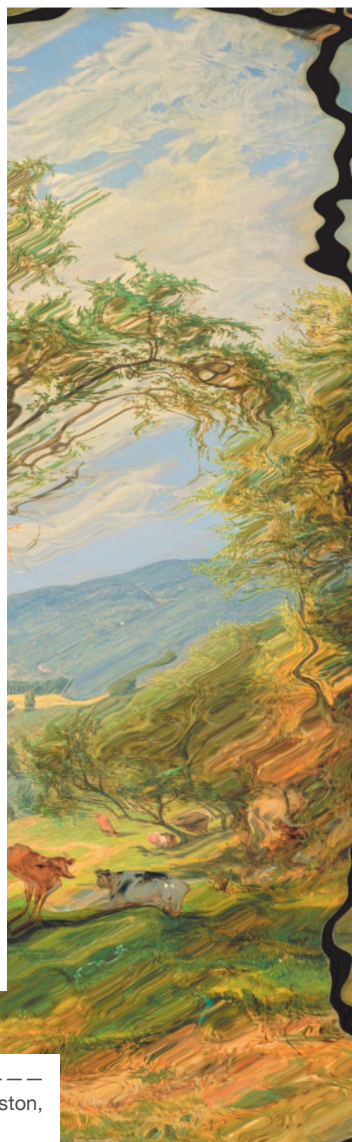
Tell me your story
So I can theorize it³
Whites

Travel, study our foods
And open a trendy restaurant
Whites

Read our books
And be cultured at dinner parties
Whites

Fuck us
And fuck us over
Whites

3. See bell hooks. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992).



Brown
Trying to be close to white
Whites

Invite us to be guest speakers
But not colleagues
Whites

I am a white settler
Ally
Whites

Why are you attacking me?
Persecuted
Whites

I got caught
Crying
Whites

Are you the
Professor?
Whites

All lives
Matter
Whites

Our boys are
Falling behind
Whites

Support
Diversifying whiteness⁴
Whites

4. [https://twitter.com/malindasmith/status/932987302137143297?](https://twitter.com/malindasmith/status/932987302137143297?lang=en)
lang=en

I am a white woman
I understand
Whites

I believe in excellence
And meritocracy
Whites

Water? Fire? Love? Party?
You are not properly academic
Whites ⁵

If you were less angry
I could hear you better
Whites

Not all
Whites
Whites

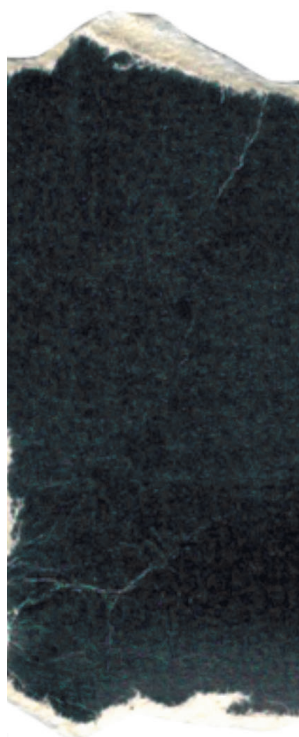
Speed up
When brown and Black people cross the streets
Whites

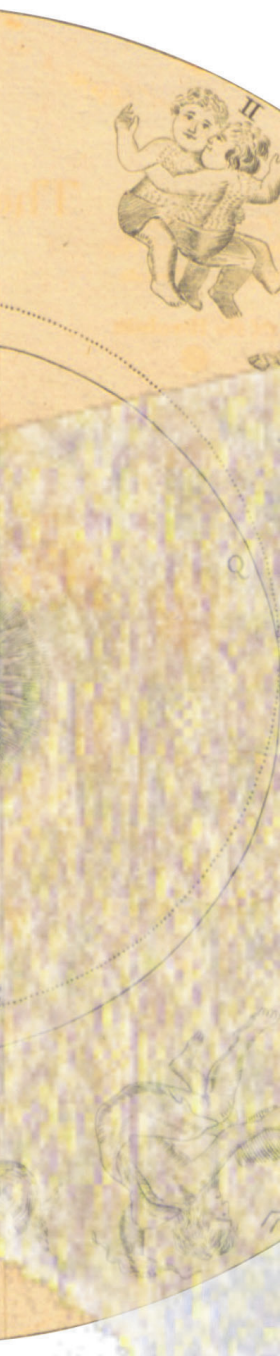
Volunteer to build a school
And dig a well
Whites

I'm trying
Teach me
Whites

Make a career
Out of saving us
Whites

5. <https://www.theasa.net/annual-meeting/years-meeting/next-years-2022-theme>





Punish you
Politely
Whites

You speak English
So well
Whites

Where are you
Really from?
Whites

Like you
From far away
Whites

Not like those
Whites
Whites

I worked hard
No one gave me a handout
Whites

Women are oppressed
Too
Whites

Don't cite you
But read you
Whites

I've read
White Fragility
Whites

Pretend you don't have a name
For years
Whites

I made a mistake
Sorry
Whites

Black Lives Matter in public
Call the lawyers in private⁶
Whites

I helped you
Be grateful
Whites

Diversify
Entry level job
Whites

I don't see colour
I believe in excellence
Whites

I can't get a job
Reverse racism
Whites

Arrest a Black student
Skateboarding on campus
Whites⁷


Find the least threatening
Brown person
Whites

I can't believe that
Happened to you
Whites

We are oppressed too
Linguistic minority
Whites

6. <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/06/9865297/sasha-exeter-jessica-mulroney-are-not-having-a-disagreement>

7. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/humiliating-black-uottawa-student-cuffed-in-campus-carding-incident/>



Love you
Too enthusiastically
Whites

Arms crossed
I have nothing to learn from you
Whites


I believe in free speech
And unpopular opinions
Whites

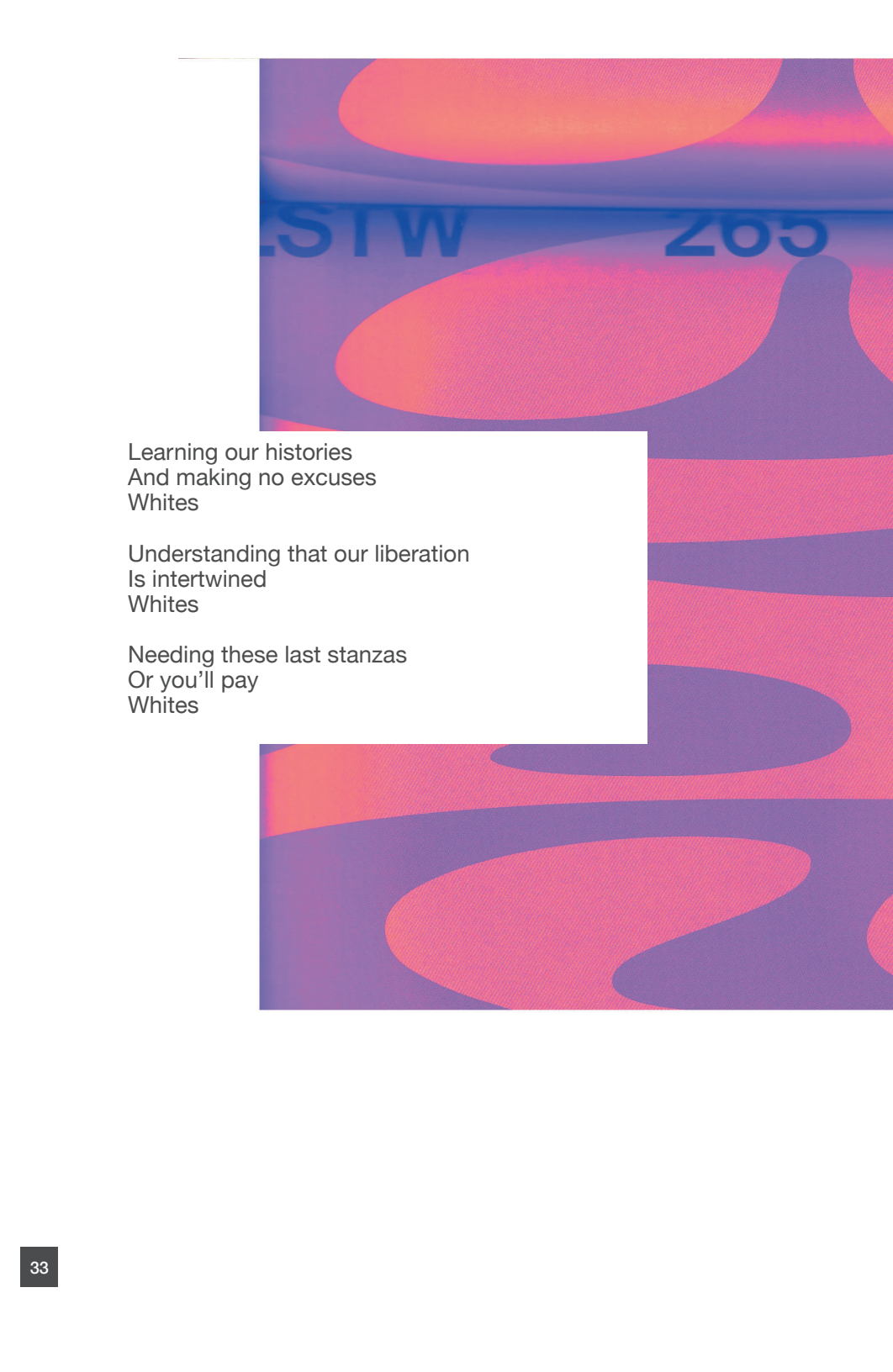
Tyranny of
Cancel culture
Whites

Why can't we all just
get along
Whites

But my partner is brown
And my best friend is Black
Whites

Wondering
is this poem about me?
Whites



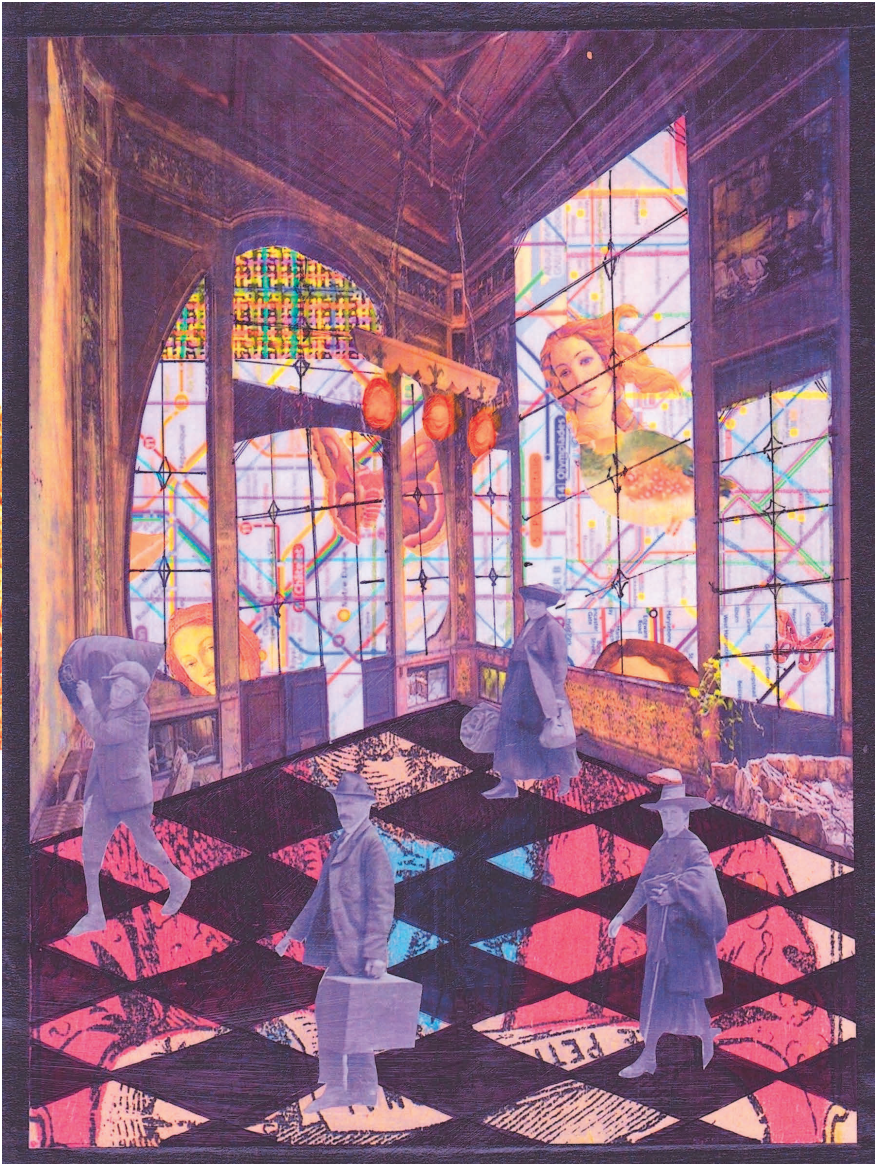


Learning our histories
And making no excuses
Whites

Understanding that our liberation
Is intertwined
Whites

Needing these last stanzas
Or you'll pay
Whites

Terminus
C. R. Resetarits



Materials: paper and paste, pencil

Themis
C. R. Resetarits



Materials: paper and paint on mirror board,
scanned and additional images added



Artist Statement

I like the edge of things, real and unreal. Edge as in poignant and slightly threatening and edge as in interconnection. I like remaking things that already exist exist differently. Ecology with more possibilities. It's not just about my ecological stance and the future but about mystery and faith and history. I like making the personal and private, otherly and known, iconographic and rare.





The Original Thirty-Five Questions to Periodically Contemplate for the Children of Cassini

John-Paul Smiley

What are you?

Who are you?

Why are you you?

When were you born?

What other significant events occurred on that date?

What do you owe to everyone?

What do you owe to yourself?

How do you know if you owe anything to anyone?

What fears do you have?

What hopes do you have?

Where do these come from?

Do other people matter to you?

Do you matter to yourself?

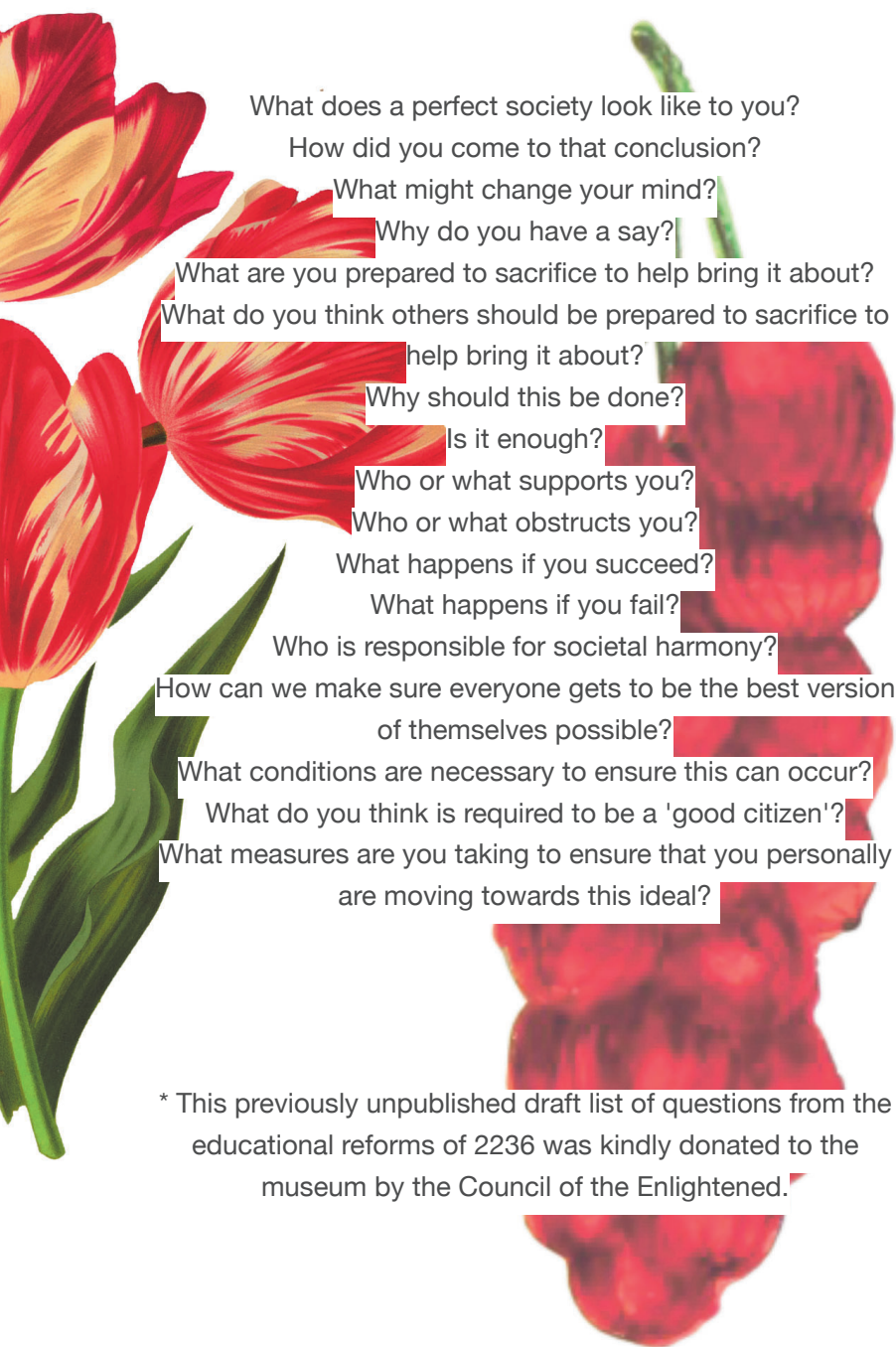
Who matters more?

If forced to choose, should you put others' needs before
your own?

What is selfishness to you, in the context of the relationship
between individuals and society?

What should be done about physical and mental pain and
suffering?

What lessons can be drawn from the physiological and
psychological damage caused to humans by the
unmanaged flows of societal figurations up to the 22nd
century?



What does a perfect society look like to you?

How did you come to that conclusion?

What might change your mind?

Why do you have a say?

What are you prepared to sacrifice to help bring it about?

What do you think others should be prepared to sacrifice to

help bring it about?

Why should this be done?

Is it enough?

Who or what supports you?

Who or what obstructs you?

What happens if you succeed?

What happens if you fail?

Who is responsible for societal harmony?

How can we make sure everyone gets to be the best version

of themselves possible?

What conditions are necessary to ensure this can occur?

What do you think is required to be a 'good citizen'?

What measures are you taking to ensure that you personally

are moving towards this ideal?

* This previously unpublished draft list of questions from the educational reforms of 2236 was kindly donated to the museum by the Council of the Enlightened.

Things change Things changed

Attention wanders across sound. And silence, momentarily illuminating darkness. An artwork that jolts and fades, pulsing in suspense. Synchronicity and dissonance, felt in the palm, the glow from a screen. Responding to the knowledge synthesis, is an illuminated deep listening moment, the outcome of an experimental performance study. Resonant extracts from the synthesis (right) are translated into scores and performed across a series of sonic experiments with different instruments and machines. An acoustic upright piano, a monomachine synthesizer and music sequencer, and a broken cassette-tape recorder capture and interpret the conditions illustrated throughout the knowledge synthesis. Animated stills accompany the audio, detailing a crop of broadleaf docks treated by a hormone weedkiller, accelerating abnormal growth in the plant. The ancient perennial used as food and medicine over the ages is commonly viewed as an invasive species, often rid from gardens and farmland. At times a slow revelation, at points a rapid switch, the work presents a durational moment to reflect on things changed.

*View the work by Emily Warner and John MacArtney here:
coventrycreates.co.uk/project/things-change-things-changed/*

ROTATE What do we know?

It may take some years,
Knowledge synthesis. Remains limited,
switching service
adapting large portions of care and support.

DEPLETION

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

The pandemic
a now dispersed community of
service users,
caring and supporting people with life-limiting
conditions.

INVERSE ARRANGEMENT

LOSS OF BODIES

UPSET

New ways of valuing and discussing life,
the amount of life
(predicted to be) left.

HIDDEN OVERLOOKED

SLOW EVOLUTION

What else can be done?
Ongoing impact,
missing perspective,
the uneven relational, social and healthcare impacts.

LIMIT

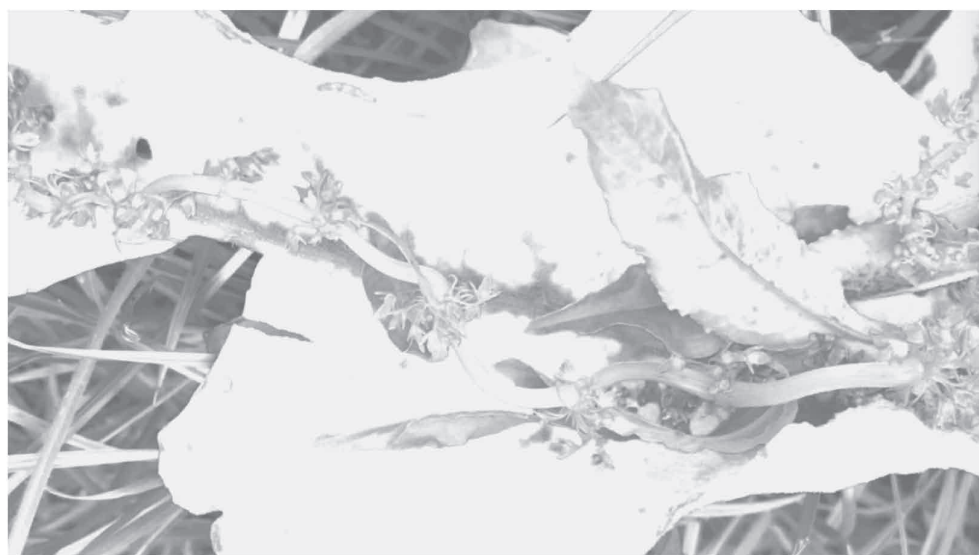
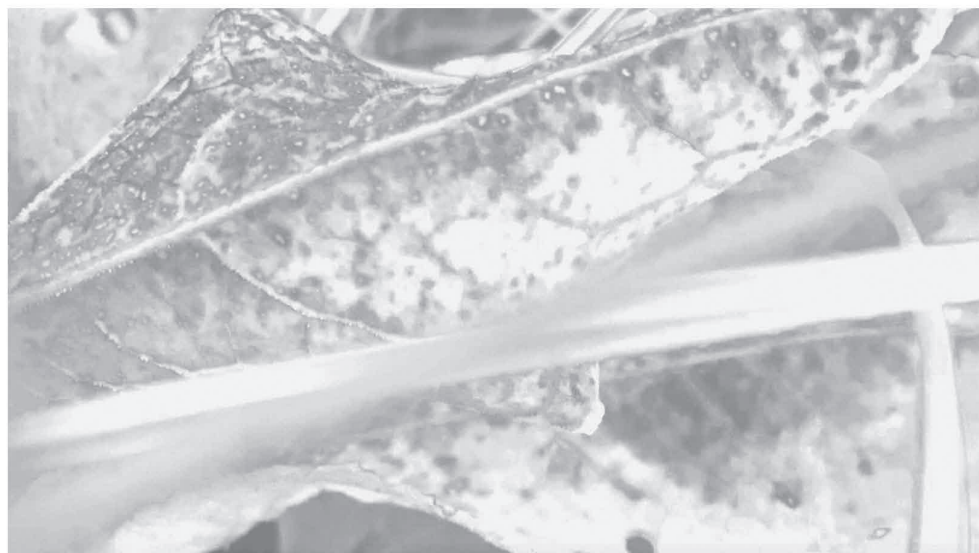
PUSH PULL

A rapid response, emergent and uncertain context,
less attention afforded.
Extra work done,
above-and-beyond.

LOBBY

FILTERING

An overlooked service, suffered immense strain.
Multi layered challenge,
distinctive challenge.
Moments separated by a window.
Stay away for fear, exclusion of others,
detrimental effect on
quality.
The non-NHS status of many hospices.
Disproportionate impact exacerbated because of it.
Novel issues, magnified challenges.
Shift
in location of care,
Cessation
of the volunteer.
Restrictions
on usual forms.



Things Change, Things Changed 2021, Digital film and audio 21m30s

Things Change, Things Changed is the result of an exchange between Dr John I MacArtney, Chief Investigator for 'The impact and implications of Covid-19 on the relational, social, and healthcare experiences of hospice care in the West Midlands' study, and artist Emily Warner.

Background to the Study

People with life limiting conditions are some of the most vulnerable to Covid-19. The aim of the study is to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of those involved in receiving and providing hospice care during the pandemic. The findings will be used to contribute to nationally relevant recommendations to help mitigate adverse relational, social and healthcare impacts of Covid-19 upon hospice services for vulnerable service users and those that care for them.

John:

Before we started our own interviews, we wanted to see what other researchers had identified as affecting hospice care. We also spoke with some of the hospice staff, as well as a range of people with expertise – from working, researching, or lived experiences – in palliative care. We summarised what we found in our 'knowledge synthesis' report.

Emily:

Extracting quotes from the report, I created a series of scores that interpreted the climate and conditions that local hospices and hospice users faced during the pandemic. These were used as departure points in a series of collaborative studio days with producer Marley Butler. Testing what a piano sounded when performed through the idea of '*loss of bodies*' or '*slow evolution*' we generated a soundtrack, layered with pulsing digital rhythms, and the faint grinding of a broken tape recorder. The accompanying film shows a crop of plants affected by weedkiller, slowly breathing in and out of focus. The result is a dynamic interplay between sound and image, lightness and dark, a work that tries to hold the tricky bits in between.

John:

In both the piece and many lived experiences of the pandemic there is a sense of rhythm to proceedings. But not a rhythm that is overly regular or that gives the impression that it can be maintained for long. Neither ever seem to want to go back to what it was before, but both often present like it is something (*unwantedly*) familiar that is coming around again (*and again*). The piece, the pandemic, and dying: it is not always clear what we are looking at and just when something comes into view, it moves away again. Each can be uncomfortable to witness, to sit with, or be around. They call us to disaggregate what is natural, what is human-caused, what their meaning *really* is.

Little Luxuries

Katie Coxall

dance party with my spider plant
then I go to the supermarket
bread and oil for my husband
soup for me
bile rising into my mouth
then I go to buy a dress
for our big night out
cocktails he said
dead rat flattened under my heel
a phantom squeal
whisker residue
afterwards I try on some sandals
yellow, seaside
he said he'd get me them next week
if I stop bleeding all the time
petrol for my car
half full then
the rest into my coffee
I ran out of creamer
so now I dance through the multi-storey car park
thinking about my potted aloe vera
I hold her hands whilst I pirouette
oil spilling out of my TK Maxx handbag
I never slip
red thong around my ankles
lacy and cheap
chipped nails
oily fingers
fleshy tail creeping up
lathered in day cream
and spf 50
he doesn't like the smell of it

EXPRESS

The Luck of the Draw

JE Sumerau

Hope Landingham laughed at the full coffee pot on the forty-third day.

That was a sign of improvement, progress, maybe even recovery.

It was the first time she laughed. It was the twenty-seventh pot of coffee she poured down the sink. The worst was number twenty-three. That one happened on the thirtieth day. It was the luck of the draw. That was the morning she screamed at the machine. She was still howling when she yanked the carafe off its smug stand. She was silent when the carafe left her hand. It shattered that picture her softball-loving, photography-studying friend Lena took in a coffee shop fifteen years prior. The picture was black and white. It was one of a kind. There were no digital copies, no backups. Some things can't be replaced. The picture was hanging above the kitchen window until coffee pot number twenty-three. It fell from the wall, a crash in the sink. The picture would never be the same. She made her own cup of tea, saving a disgusted look for the coffee she couldn't even drink without getting sick.

She played a Tori Amos record on the forty-third day.

It was called *Little Earthquakes*.

She wondered when she would need to change the needle. She'd never done that before, never cared much for vinyl. She shook the cover of the Tori Amos record. There was no note, no postcard, nothing. It was the luck of the draw. Wolves by American Aquarium held a picture of the coastline just south of Sarasota. They went there on a winter day after a terrible play. The Best of Blondie held a poem, six lines, no rhymes, something about a snake playing in a downpour. She held the poem for an hour in the window seat by the record player on the thirty-second day. IV by Chatham County Line was special. She knew it would be. It was the first record Dana reviewed for the magazine. That was years before the two met, married, and shared a last name. Dana was a Cox back then. The magazine page sits in a frame in

the study. The Chatham County Line cover held ticket stubs from a Sixteen Ounce Monster concert. She could almost feel the grass at the amphitheater in Gainesville, the smell of the wind.

She opened a can of Carolinian Beer on the forty-third day.

It was the last one from three six-packs Dana bought on her last trip to her hometown.

Hope used the golden beer to wash down her pills. The little plastic case felt so big, each day marked for consumption. It wasn't fair. She was the one named Hope. She was the one with the cystic fibrosis. Dana was supposed to bury her. That was the deal. That was the plan. Dana broke the rules, the luck of the draw. Golden ale, soft yet crisp, the pills hit her stomach like a siren blasting away the afternoon. She felt the usual sudden dizziness subside, slowly, ever so slowly. Thankfully, the nausea took a sick day. She raised the glass Dana said looked fancy. The window couldn't toast in return. She took a long swallow, hard on the throat, hell on the heart, moisture from the stem of the wine glass dripping in her lap.

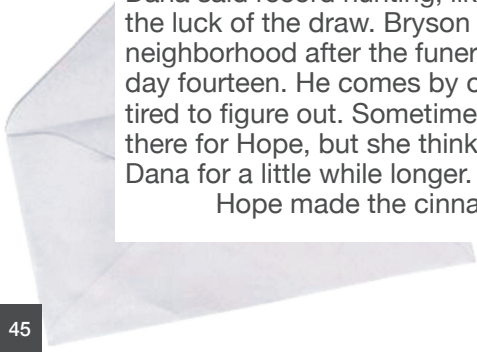
Bryson came by again on the forty-third day.

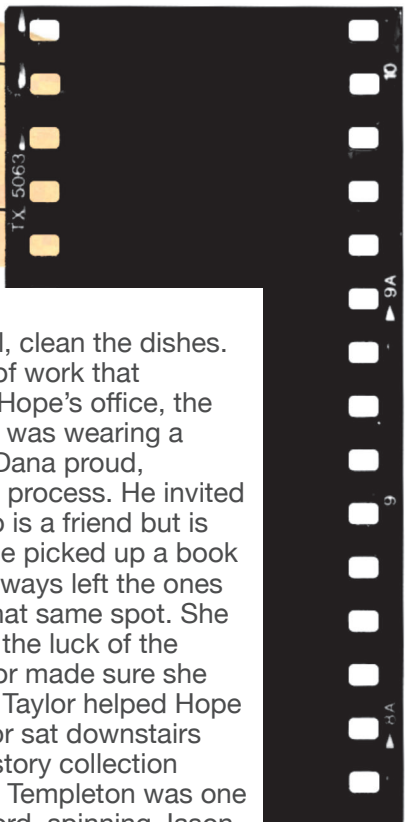
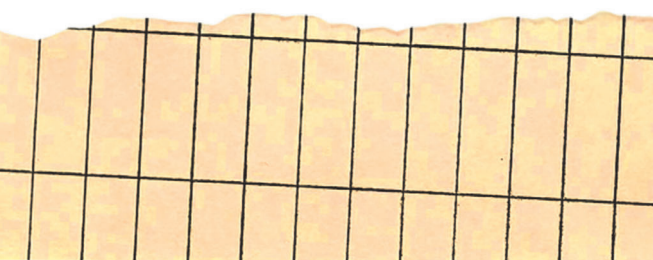
He was wearing Dana's old Florida A&M hoodie.

He cleaned the coffee pot while Hope took a nap. It wasn't much of a rest. She mostly stared at the wall, at the stack of books Dana planned to read over the summer. She could hear Bryson downstairs, moving around, cleaning up, re-starting the Tori Amos record, switching to a different one.

The second record was a promotional copy of Jasmine Guy's *Try Me* that Dana picked up from a collector in Tampa. That must have been nine years ago, maybe eight. Dana said record hunting, like so much of this life, was about the luck of the draw. Bryson moved back into the neighborhood after the funeral. That must have been around day fourteen. He comes by on some schedule Hope is too tired to figure out. Sometimes he stays for dinner, says he's there for Hope, but she thinks he just needs to feel close to Dana for a little while longer.

Hope made the cinnamon toast Dana loved so much





on the forty-third day.

Taylor showed up to help eat it all, clean the dishes.

He was carrying a backpack full of work that wouldn't get done. He'd brought it from Hope's office, the one in the corner, the one beside his. He was wearing a Miami Heat shirt that would have made Dana proud, betraying his own favorite Hornets in the process. He invited Hope out for drinks with his new girl who is a friend but is not his girlfriend. Her name is Hannah. He picked up a book off the stack on the coffee table. Dana always left the ones she thought Hope might like to read in that same spot. She was reading Lauren Groff that last night, the luck of the draw. Hope was slurring her words. Taylor made sure she took her medicine. That was Dana's job. Taylor helped Hope into bed. That was also Dana's job. Taylor sat downstairs flipping pages in the Lauren Groff short story collection called Florida. He knew that Monsters of Templeton was one of Dana's favorites. He switched the record, spinning Jason Isbell's Southeastern before making sure Hope was sound asleep. He stayed until just after midnight.

The house was empty again when Hope Landingham awoke on the forty-fourth day.

She started the coffee maker before she realized she was alone.



Vulcan

Allan McCay

A colossal lonely figure stands glistening in the middle of the Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania. The vast plain stretches for miles in all directions, and is populated by rhinos, elephants, wildebeest and lions. But the towering sculpture at the heart of the crater is not a monument to the natural, but to the man-made.

Why this place in Africa for the shrine? It was felt that such a monument should not be placed in a city or a town, but should reign over flora and fauna at the birthplace of humanity, the place where humans first put nature on the back foot.

Every day, hordes of schoolchildren arrive at the crater from Ngorongoro International Airport. They journey here in their thousands, for the greatest story ever told, that of the rise and fall of the human will. Dwarfed by the hulking sculpture, some children look up in awe, squinting their eyes to avoid the painful reflection of burning sun on Vulcan's metal torso. Some younger children try to climb onto his enormous foot but slip back down the welded steel and ultimately give up.

With a hammer in one hand, Vulcan strides powerfully across the savannah, as if inspired by some weighty purpose. His face, although somewhat human, is like a machine, angular, shiny and metallic. This leaves him inscrutable and his intentions unclear.

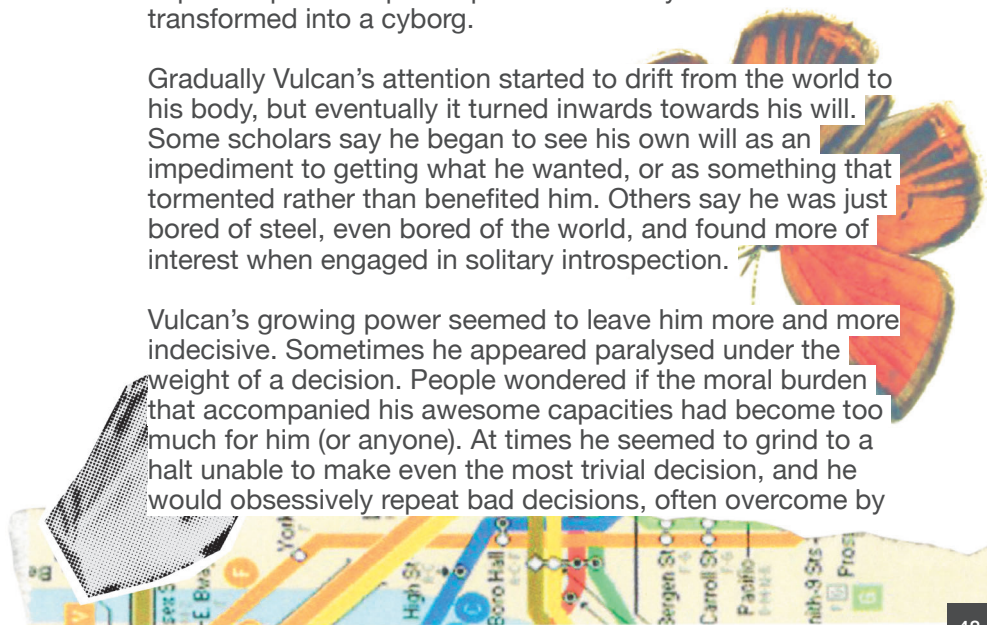
If, somehow disconnected from the rest of humanity, one had been raised without hearing the tale of Vulcan, then this massive effigy of a man-machine would be perplexing. Why did people expend such effort in building such a strange sculpture, and why here?

But all the children know the story of Vulcan even if they do not yet fully appreciate its monumental significance. Born with disability that left him lame, Vulcan had intellectual and creative talents that the world had never before seen. He immersed himself in learning, easily grasping the complexities of such diverse subjects as philosophy, physics and psychology. But it was his work in computing, robotics and neuroscience that would lead to his momentous leap to freedom. Or, on a different view, his pathetic descent to serfdom.

Not myth but history tells how Vulcan began his creative period by assembling fantastic automata that could cook, clean, and provide companionship to their owners. He produced powerful medicines to heal the sick and created beautiful artworks that illuminated the human condition and lifted the spirit. Hailed by the world as a hero, or even a god, it seemed that Vulcan could do anything. When he wanted his leg to heal, he installed restorative technology into his knee joint. But such remedial work was not enough and he started to augment himself, using cold, shiny steel to improve upon unimpaired parts of his body and thus he was transformed into a cyborg.

Gradually Vulcan's attention started to drift from the world to his body, but eventually it turned inwards towards his will. Some scholars say he began to see his own will as an impediment to getting what he wanted, or as something that tormented rather than benefited him. Others say he was just bored of steel, even bored of the world, and found more of interest when engaged in solitary introspection.

Vulcan's growing power seemed to leave him more and more indecisive. Sometimes he appeared paralysed under the weight of a decision. People wondered if the moral burden that accompanied his awesome capacities had become too much for him (or anyone). At times he seemed to grind to a halt unable to make even the most trivial decision, and he would obsessively repeat bad decisions, often overcome by





regret over yet other choices.


By this point all available accounts tell of his anguish, confusion and growing need for solitude. They go on to tell that his wife left him, but after this the record of his life starts to fade to its last entry. The last entry describes, in some detail, the most significant project of Vulcan's life. In so doing, it tells of the most momentous development in all of history, the point at which history started to become little more than a series of events.

Vulcan's last creation was the liberator.

The liberator was a minute device that Vulcan developed, and had installed into his brain, for the purpose of helping him to make decisions. Of course, people have always used devices to resolve indecision, and the idea of flipping a coin to decide on a course of action was nothing new. The genius of the liberator, and the thing that set it apart from rotating airborne coins imbued with fate, was that the liberator's decisions were based on Vulcan's values.

Sadly, little is known about the neurosurgeon who installed the device in Vulcan's brain. The liberator itself needed to be tweaked on installation, and the person who did this deserves at least a mention at Ngorongoro. Only a small plaque under the sculpture acknowledges 'the Unknown Installer'.

Beholden to the Unknown Installer's reprogramming mind and scalpel, but by then, at one with Vulcan's flesh, the way the first liberator operated was analogous to old-fashioned internet search technology. It dutifully crawled around the brain from neuron to neuron, downloading a complete picture of Vulcan's values (something Vulcan had only a faint and somewhat hazy sense of). How important is humour? Is it important to act altruistically? Are tangy flavours desirable? Are cold sunny days preferable to warm sunny days? All this information about Vulcan's preferences



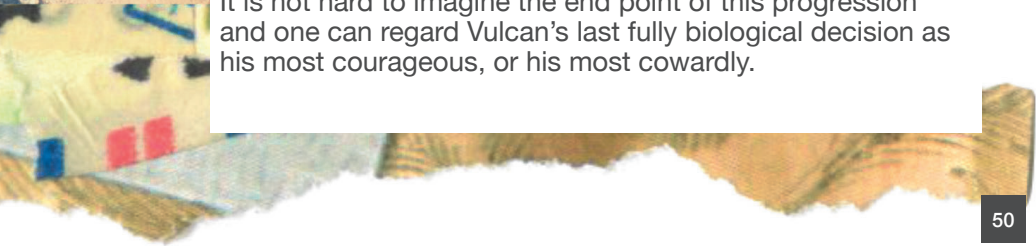
was sent back and stored on his tiny but powerful liberator. Of course, indecision was still possible, and it was necessary for the volitional software to have a way of choosing between apples and pears where nothing in Vulcan's value system preferred one to the other. Only these kinds of decisions were made randomly (Vulcan ensured his liberator was networked to a remote Geiger counter to create real randomness in his decision-making process where necessary).

The technology could also improve itself. When the softwill (Vulcan's notes abbreviate the alternative term he sometimes used for the liberator: and so "software will" was thus reduced) decided that Vulcan should refrain from calling his wife, but he later felt this was a poor decision, the code updated his value set to take account of this new, regret-based information. And so he called her but the call was not answered.

Vulcan spent time with his liberator switched on and time with it off, but this brought him disquiet. He started to feel indecisive about whether to have the device on or off, or how long to have it operating for. Sometimes when stressed, he would switch it on using a timer in order that it cut out 24 hours later.

Over a period of about 6 months the liberator gradually became more and more successful in deciding for him. He was generally happy with its decisions and came to regard them as better than his own, or as he sometimes wrote, "better versions of his own"). Vulcan's estranged wife also preferred her husband's softwilled behaviour, and she ultimately decided to return to her newly liberated and now less god-like partner.

It is not hard to imagine the end point of this progression and one can regard Vulcan's last fully biological decision as his most courageous, or his most cowardly.



The course, and very nature of history, began to change when he switched the device on permanently. This permanence meant that any decision to switch the liberator off (if that were ever to happen) would involve the liberator. But the children know all of this. They all have their own liberators installed, as have most of the teachers. Now liberators come in many varieties, some wholly inside the brain, others in distant locations but networked to the brain.

One or two of the older teachers sometimes grumble that nowadays no one has free will, and that everything important in life is lost, but for the most part people are happy with the new world of “enhanced deliberation” (as many software companies now refer to the technology). And so enhanced and respectful children flock to Ngorongoro Crater to strive for a oneness with nature, and to acknowledge the enormous debt owed to the man who freed them by ending their freedom.

In 2008 the author published a shorter version of this story in the journal Philament, under the name “Our Debt to Vulcan”.


No Mercy

Ian C Smith

A thirteen year-old boy wearing a school jumper and gauzy bravado he shall always remember strides towards a beach several miles from his poor family home south of Melbourne, cold, trembling from his latest thrashing. The gravel road lies quiet but for a lone car driven by a novelist who never stops to offer a ride.

When my father died my mother gave me his wallet, his belt. He left no memory of kind words. She knew this. She remembered. Inside the wallet, hidden, I found money, too much for the old-age pension, not part of a memento.

The novelist's family, with their own light aircraft and airstrip, lives beyond the boy's, all English emigres settling a domain of kookaburras and copperheads. He has finished writing a book about the fraught end of our beloved world, a world I wanted to experience before it ended, later to be filmed, partly in this area where the posher properties swoon, immaculate, with white horse fences gleaming below a pale moon and its jewels.



Through the long personal twilight I thought about my father's life, and death, which he feared right until the end. I thought I heard a man weeping when a bird, seeing only freedom in my window, stunned itself, lay panting on my veranda near a birds-nest fern in a tub before travelling on, a wingbeat ahead of silent cats and certain death.

The car's sound faded, the boy's contempt for that novelist, for most adults, parents, teachers, cops, dissolved into shadows at a paddock's edge, a stray dog passes him, then turns to follow ten yards behind, gait faithful to his, seeking adoption, the boy's mind running amok through a dreamlike future, that unknown pinprick of starlight we each grope towards.

I fell to thinking about how I found a kind of love, relegated the past, discovered the remainder of my days. When I returned the banknotes, everything except a cropped photograph of my sister long ago, and small change, my mother's face stamped her guilty of attempted bribery. And heartache.

The boy has a pound for each year he has lived, earned, stolen, stashed, his pouch of tobacco, a rage for freedom, for cities' giddy adventure, thinks he could hitchhike 500 miles to Sydney: in imagination's kingdom a truck-stop, a jukebox, songs of lonely far-off times.





80s flashback

J

The teachers' lounge was located on the ground floor of a four storey administration building that was positioned in the centre of the school's campus. Fittingly, the building was centrally located, reflecting a centralised system of authority.


The lounge was furnished with more chairs than were ever in use at any one time. On the large round tables were numerous ashtrays, and there never seemed to be enough of those. Coffee and cigarettes were what drew teachers to the lounge, but lately the coffee provisions had suffered. Instead of a free flow of joe, directives had started to flow, rather than drip, from the top down to the teachers' lounge, all too easily some thought.

Whilst the seasoned teachers who had become so accustomed to accepting directives that they no longer publicly nor privately objected, the increased frequency of the directives had started to unsettle some.

That morning, when Suzana opened the door to the lounge she found it empty. She walked in and quickly found herself in a mist of cigarette smoke indicating to her that she was not first in. Immediately and instinctively she moved to the cork noticeboard to which was fastened, by a bent pin, a longer than usual memo. The memo was creased. She would not be the first to read it.

'Attention!' printed in black typewriter type stood on the top of the memo. It had been underlined numerous times with a red pen. 'This must be serious' Suzana thought. All too deftly she unpinned the paper and took a seat at the centrally located table. She lit a cigarette and scanned the sheet.





Suzana's eyes moved swiftly across and then down the paper. 'Oppression of the Serb people.' 'Generational change.' 'Growing Muslim birth rate', 'Overpopulation and the loss of our identity.' 'Muslim fundamentalists' were the words at which Suzana's gaze lingered. So, it's true, she thought. She lit another cigarette and read the memo again slowly.

Suzana reached into her handbag and took out the lesson plans she had prepared for the day. With her own red pen, she quickly jotted ideas and corrections into the margins and above headings. With a few tweaks she was able to modify the lesson to address the warnings issued in the memo.

Confident that she knew what role she must play to save her people and her country she pinned the memo back onto the noticeboard and left the lounge for her classroom. For the next reader, she added her own red line underneath the 'Attention' that headed the memo.

Lime Green

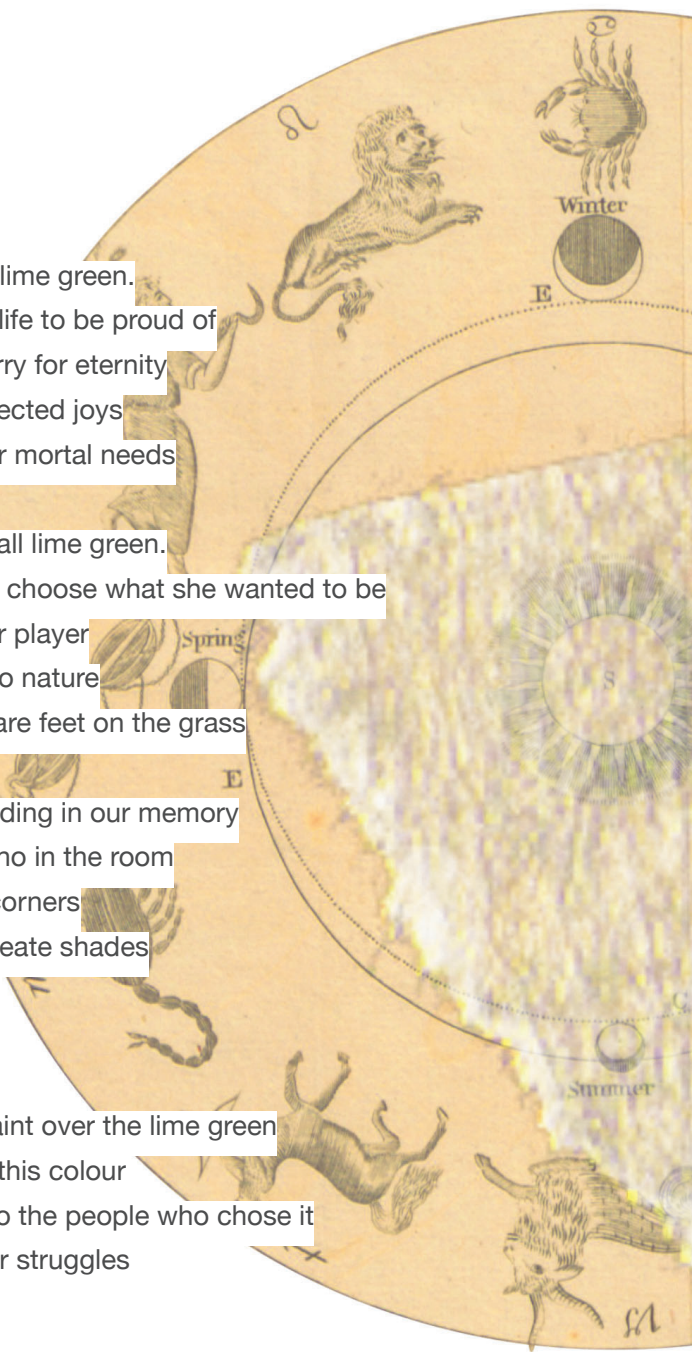
Caroline Lenette

I painted the wall lime green.
There was a new life to be proud of
A new label to carry for eternity
A series of unexpected joys
A love beyond our mortal needs

We painted the wall lime green.
So that she could choose what she wanted to be
A fairy or a soccer player
A creature close to nature
Who would run bare feet on the grass

Now the wall is fading in our memory
No laughter to echo in the room
No love to fill its corners
No sunshine to create shades
Emptiness.

In years to come
Those who will paint over the lime green
Will wonder, why this colour
What happened to the people who chose it
Their failures, their struggles



Phillipsburg, New Jersey
befordtowers

















The capable novice, I am

Erika Wall

Shelf-clad walls filled with cereals,
the scent of freshly ironed workwear.
I'm the new one at the workplace.

When I nervously practice serving customers,
the warmth of my mother's voice I hear:
advisory, descriptive, explanative.

I feel like the little child.

When I gingerly unpack goods,
the backing tones of my friends I catch:
take it easy, take care, recover.


I need someone mirroring me.

When I curiously learn new tasks,
the colleagues' declarations of trust I notice:
supportive, expectant, approving.

I appreciate being seen as the skilled one.

Incessant asking's from consumers seeking stuff,
the smell of cardboard packages.
I'm the new one at the workplace.



A collage of red flower petals, some of which are layered over other elements like the text and the book page.

Being given room for all what I am,
at the work floor and far away:
that's sense of security for me.

*I am the novice
I am the capable
I am*





Subway Tiles

Anastasia Nanthanolath

In a city that never sleeps,
I sit on a train that rarely slows.

And I,
I sit alone.


When the train suddenly stops its constant moving,
and blurred images still,
everyone ups and leaves.
But I stay on for the next stop.

And the next.
And the next.
And the next.

I spend my days here,
slumped on slippery seats.

It's become my home.
Guests come and go.
Into the under
Just beneath the skin of the earth.

*N.B. The
respect to the figures of the Planets, here given as
represented by the Circle of the Sabins Orbit marked,*



Here, in this fluorescent lit train,
An old man stares down at his phone,
A young man hides behind the Times.
A woman baring skin smiles
At a woman in full modesty.
A businessman stands in the middle aisle
too close to a lousy Statue of Liberty
gripping a ceiling handle for her dear life.

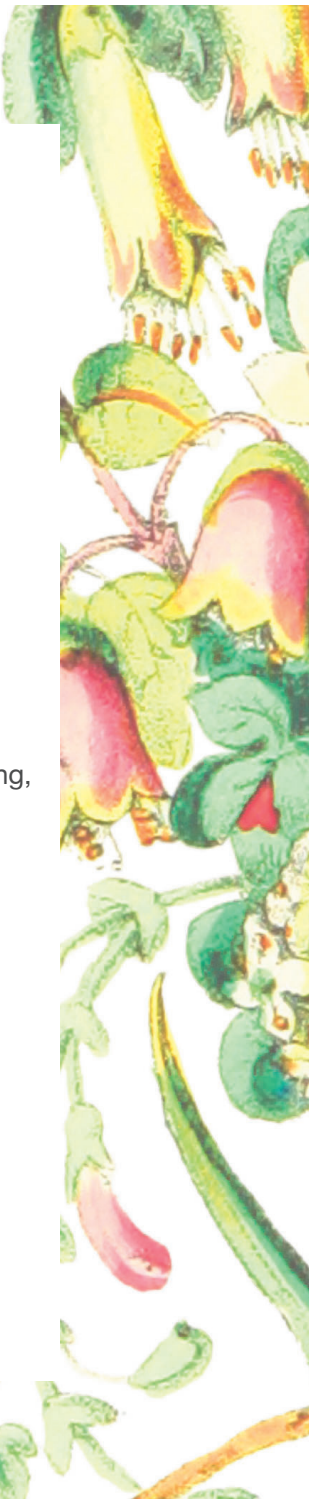
Here,
Every sort of person sits together.
Because here, in this fluorescent lit train,
They exist underground.

When the train suddenly stops its constant moving,
and blurred images still,
everyone ups and leaves.
One destination,
Different directions.

But I stay on board and wait for the next stop.

And the next.
And the next.
And the next.

And I,
I sit alone.





arrogant ghost

jason harding

People interest me. What they have seen. How they see.
Their acute moments. The long arc of their life. Their story.

But I don't often know their story. Or get a chance to hear it.
And I never will. So I crouch down and shoot a pic on the fly.
I frame up my assumptions. And write a conclusion. On a
topic I know nothing about.

A single image may stand up and say a few words on the
subject's behalf. But it regularly does so as an arrogant
public speaker ...

... who has misplaced their ghost-written speech.



Image: Dehli to Dehradun | India | November 2017.



Life in Death: An Aerial View of the Reagan Revolution

Sean Murphy

Searing, indifferent asphalt
serves up a steaming carcass.
Ground down, inexorably,
by the evolved vocation
of men and their machines.

Fetid stench of spoiled flesh:
in death sustaining the life
of an oil-skinned opportunist
that squats and starts, claiming
this free market procurement.

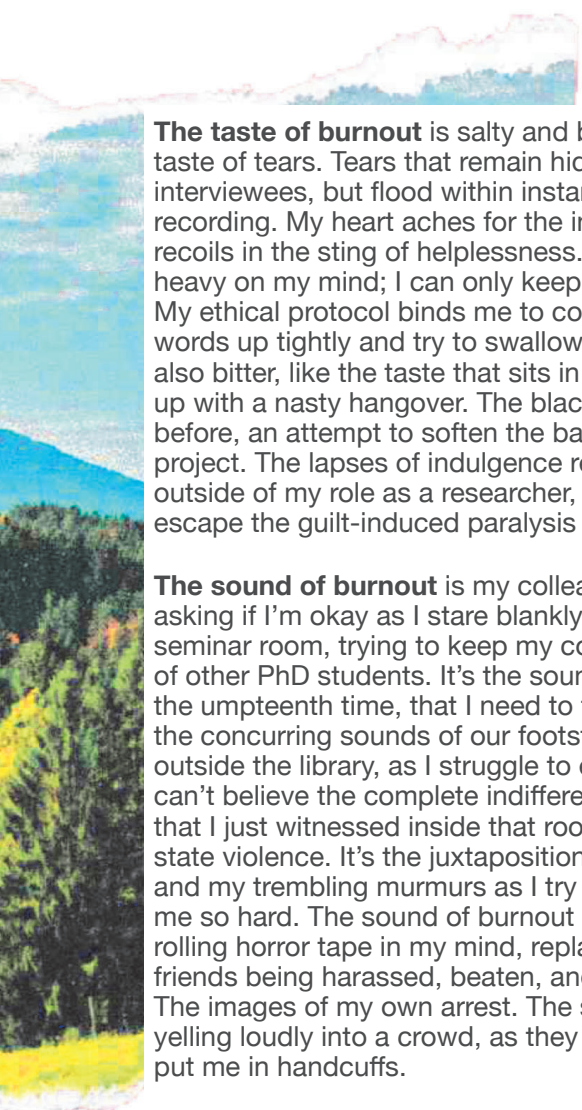
Burnout: a sensorial retelling

Elise Imray Papineau

The shape of burnout is the shape of shed skin. It is my body floating over a shell of myself, looking with complete confusion at the barren corpus below. It is a confrontation between my past ambitions and my current inability to hold everything together. It is the rubble remaining from a once-unyielding pedestal, now collapsed under the weight of my own expectations and the crippling doubt of imposter syndrome. Too fragile to be left alone, too stubborn to ask for help.

The smell of burnout is the stench of the oft-neglected kitchen sink in our activist office. It is the smell that reminds me that even the sweetest things go sour if they're not taken care of. It is the putrid indication that I have bitten off more than I can chew. The odours that rise from the kitchen sink – from a combination of dried wheat-paste chunks, unwashed take-away containers, and rotting vegetables from a nearby dumpster – only fuel my sense of exasperation. I want to be washed down with the crumbs. I curse myself for spending so much time in this space despite how little I have to give. The smell of this kitchen could trigger a panic attack in itself, let alone the sight of it.

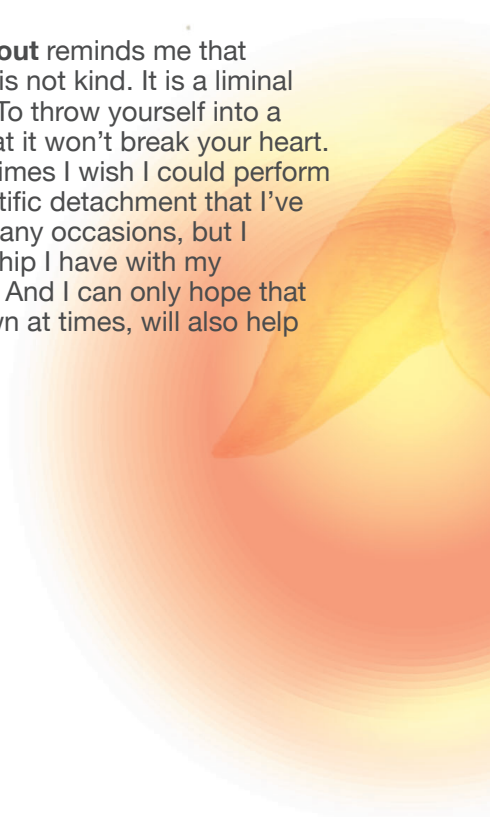




The taste of burnout is salty and bitter. It is, above all, the taste of tears. Tears that remain hidden while I talk to my interviewees, but flood within instants of turning off the recording. My heart aches for the injustice they face, and recoils in the sting of helplessness. Their stories weight heavy on my mind; I can only keep it together for so long. My ethical protocol binds me to confidentiality; I wrap the words up tightly and try to swallow them down. Burnout is also bitter, like the taste that sits in my mouth when I wake up with a nasty hangover. The blackout from the night before, an attempt to soften the barbed edges of this project. The lapses of indulgence remind me that I exist outside of my role as a researcher, only if – and when – I escape the guilt-induced paralysis of practicing self-care.

The sound of burnout is my colleague's voice, gently asking if I'm okay as I stare blankly out the window of a seminar room, trying to keep my composure amid a crowd of other PhD students. It's the sound of her telling me, for the umpteenth time, that I need to take a break, for real. It's the concurring sounds of our footsteps on the concrete outside the library, as I struggle to enunciate my words; I can't believe the complete indifference to police brutality that I just witnessed inside that room. Their nonchalance to state violence. It's the juxtaposition of her calm breathing, and my trembling murmurs as I try to explain why it struck me so hard. The sound of burnout is accompanied by the rolling horror tape in my mind, replaying the footage of my friends being harassed, beaten, and abused by the police. The images of my own arrest. The sounds of my own voice, yelling loudly into a crowd, as they dragged me away and put me in handcuffs.

The sensory experience of burnout reminds me that research is not calm, and often, it is not kind. It is a liminal space, both of harm and healing. To throw yourself into a labour of love is to blindly trust that it won't break your heart. But it does. Over and over. Sometimes I wish I could perform the same manner of praised scientific detachment that I've seen my colleagues execute on many occasions, but I treasure the complicated relationship I have with my research. It keeps me on my toes. And I can only hope that burnout, despite breaking me down at times, will also help build me back stronger.





Phone

Josephine Browne

It would be like this, the knocking, but a lot louder. It'd be more persistent. It would quickly pass from the door to the window beside the door. Then the knocks would sound on all the windows as he ran around the house, hitting every one, trying to discover which room she was hiding in, ending in a wild crescendo full of his desperation. Maybe breaking glass.

She would need to pick up the phone before she opened the door and told him to go away.

It's best if, in spite of shaking, in spite feeling sick and in desperate need of a calming breath before she opened the door and saw him — it would be best if she could move more quickly than he did, reaching for the doorknob before he even left the doorstep for that window run around her house.

Phone in hand.

She must remember that in the moment of opening the front door and seeing his face, she would already have the phone in her hand. Then there is the security door.

The security door leaks: his breath will be able to get in. And his voice, which is dangerous to her — it has been. Those words he can say — words that insinuate, crawl through her mind, tell her she's revolting, make her doubt everything...

Even the windows leak. They let in the sound of his fists banging against the glass, threatening worse. She knows all the words behind those fists, every one of them

desperate and hurt and lost words, the words of a little boy who is suffering, who cries. These tears, his hurt - it justifies, it trumps everything. Everything. But she would have the phone. And with the phone comes help. He won't be able to see she has the phone, because it's a one-way security door.

Remember this.

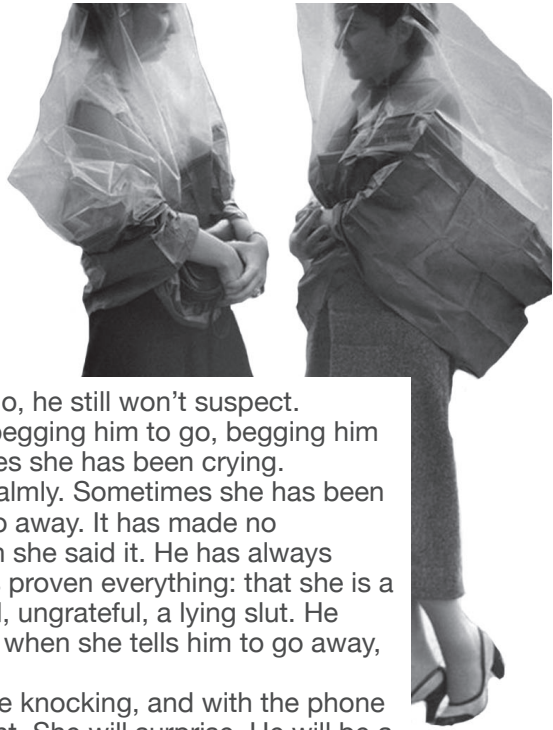
It's hard to remember anything with the knocking. She has to open her mouth to breathe.

Hold the phone.

The police said don't engage with him, just tell him he is not welcome and must leave. If he doesn't, call 000. A patrol car will be around. Quickly. The police were astonishing in their clarity. One police officer said, Get an Intervention Order because then we have the power of arrest. They seemed to want the power of arrest. They sounded fed up. They said she was not alone.

She's known that for a long time.

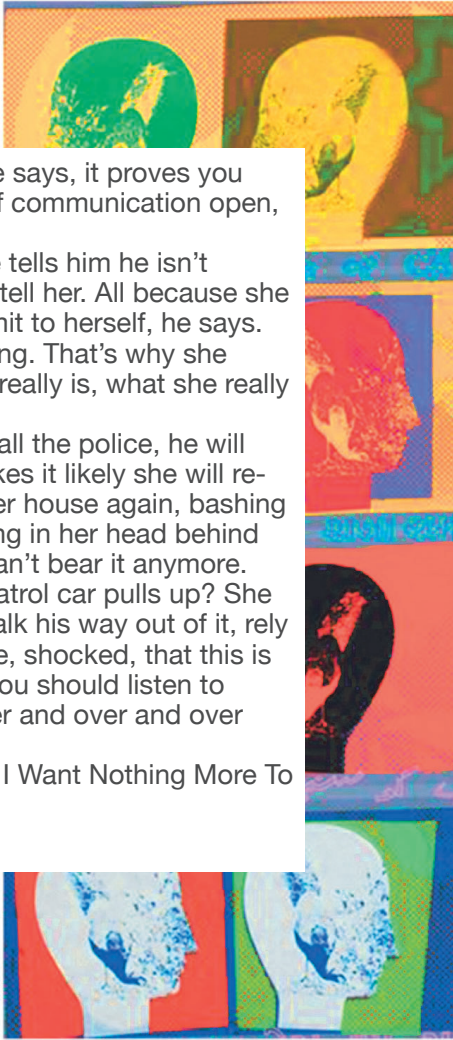
So, when the knocking comes, just like this, she can get the phone. She can walk to the door. He won't be able to see the weapon. He won't guess it — he wouldn't believe it. She has never asked someone to judge him, or to protect her. So he will expect that the open door means open slather. All the usual things.



Even when she tells him to go, he still won't suspect. Because she's spent years begging him to go, begging him to leave her alone. Sometimes she has been crying. Sometimes she has said it calmly. Sometimes she has been angry and yelled at him to go away. It has made no difference, the ways in which she said it. He has always heard it the same way. It has proven everything: that she is a whore, a bitch, uncommitted, ungrateful, a lying slut. He says he is a victim of abuse: when she tells him to go away, it's proof.

But this time, after the knocking, and with the phone in her hand, it can be different. She will surprise. He will be a sitting duck without even knowing it. Without knowing she has already invited someone else to come. She has finally told. Listening to clarity in a navy suit, the banality of her story reflected back to her – same old, same old – has left her numbed, in another world. Despite her thumping heart, she can surprise now.

The open door will mean another Yes, in his mind. Telling him to go away has always meant another Yes: a willingness to talk, he calls it.



As long as we are communicating, he says, it proves you want and love me. With these lines of communication open, he tells her, he is happy.

So he will be happy when she tells him he isn't welcome. We are connecting, he will tell her. All because she loves him – something she won't admit to herself, he says. But he knows better – about everything. That's why she needs him; he alone knows who she really is, what she really wants.

When she shuts the door to call the police, he will think that the previous exchange makes it likely she will re-open the door if he dances around her house again, bashing on the windows, all his words tumbling in her head behind his fists against the glass, until she can't bear it anymore.

What will he think when the patrol car pulls up? She doesn't know. He may think he can talk his way out of it, rely on his infinite charm. Or will he realise, shocked, that this is finally the end, that there are things you should listen to when someone says them to you over and over and over again?

Things like: Stop It. Go Away. I Want Nothing More To Do With You.



Cultivated invisibility

Simon Stewart

I am the stranger who comes today and stays tomorrow.

I am sitting next to you on the bus;

I am walking beside you on the street;

I sit across the room from you in the café.

My objectivity is enabled by a combination of belonging and non-belonging.

My vigilance ensures that I always see you

But I have cultivated invisibility so that you do not notice me.

If you did, you might give me a few coins and a passing glance of solidarity,

Or you might get me thrown off the bus and out of the country.

SOCIOLOGICAL HOROSCOPES

courtesy of my university's 'values in action' framework

ARIES

make

time

TAURUS

Adapt

GEMINI

trust

long-term relationships

CANCER

open

to

be

action

SOCIOLOGICAL HOROSCOPES

courtesy of my university's 'values in action' framework

LEO

embrace

change.

VIRGO

feedback

peers

Seek

from

LIBRA

consider what you want to achieve

SCORPIO

with ambiguity

deal

SOCIOLOGICAL HOROSCOPES

courtesy of my university's 'values in action' framework

SAGITTARIUS

act as a sounding
board

CAPRICORN

dialogue
is words and actions

AQUARIUS

resolve
desire

PISCES

Act on
opportunities to
Maintain contact

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John-Paul Smiley is a writer and independent scholar. He has a PhD in Civil and Building Engineering (Loughborough, UK), an MSc Social Research (Leicester, UK), and a BA Politics and Sociology (York, UK). His interests include futurism and science fiction, as well as politics and sociology. He tweets at @JohnPaulSmiley

Ian C Smith's work has been published in Antipodes, BBC Radio 4 Sounds, The Dalhousie Review, Griffith Review, San Pedro River Review, Southword, The Story Thursday Book, & Two Thirds North. His seventh book is wonder sadness madness joy, Ginninderra (Port Adelaide). He writes in the Gippsland Lakes area of Victoria, and on Flinders Island.

Simon Stewart is a Reader in Sociology and Director of the Centre for European and International Studies Research at University of Portsmouth, UK. His research expertise is in cultural sociology and he is currently working on an ESRC/UKRI funded project on migrant homelessness. He sometimes writes drabble poems.

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Daniel Tiernan is a hobbyist photographer and short story writer. He lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota with his wife. During the day, he works at a nonprofit as a marketing manager. danieltiernan.com

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emily warner is an artist, facilitator, performer, producer and DJ. Based in Birmingham (UK) they work with forms of liveness to explore ideas of togetherness. Prioritising process and collaboration they work with the digital, audio-visual and performance tactics. Commissions include Coventry City of Culture, Eastside Projects, University of Birmingham, and Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust.

Megan Watson is an Anthropology Honours student studying in Australia. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Anthropology. She enjoys to read, paint, bushwalk, bake, and garden.



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