

So Fi Zine  
Edition #5  
June 2019



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Ashleigh Watson

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Guest editorial by  
Michael Burawoy

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## Editorial

Ashleigh Watson

Since I opened the call for submissions for this edition in early 2019, I've spent a lot of time talking with people who aren't sociologists about *So Fi Zine*. This has mostly been at zine fairs. Zinesters are an amazing community of people. The care that goes into the craft is immense—despite the rough/indie/quick simplicity of the form, every zine made and shared and touched and talked over is a product of close attention and personal time. Zines are immensely personal—delicate, open and intimate works—that are made to be held, made to be shared. It's no surprise that zines are full of the most crafty personal/political work I've seen.

These conversations I'm having, of course, lead to discussions about sociology—what it is, who does it, why it's done. I often find myself talking about shared concerns between the discipline and zinesters, things like relationships and identities and culture and rights.

Fittingly, for this edition, featuring a guest editorial on public sociology by Michael Burawoy, many of the pieces focus on the conversations we find ourselves in with others—the ways we try to reach mutual understanding, and the friction it takes to get there.

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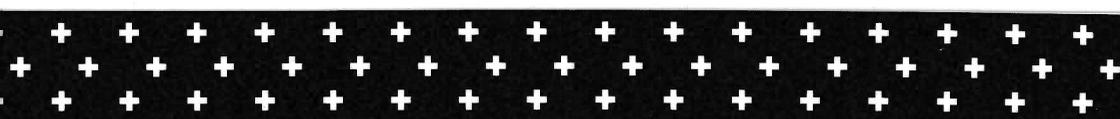
Yes, Ishmael, the same fate may be thine

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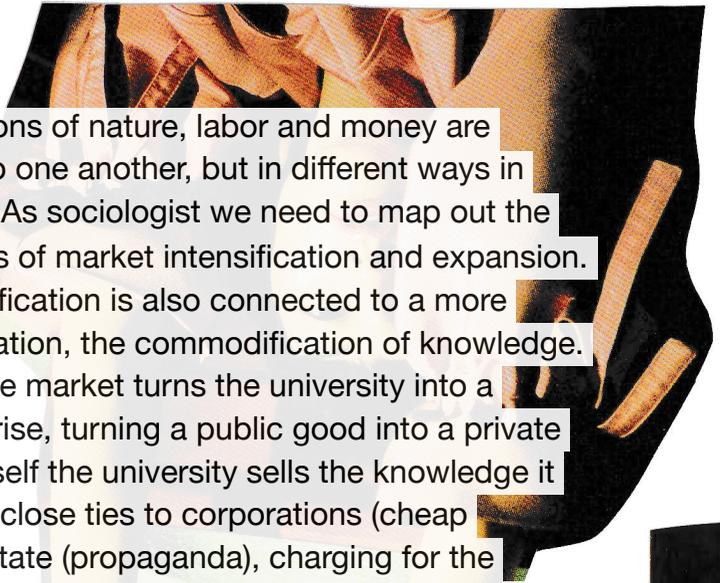
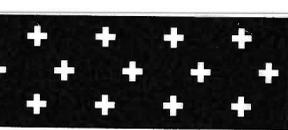
## Guest Editorial

### Why Public Sociology?

Michael Burawoy

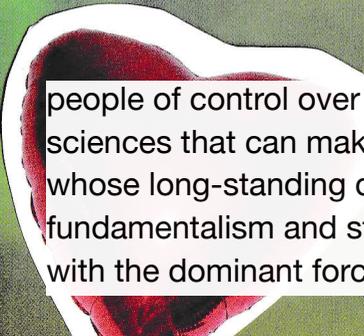
As sociologists we find ourselves in a paradoxical situation: the world's problems require a sociological imagination for their solution but that imagination is losing ground as an academic discipline and as public knowledge. The struggle for public sociology is both an expression and an answer to this paradox.

What are the issues of today? Simply put the survival of the human race. As we plunder nature – whether it be land, water or air – for profit so we not only jeopardize long term planetary existence (global warming, toxic waste, pollution of every sort), but displace enormous populations, dispossessing them of access to their means of existence, and thereby creating enormous reservoirs of labor. Wage labor becomes the privilege of ever fewer, themselves subject to ever greater insecurity. Instead of a proletariat we create an expanding, frightened precariat, rising into ever higher rungs of the socio-economic ladder. Unable to find consumers for the goods and services it produces, capitalism extends credit to all and sundry – individuals (mortgages, credit), communities (micro-finance), nations (structural adjustment loans) – but when payments can no longer be postponed, the bubble bursts, bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy and financial crises ensue, and ever more people are expelled onto the streets.



The commodifications of nature, labor and money are intimately related to one another, but in different ways in different countries. As sociologist we need to map out the interwoven patterns of market intensification and expansion. But each commodification is also connected to a more recent commodification, the commodification of knowledge. The extension of the market turns the university into a commercial enterprise, turning a public good into a private good. To finance itself the university sells the knowledge it produces, building close ties to corporations (cheap research) and the state (propaganda), charging for the dissemination and certification of knowledge (student fees), begging for funds from the rich and super-rich in exchange for symbolic capital. In some places the university becomes a shadow of its former self or simply withers away. The survival of disciplines within the university increasingly depends on their market value whether they render useful research for industry, ideology for the state or jobs for students. As the membrane separating the university and society becomes thinner academics can no longer assume autonomy, so we have to decide whose side we are on, whose values we support.

Within the social sciences, economics – conventionally neoclassical but with notable dissenters – develops the technologies for new markets while providing the ideology that justifies the destruction of the planet. Political science, again with notable dissenters, is its accomplice, establishing the conditions of market expansion while contracting the meaning of politics, separating it from power, dispossessing



people of control over their own lives. These are the social sciences that can make claims to pay their way -- unlike sociology whose long-standing defense of civil society against market fundamentalism and state despotism is increasingly out of favor with the dominant forces in society.

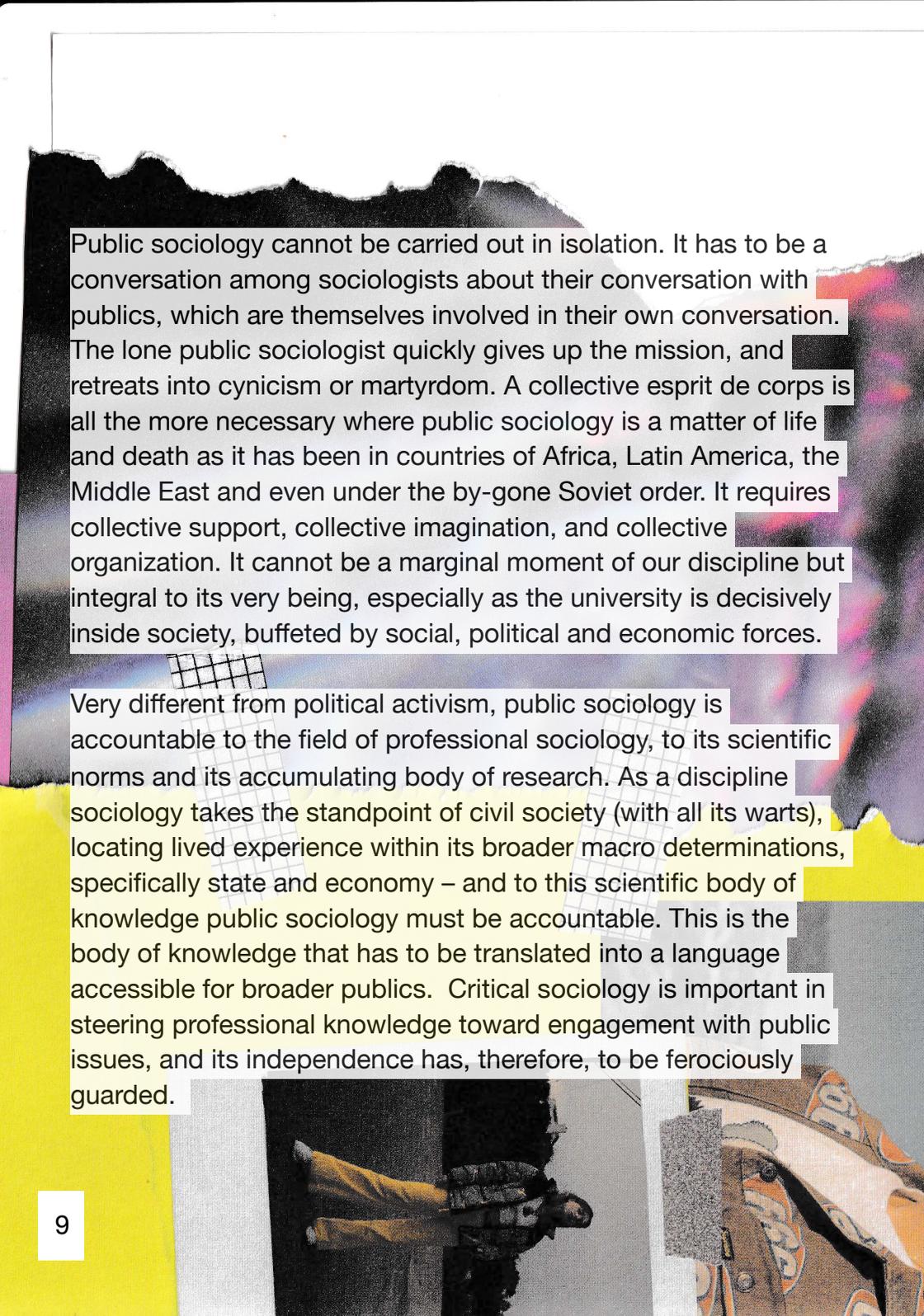
There are states – fewer and fewer – that seek to contain the destructiveness of the economic tsunami, and even fewer that are successful. They include the welfare states of Northern Europe which still recognize the social dimension of problems and policies. Here sociological perspectives have legitimacy, particularly as a form of policy science. There are other states that erect barricades against the market, holding it at bay through authoritarian means. Here sociology's defense of an open civil society is seen as politically threatening and sociology's existence is precarious, as it is easily labeled an enemy of the state. Whether sociology survives at the national level will determine its survival at the global level – the level most critical to saving the planet for human habitation. A global sociology, not a false universalism, not a hegemonic projection of a singular, particular sociology, has to be our goal.

What is to be done? Sociology cannot insulate itself within the academy watching its support dwindle, but must advance into the public sphere and there excite debate about the direction of society, educate citizenry about the dangers of market commodification and political rationalization. This can be done in two ways – as a traditional public sociology which uses various media – print, audio and visual – to stimulate conversation. This is never easy. Often, journalists have neither the patience nor

the interest in critical commentary. Independent opinion pages are limited in space and readership. Television and radio are either carefully monitored or subject to arbitrary market criteria. Occasionally, a sociology text that links personal troubles to social issues captures the public imagination. Social media do provide an alternative outlet, but the competition is relentless, and so we have to be innovative in attracting attention. Whatever the challenges, even as a professional discipline, we cannot abandon the public sphere to conglomerate sponsors or to political propaganda.

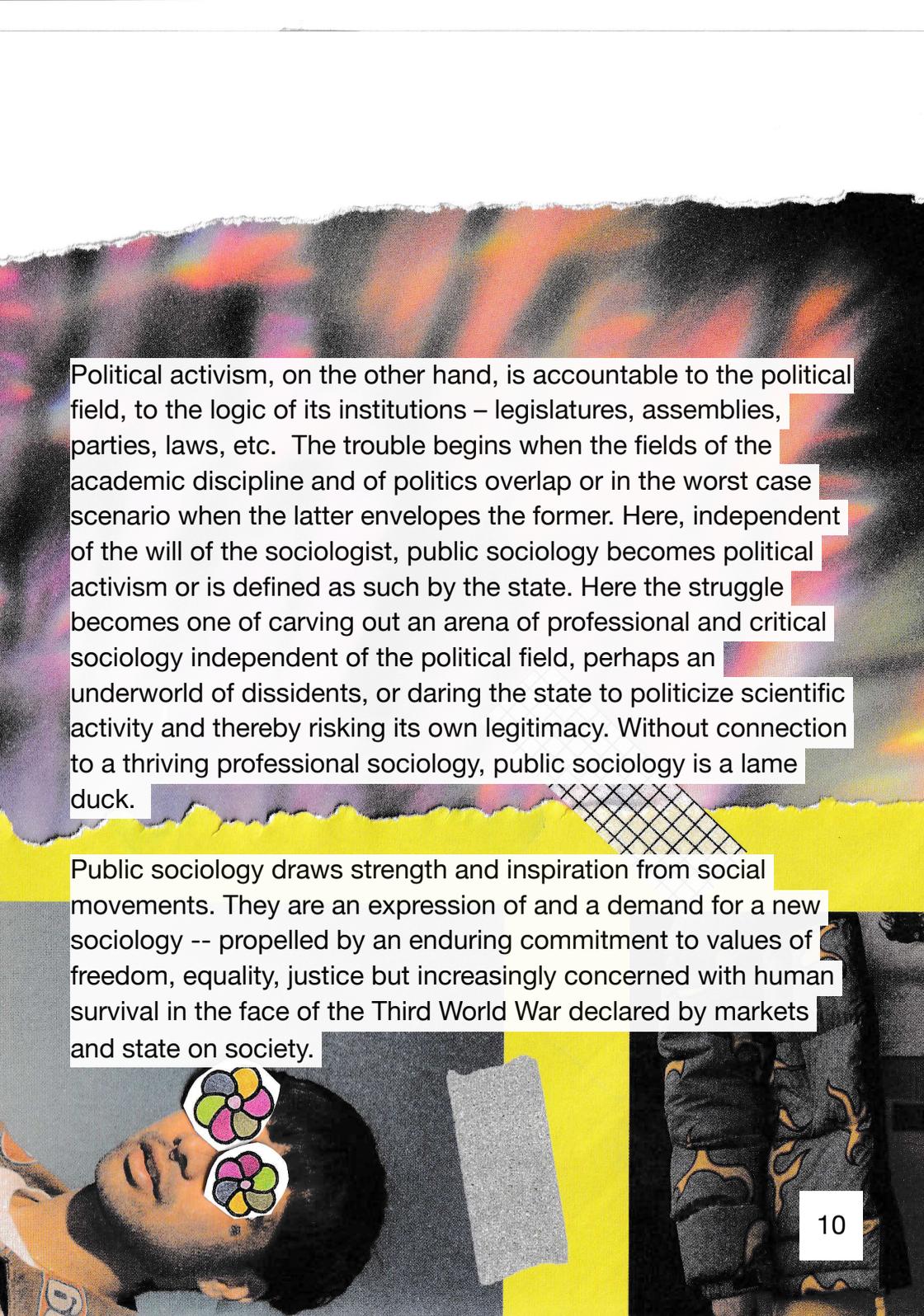
There is a second way forward – organic public sociology. Here there is an unmediated relation between sociologists and their publics that can be social movements, social organizations, local communities. The publics concerned are active rather than passive, thick rather than thin, narrow rather than broad, counter rather than mainstream. Like traditional public sociology, organic public sociology requires enormous patience, eliciting the trust of others, resisting pressures to sacrifice intellectual autonomy, but also refusing a vanguardist role that condemns the subaltern voice to oblivion. Organic and traditional public sociologies are not mutual exclusive but complementary.

Public sociology has perhaps its greatest and most enduring potential in the classroom where most of us spend most of our professional lives. Indeed, just as public sociology is a form of teaching – in which the teachers and are also the taught – so teaching can be a form of public sociology. It calls upon us to see students as a public with whom we can engage traditionally or organically, raising to a sociological plane their understanding of themselves and their connection to others.



Public sociology cannot be carried out in isolation. It has to be a conversation among sociologists about their conversation with publics, which are themselves involved in their own conversation. The lone public sociologist quickly gives up the mission, and retreats into cynicism or martyrdom. A collective esprit de corps is all the more necessary where public sociology is a matter of life and death as it has been in countries of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and even under the by-gone Soviet order. It requires collective support, collective imagination, and collective organization. It cannot be a marginal moment of our discipline but integral to its very being, especially as the university is decisively inside society, buffeted by social, political and economic forces.

Very different from political activism, public sociology is accountable to the field of professional sociology, to its scientific norms and its accumulating body of research. As a discipline sociology takes the standpoint of civil society (with all its warts), locating lived experience within its broader macro determinations, specifically state and economy – and to this scientific body of knowledge public sociology must be accountable. This is the body of knowledge that has to be translated into a language accessible for broader publics. Critical sociology is important in steering professional knowledge toward engagement with public issues, and its independence has, therefore, to be ferociously guarded.



Political activism, on the other hand, is accountable to the political field, to the logic of its institutions – legislatures, assemblies, parties, laws, etc. The trouble begins when the fields of the academic discipline and of politics overlap or in the worst case scenario when the latter envelopes the former. Here, independent of the will of the sociologist, public sociology becomes political activism or is defined as such by the state. Here the struggle becomes one of carving out an arena of professional and critical sociology independent of the political field, perhaps an underworld of dissidents, or daring the state to politicize scientific activity and thereby risking its own legitimacy. Without connection to a thriving professional sociology, public sociology is a lame duck.

Public sociology draws strength and inspiration from social movements. They are an expression of and a demand for a new sociology -- propelled by an enduring commitment to values of freedom, equality, justice but increasingly concerned with human survival in the face of the Third World War declared by markets and state on society.



## Patricia Leavy on Spark

*[In February and March 2019, I had a long interview-style discussion with Patricia Leavy over email about her latest social research novel Spark. We discussed many things and she gave long, considerate, detailed answers to each of my questions. We talked about how she wrote Spark and the novel's reception. I asked about her about how she workshops her characters, her writing and editing practices, her motivations, and her advice for novice writers. I also asked about what she thinks fiction offers us, in a big picture sense. Here, I have curated some of her responses –*  
*Asleigh Watson]*

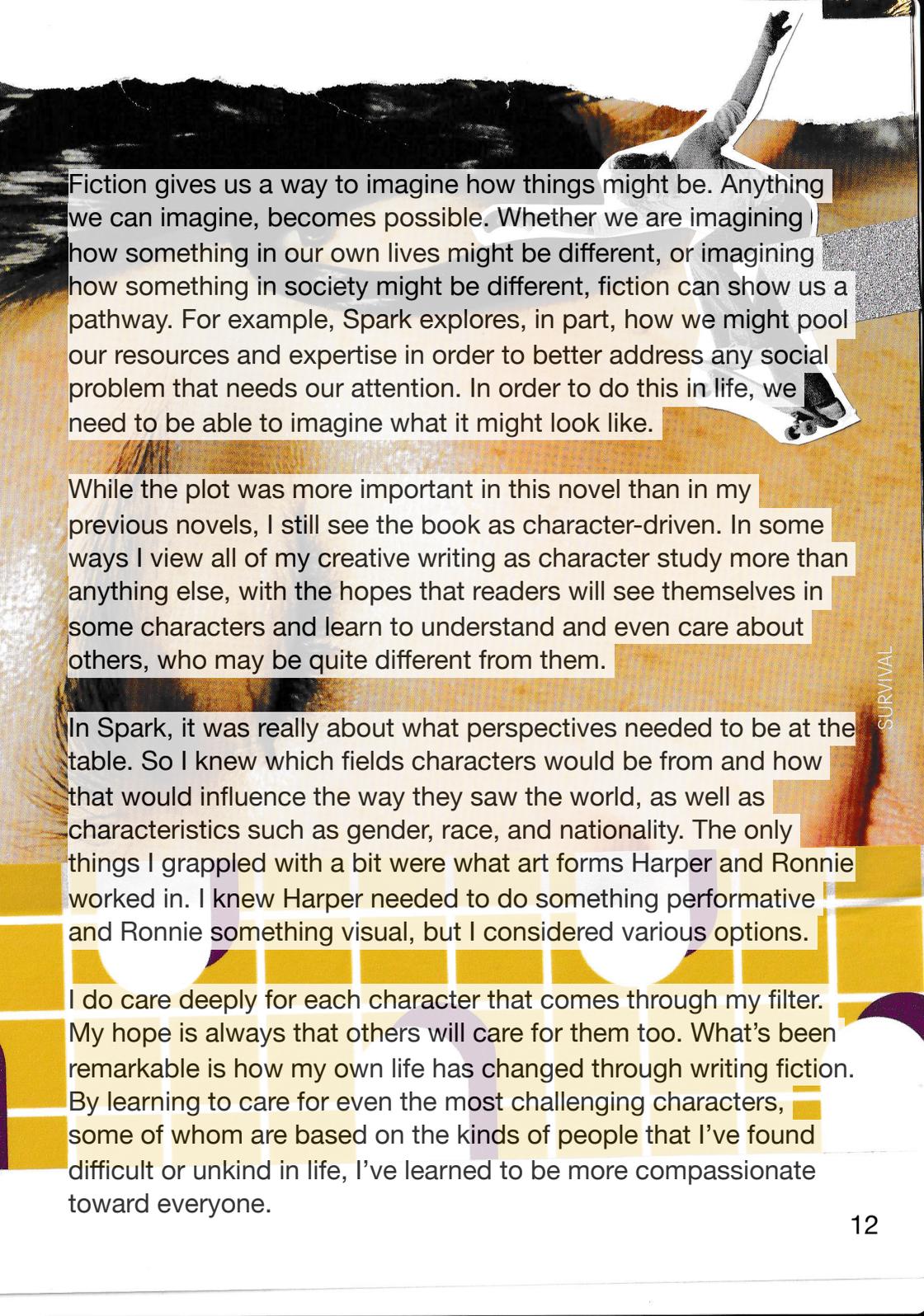
This novel, most unusually, came to me all at once, from the opening line to the last line.

I was one of fifty people from around the world invited to participate in the Salzburg Global Seminar session on the neuroscience of creativity. During my time there, at a spectacular castle in Austria, the entire novel came to me. I knew all of the characters instantly.

I actually had a sequel to Blue planned since the day I finished writing it. The natural thing would have been to write that first. However, I wanted to grow as a writer first. I wanted to challenge and push myself. So I decided to write Spark

One of the reasons I love writing fiction is because you can cultivate empathy. This is such a vital part of our humanity: the ability to see others with compassion. Fiction allows me to be a part of that...

Writing fiction has taught me to be much more empathetic, and Spark had a particularly deep affect on me in this regard.



Fiction gives us a way to imagine how things might be. Anything we can imagine, becomes possible. Whether we are imagining how something in our own lives might be different, or imagining how something in society might be different, fiction can show us a pathway. For example, Spark explores, in part, how we might pool our resources and expertise in order to better address any social problem that needs our attention. In order to do this in life, we need to be able to imagine what it might look like.

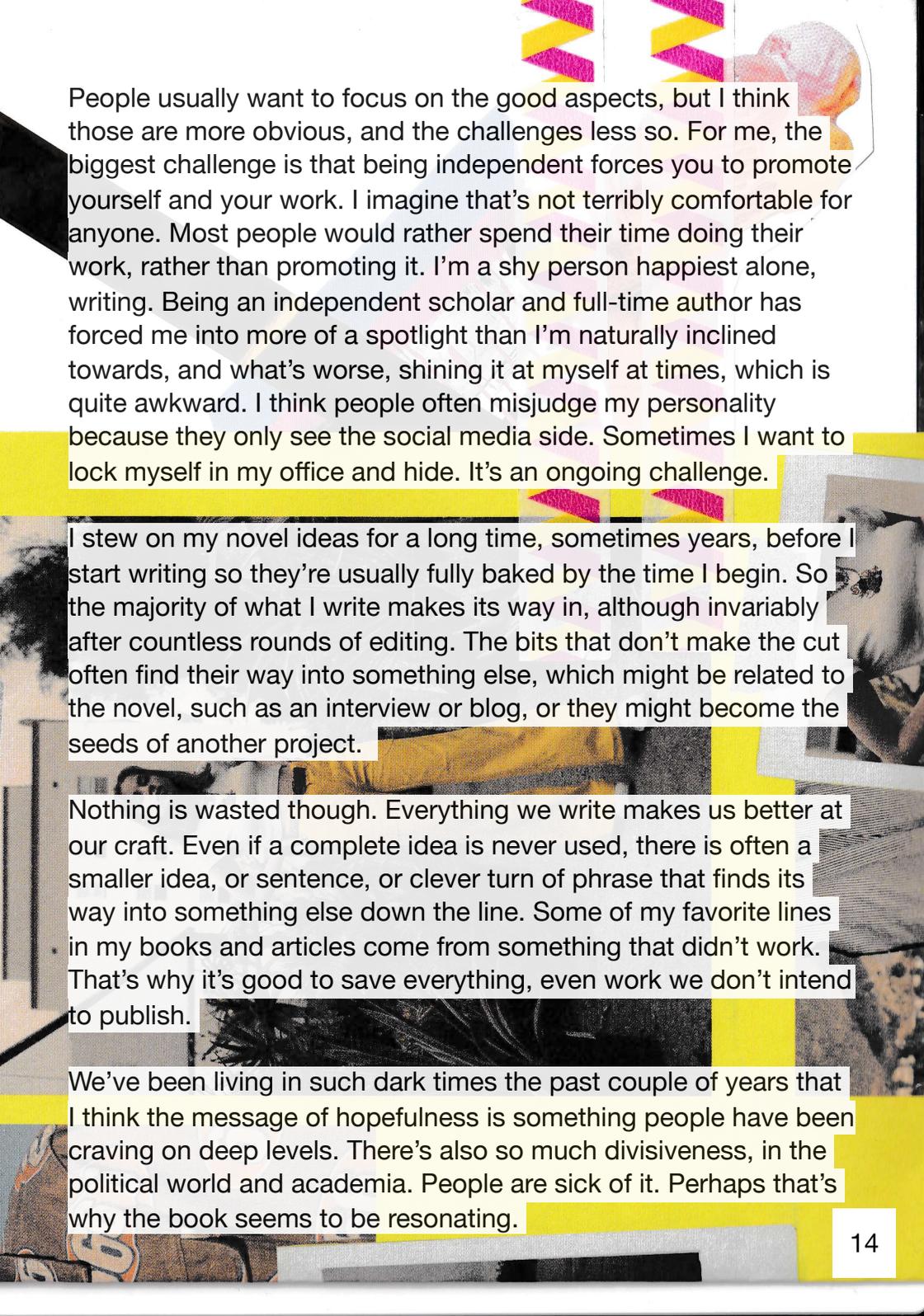
While the plot was more important in this novel than in my previous novels, I still see the book as character-driven. In some ways I view all of my creative writing as character study more than anything else, with the hopes that readers will see themselves in some characters and learn to understand and even care about others, who may be quite different from them.

In Spark, it was really about what perspectives needed to be at the table. So I knew which fields characters would be from and how that would influence the way they saw the world, as well as characteristics such as gender, race, and nationality. The only things I grappled with a bit were what art forms Harper and Ronnie worked in. I knew Harper needed to do something performative and Ronnie something visual, but I considered various options.

I do care deeply for each character that comes through my filter. My hope is always that others will care for them too. What's been remarkable is how my own life has changed through writing fiction. By learning to care for even the most challenging characters, some of whom are based on the kinds of people that I've found difficult or unkind in life, I've learned to be more compassionate toward everyone.



When I quit my job as a professor to write full-time, I also moved from Boston to Maine. I'm the kind of person who loves to be alone and could truly sit for months writing on my own and be just fine. But I was worried with all of the changes that I wouldn't have enough interactions with people so I forced myself to join a writing group at my local library. We met monthly and I bonded with one of the women in the group. She's a lawyer by day and young adult writer by night. Although we're in completely different genres, we get and respect each other's work. We started meeting on our own once a week, sometimes less if we have travel or other obligations, and we've been doing this for about seven years. We email each other whatever we've been working on and then we each make hand written edits on the other's work. We meet Sunday mornings, over coffee or tea, and review our feedback. It's been absolutely invaluable. She's a fantastic editor, but more importantly, it works well because she has no agenda other than helping me achieve my vision, and the same is true for me regarding her work. Kind of like a therapist or partner, you need to find the right person.

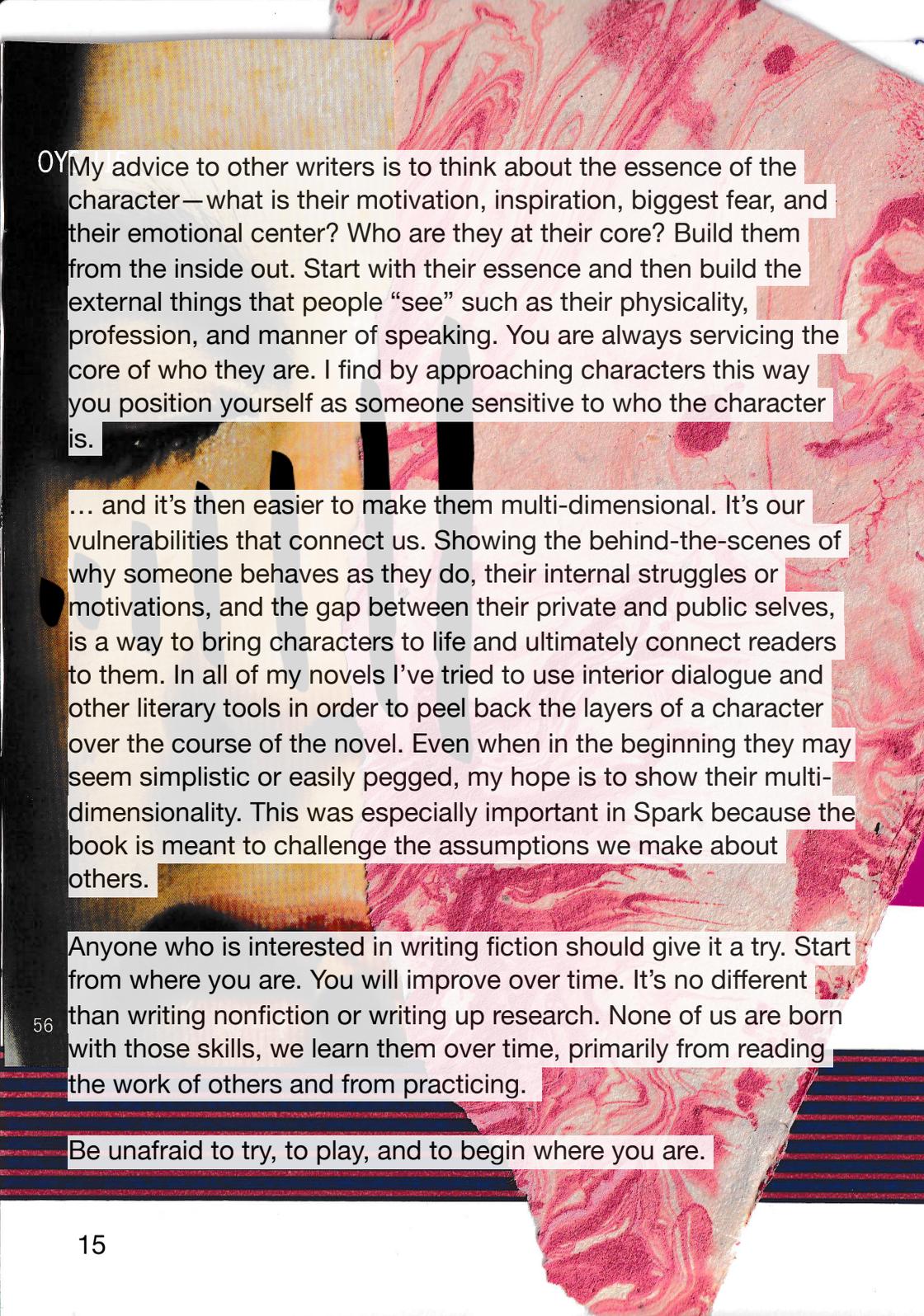


People usually want to focus on the good aspects, but I think those are more obvious, and the challenges less so. For me, the biggest challenge is that being independent forces you to promote yourself and your work. I imagine that's not terribly comfortable for anyone. Most people would rather spend their time doing their work, rather than promoting it. I'm a shy person happiest alone, writing. Being an independent scholar and full-time author has forced me into more of a spotlight than I'm naturally inclined towards, and what's worse, shining it at myself at times, which is quite awkward. I think people often misjudge my personality because they only see the social media side. Sometimes I want to lock myself in my office and hide. It's an ongoing challenge.

I stew on my novel ideas for a long time, sometimes years, before I start writing so they're usually fully baked by the time I begin. So the majority of what I write makes its way in, although invariably after countless rounds of editing. The bits that don't make the cut often find their way into something else, which might be related to the novel, such as an interview or blog, or they might become the seeds of another project.

Nothing is wasted though. Everything we write makes us better at our craft. Even if a complete idea is never used, there is often a smaller idea, or sentence, or clever turn of phrase that finds its way into something else down the line. Some of my favorite lines in my books and articles come from something that didn't work. That's why it's good to save everything, even work we don't intend to publish.

We've been living in such dark times the past couple of years that I think the message of hopefulness is something people have been craving on deep levels. There's also so much divisiveness, in the political world and academia. People are sick of it. Perhaps that's why the book seems to be resonating.



MY My advice to other writers is to think about the essence of the character—what is their motivation, inspiration, biggest fear, and their emotional center? Who are they at their core? Build them from the inside out. Start with their essence and then build the external things that people “see” such as their physicality, profession, and manner of speaking. You are always servicing the core of who they are. I find by approaching characters this way you position yourself as someone sensitive to who the character is.

... and it's then easier to make them multi-dimensional. It's our vulnerabilities that connect us. Showing the behind-the-scenes of why someone behaves as they do, their internal struggles or motivations, and the gap between their private and public selves, is a way to bring characters to life and ultimately connect readers to them. In all of my novels I've tried to use interior dialogue and other literary tools in order to peel back the layers of a character over the course of the novel. Even when in the beginning they may seem simplistic or easily pegged, my hope is to show their multi-dimensionality. This was especially important in Spark because the book is meant to challenge the assumptions we make about others.

Anyone who is interested in writing fiction should give it a try. Start from where you are. You will improve over time. It's no different than writing nonfiction or writing up research. None of us are born with those skills, we learn them over time, primarily from reading the work of others and from practicing.

Be unafraid to try, to play, and to begin where you are.



## Glass

Kate Carruthers Thomas

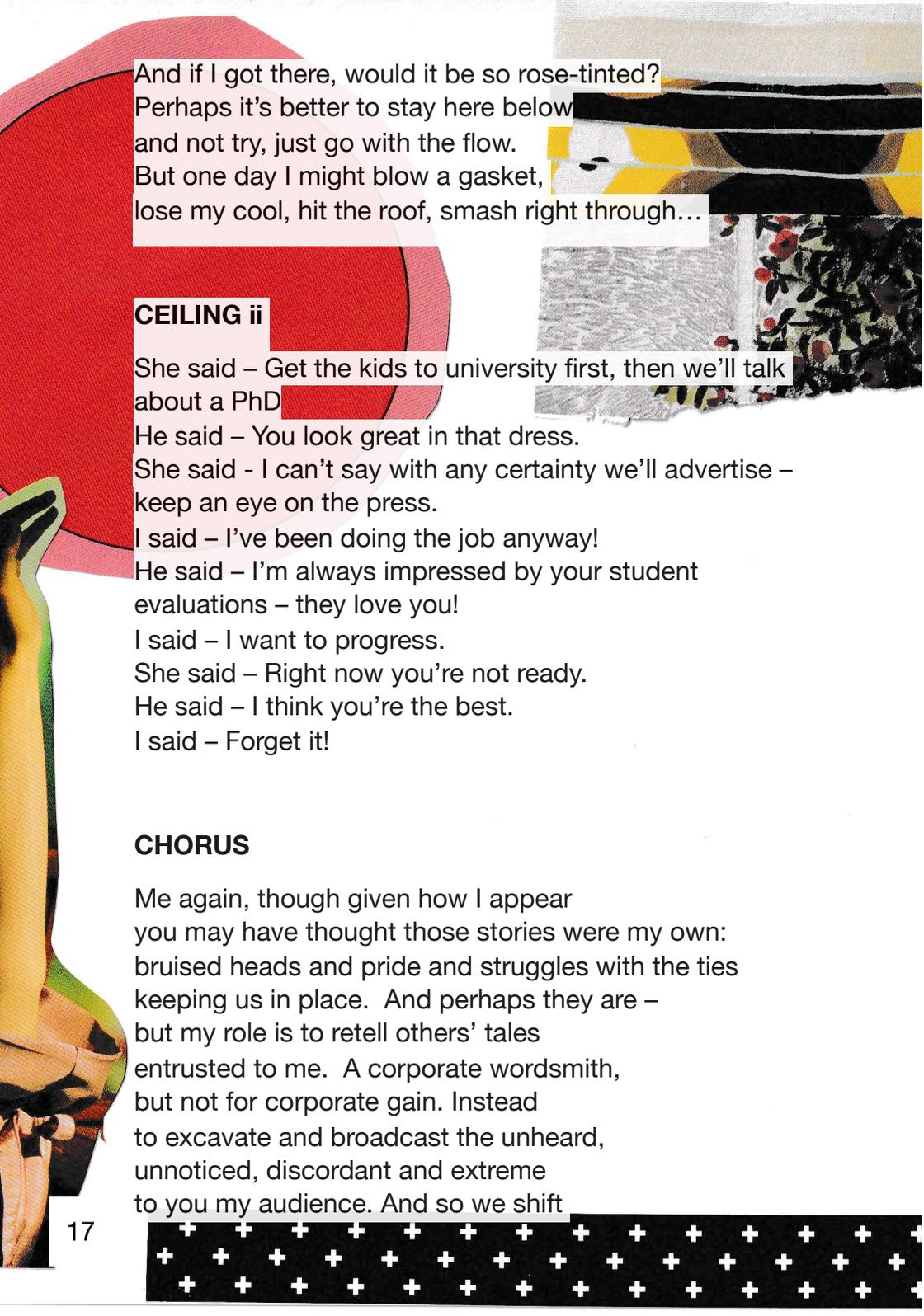
### PROLOGUE

Here's the prologue and I, the poet  
to deliver it, to set the scene before  
I tell the stories I have found, of university  
and those within this workplace, glassed  
and gendered, of confines and horizons,  
of ceiling, escalator, closet, cliff;  
metaphors archetypal – architectural,  
fields of battles lost and won  
and endlessly it seems, ongoing  
in the body corporate: Massey's  
'highly specialised envelope of space-time'.  
But note, this poet is of this body,  
insider, paid-up member – and gendered too.  
Do not expect objective 'truth'.

### CEILING i

It's a bit of a myth the glass ceiling,  
didn't we smash it some time ago?  
Aren't we prime ministers, bishops and CEOs?  
All the paperwork has to be equal  
and the pay – well, there's some way to go!

I can see where I want to get to  
not the top, just a place where I know  
my work matters and I've something to show  
for my labour. Not ticking boxes.  
But why is it all so damn slow?



And if I got there, would it be so rose-tinted?  
Perhaps it's better to stay here below  
and not try, just go with the flow.  
But one day I might blow a gasket,  
lose my cool, hit the roof, smash right through...

## CEILING ii

She said – Get the kids to university first, then we'll talk  
about a PhD

He said – You look great in that dress.

She said - I can't say with any certainty we'll advertise –  
keep an eye on the press.

I said – I've been doing the job anyway!

He said – I'm always impressed by your student  
evaluations – they love you!

I said – I want to progress.

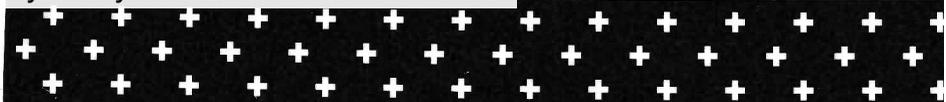
She said – Right now you're not ready.

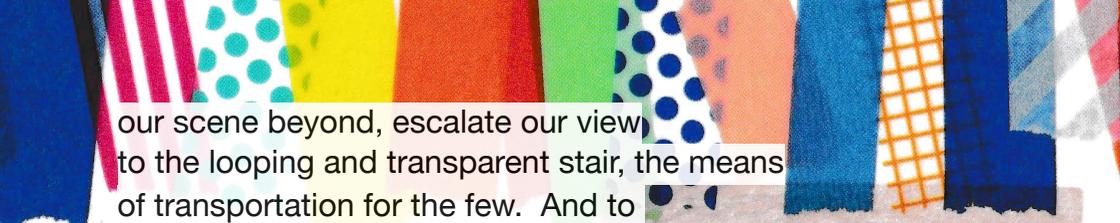
He said – I think you're the best.

I said – Forget it!

## CHORUS

Me again, though given how I appear  
you may have thought those stories were my own:  
bruised heads and pride and struggles with the ties  
keeping us in place. And perhaps they are –  
but my role is to retell others' tales  
entrusted to me. A corporate wordsmith,  
but not for corporate gain. Instead  
to excavate and broadcast the unheard,  
unnoticed, discordant and extreme  
to you my audience. And so we shift





our scene beyond, escalate our view  
to the looping and transparent stair, the means  
of transportation for the few. And to  
the hidden spaces in which some remain unseen.

## ESCALATOR i

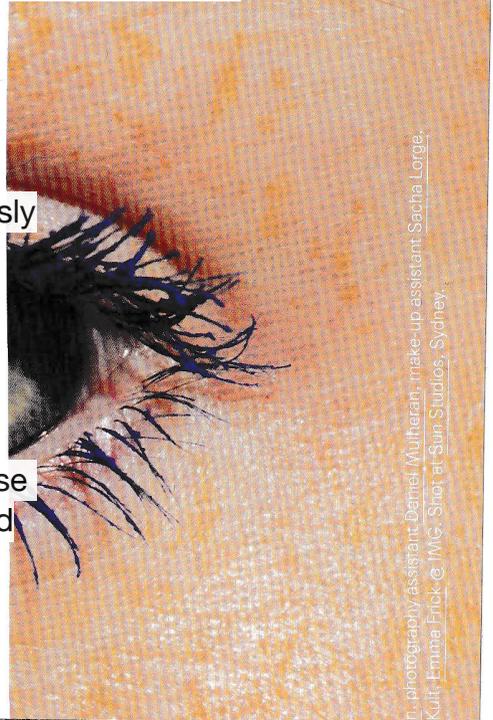
It works like this.

Step on. Stand still. And effortlessly  
it seems, you rise. A passenger,  
innocent.

A stair does not discriminate,  
A motor just keeps running.

You're carried upwards  
and between floors you pass those  
whose journey started sooner and  
was interrupted so must pause,  
and wait to step back on.

You wave and travel on.  
The motor down below,  
hidden from view, the machinery  
of privilege concealed.



in photography, assistant: Daniel Mulheran, make-up assistant: Sacha Lorge,  
Kulif, Emma Frick © IMG. Shot at Sun Studios, Sydney.

## ESCALATOR ii

You and I, we're the same.

I've just taken the breaks when they've come to me,  
I've put things in place so I'm ready.

Perhaps I'm further ahead than I ought to be  
but not because anyone's favoured me.

You and I, we're the same.

We started out simultaneously,  
we both want the same things academically,  
but you stepped off the ladder temporarily (twice).  
Said you wanted to, for the sake of your family.

You and I we're the same.

Guys at work act tough around me,  
say that's how they'll get where they want to be.  
I don't agree, that's not me, I work differently -  
still get promoted. They keep asking me.

You and I we're the same.

You'll catch up. You're actually better than me.  
It's the way it is, the corporate machinery,  
right place at right time. No, not how it ought to be,  
but I've just taken the breaks when they came to me.

## CLOSET i

Roll up, roll up! To see the cabinet of curiosity,  
the office oddity, the workplace phenomenon,  
the extraordinary, the astonishing glass closet!

Roll up, roll up! Step inside sir, don't be shy sir.  
What's that? You're just a normal guy sir?

No problem, step inside and let the closet do its work.

Now tell those watching, can you see out sir?

That's right, as clear as day, through those glass walls sir!  
A little tight in there? You're right, it's quite a squeeze sir.

But here's the trick. We can't see *you* sir! That is to say  
half of you has disappeared!

What's that you say sir? Your better half? Oh you're a laugh sir!

Step out when you like sir, you're absolutely free to go.

The closet has no key. But let's just hope we all like what we see when you come out sir. There's no guarantee

...

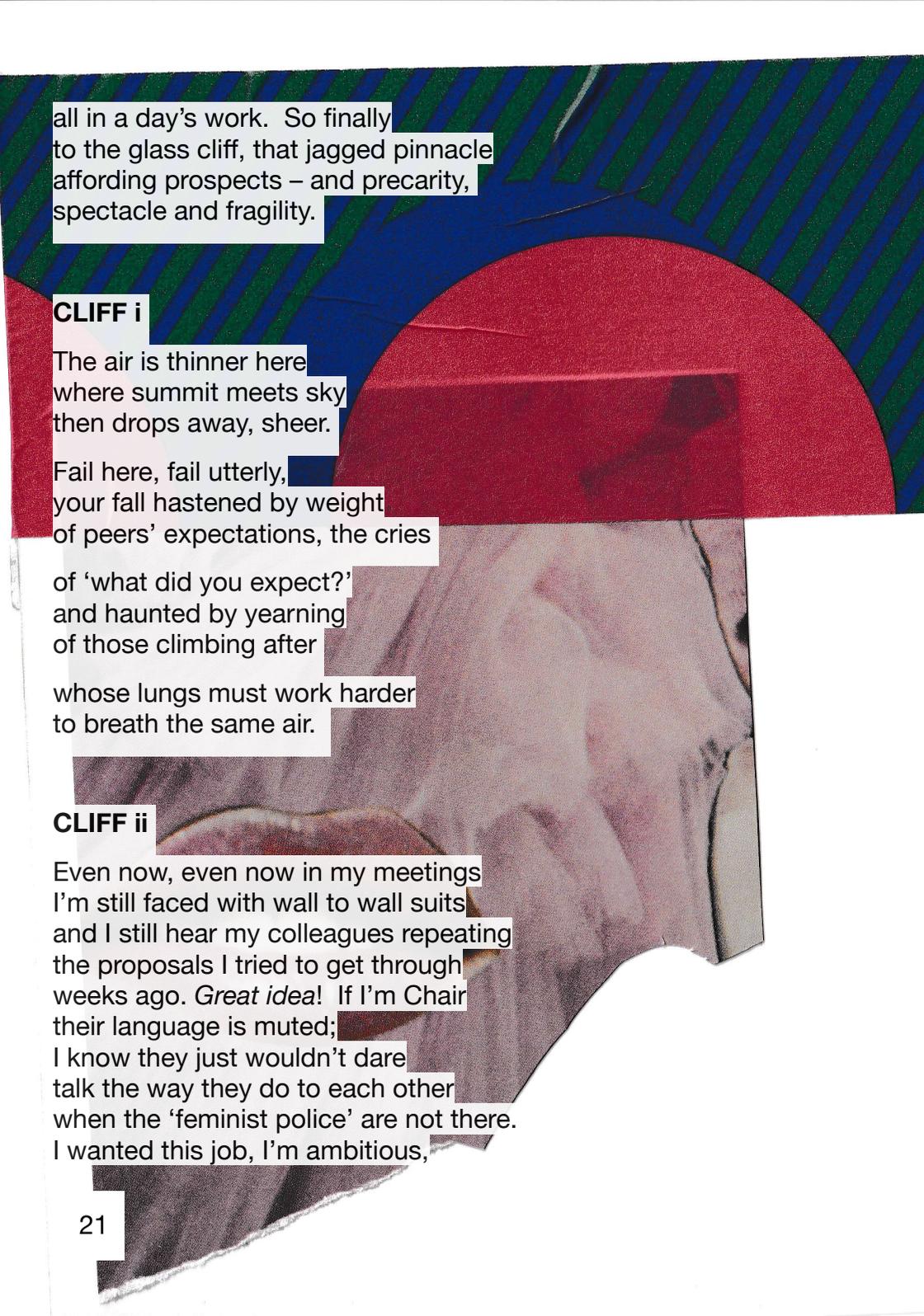
## CLOSET ii

What's work to do with how we live and who we love? Keep that for the weekend, your private life, the pub. Strike a happy medium, or people get confused and won't be comfortable around you and that's no good for business is it? No one's saying that it's wrong, but there's no need to advertise. We all know these things go on. Your skills are top notch, that's the main thing. We value you for that. Let's focus on the positive and keep the personal under wraps.

## CHORUS

All in a day's work? Let's take stock before reflecting on our final plane. We've heard from those confined by glassy horizontals, joisted by power overt and invisible, the same that drives and hides machinery transporting some to higher floors. We've heard from those who make themselves invisible, wrapping in opacity the fragments they fear distorted most. And this





all in a day's work. So finally  
to the glass cliff, that jagged pinnacle  
affording prospects – and precarity,  
spectacle and fragility.

### CLIFF i

The air is thinner here  
where summit meets sky  
then drops away, sheer.

Fail here, fail utterly,  
your fall hastened by weight  
of peers' expectations, the cries

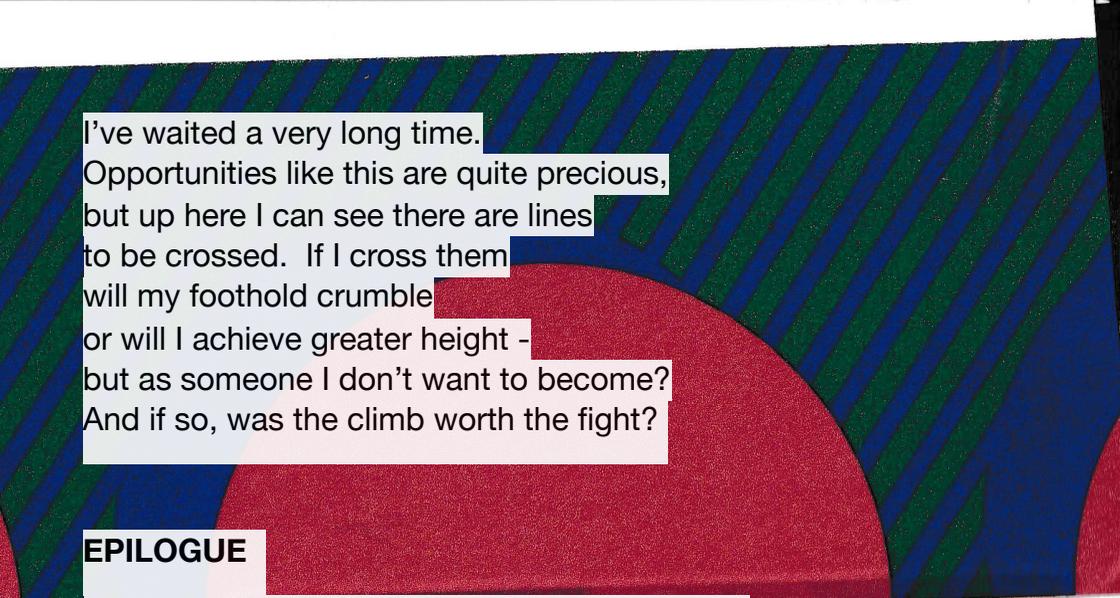
of 'what did you expect?'  
and haunted by yearning  
of those climbing after

whose lungs must work harder  
to breath the same air.

### CLIFF ii

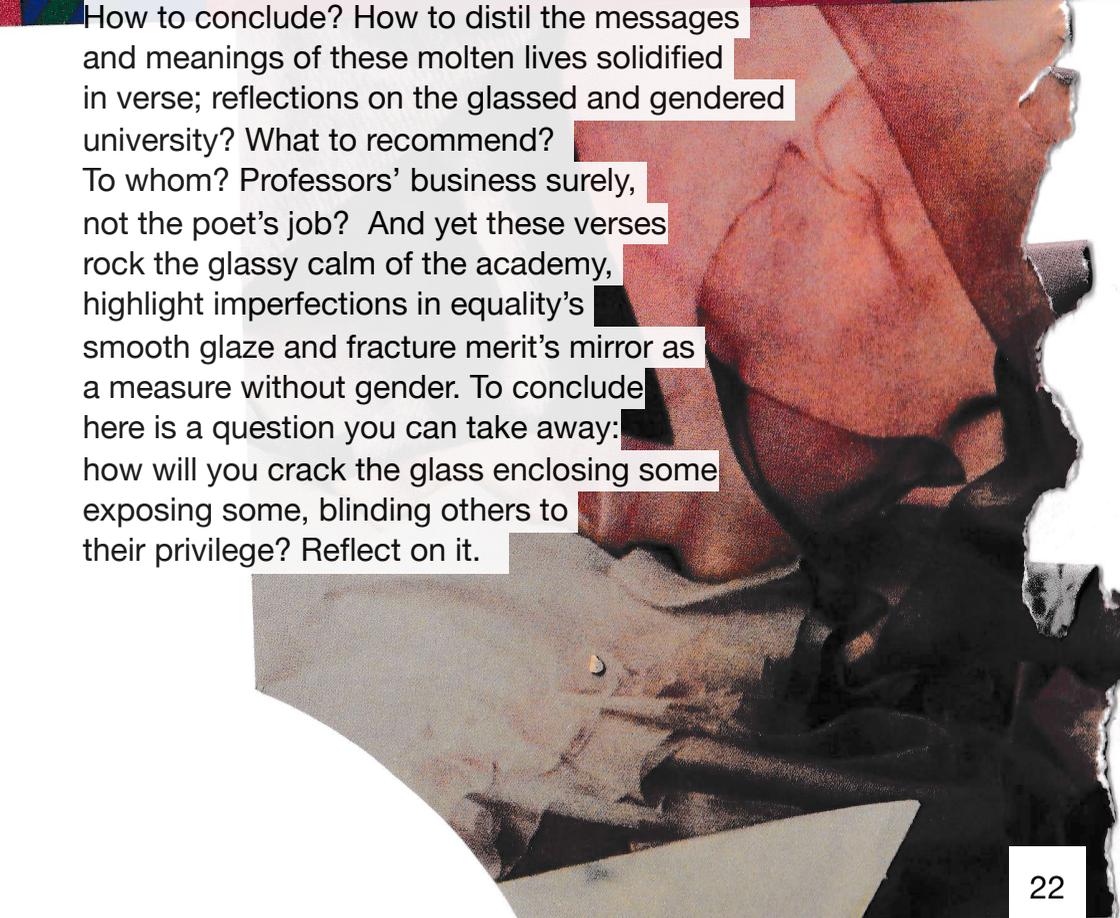
Even now, even now in my meetings  
I'm still faced with wall to wall suits  
and I still hear my colleagues repeating  
the proposals I tried to get through  
weeks ago. *Great idea!* If I'm Chair  
their language is muted;

I know they just wouldn't dare  
talk the way they do to each other  
when the 'feminist police' are not there.  
I wanted this job, I'm ambitious,

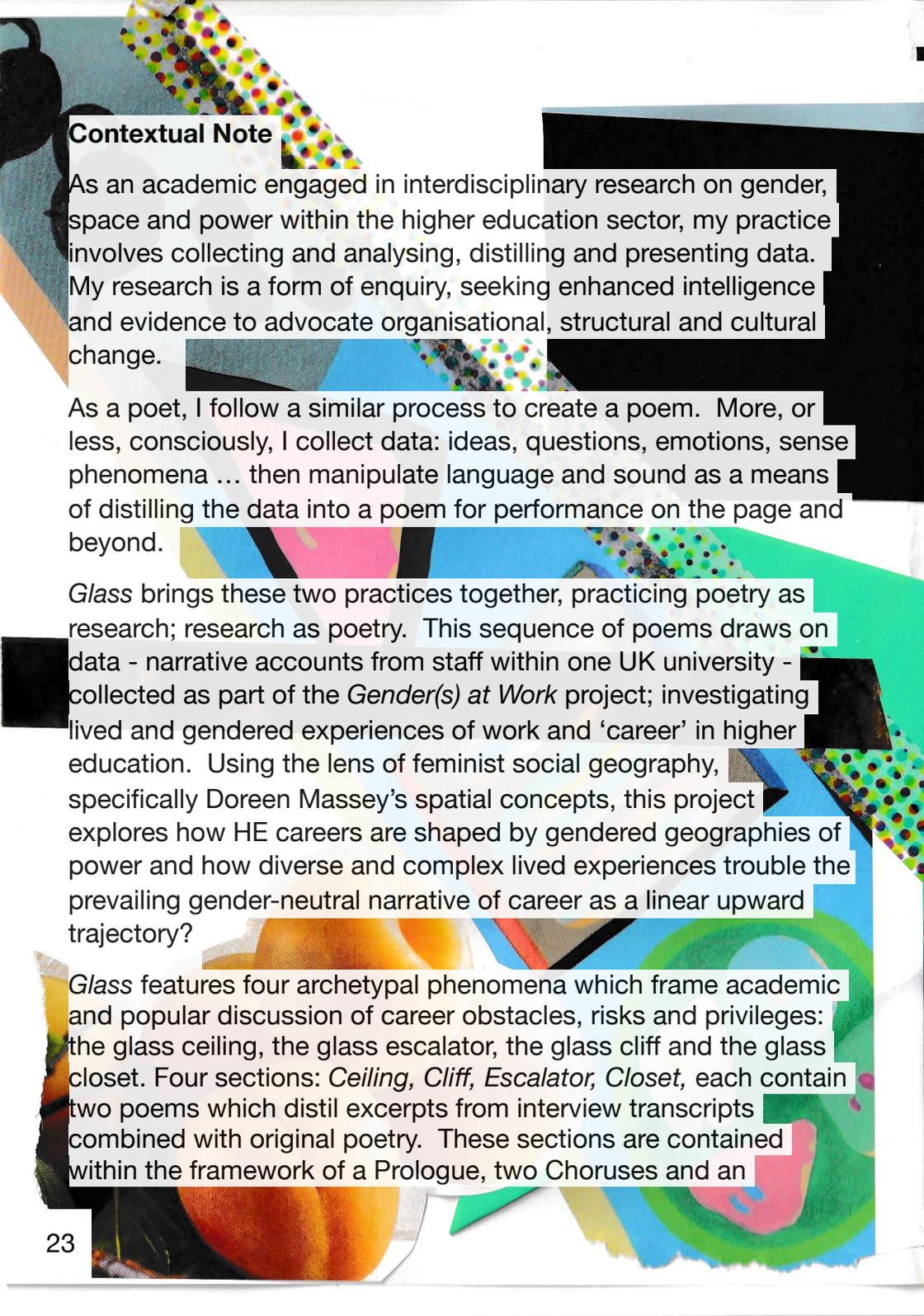


I've waited a very long time.  
Opportunities like this are quite precious,  
but up here I can see there are lines  
to be crossed. If I cross them  
will my foothold crumble  
or will I achieve greater height -  
but as someone I don't want to become?  
And if so, was the climb worth the fight?

## EPILOGUE



How to conclude? How to distil the messages  
and meanings of these molten lives solidified  
in verse; reflections on the glassed and gendered  
university? What to recommend?  
To whom? Professors' business surely,  
not the poet's job? And yet these verses  
rock the glassy calm of the academy,  
highlight imperfections in equality's  
smooth glaze and fracture merit's mirror as  
a measure without gender. To conclude  
here is a question you can take away:  
how will you crack the glass enclosing some  
exposing some, blinding others to  
their privilege? Reflect on it.



## Contextual Note

As an academic engaged in interdisciplinary research on gender, space and power within the higher education sector, my practice involves collecting and analysing, distilling and presenting data. My research is a form of enquiry, seeking enhanced intelligence and evidence to advocate organisational, structural and cultural change.

As a poet, I follow a similar process to create a poem. More, or less, consciously, I collect data: ideas, questions, emotions, sense phenomena ... then manipulate language and sound as a means of distilling the data into a poem for performance on the page and beyond.

*Glass* brings these two practices together, practicing poetry as research; research as poetry. This sequence of poems draws on data - narrative accounts from staff within one UK university - collected as part of the *Gender(s) at Work* project; investigating lived and gendered experiences of work and 'career' in higher education. Using the lens of feminist social geography, specifically Doreen Massey's spatial concepts, this project explores how HE careers are shaped by gendered geographies of power and how diverse and complex lived experiences trouble the prevailing gender-neutral narrative of career as a linear upward trajectory?

*Glass* features four archetypal phenomena which frame academic and popular discussion of career obstacles, risks and privileges: the glass ceiling, the glass escalator, the glass cliff and the glass closet. Four sections: *Ceiling*, *Cliff*, *Escalator*, *Closet*, each contain two poems which distil excerpts from interview transcripts combined with original poetry. These sections are contained within the framework of a Prologue, two Choruses and an



Epilogue featuring the voice of the researcher as narrator and commentator.

Originally conceived for the page, it became clear in the writing of *Glass* that it was, primarily, a performance piece. *Glass* was first performed at the Art of Management and Organisation conference (Brighton, 2018) and since, to multiple audiences within the UK as part of a multi-modal research dissemination project: [the gword tour](#). I have found that communicating research findings in this way is emotive, sensual and disruptive, impacting the ways in which audiences hear, listen and respond to the material.

## The Real Fan

Kasey Symons

Lily held the wad of tickets in her hands, flicking them like playing cards as she waited impatiently in the bitter-cold Melbourne wind outside Gate 5 of the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Where are they all?

Her team would be running through the banner any minute. Ever since her father started taking her to games with him when she was a little girl, the superstition of being in your seat to watch the team run through the banner had stuck. It was bad luck to miss it and she couldn't do that to her boys. Being in her seat at the right time was the role she played for the team.

Finally, she spotted Jack bouncing up the stairs and she released a breath of relief. At least she could tell him to wait outside with the tickets if the rest of the group was much longer. She was not going to let her team down.

'Hey mate!' He gave Lily a big bear hug and she was temporarily warmed in the wintering afternoon.

'Hey!' She squeezed him back and dutifully handed him a ticket.

'Cheers! How much do I owe you?'

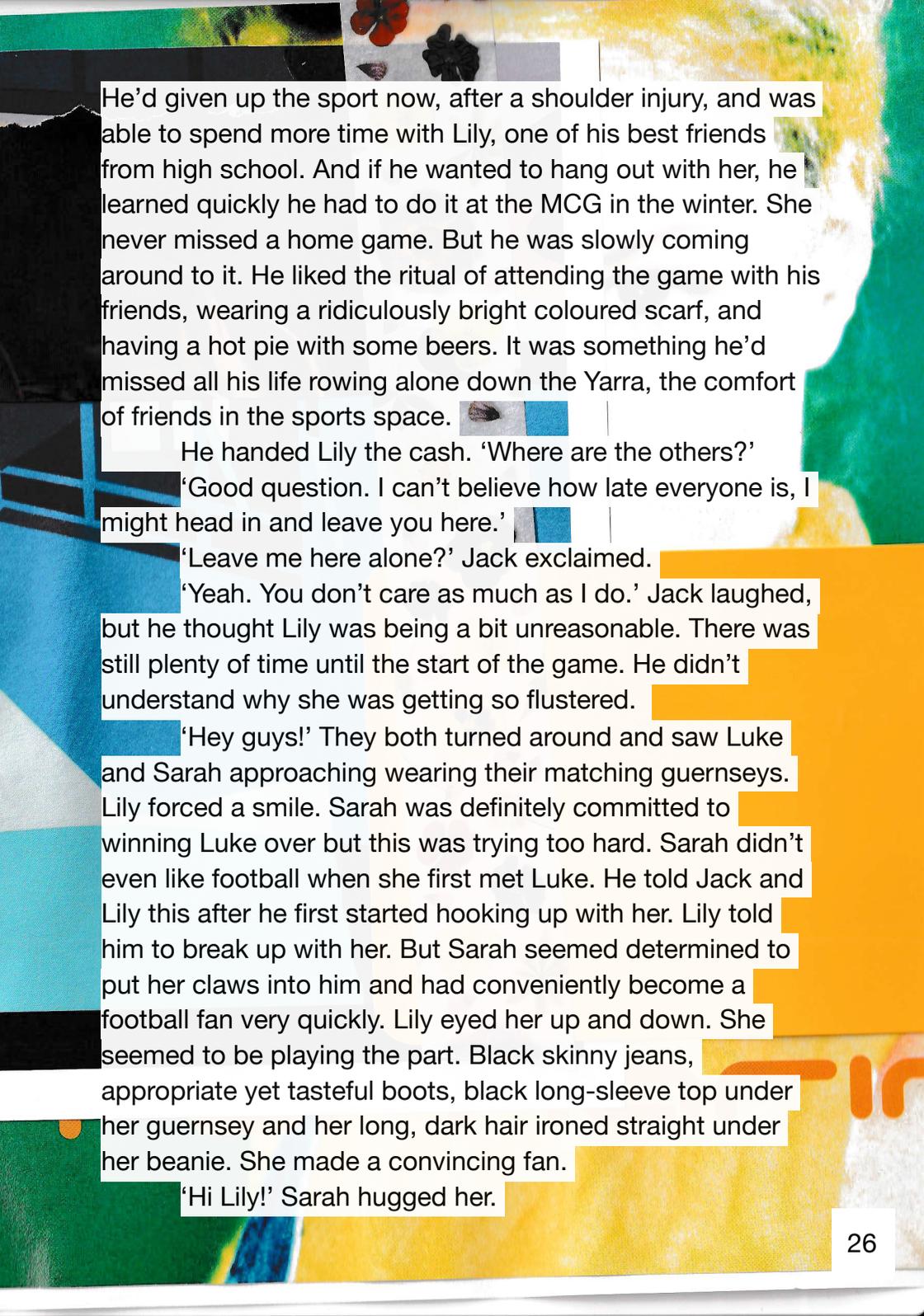
She told him and he gasped.

'Really? Wow, that's more than I thought!'

Lily frowned.

'They are premium seats, Jack. Second level on the wing. Best seats in the house!'

'I guess I'm still learning all this, hey?' He smiled at her. Jack had never really been into football. He'd been a competitive rower all his young life and never had the time.



He'd given up the sport now, after a shoulder injury, and was able to spend more time with Lily, one of his best friends from high school. And if he wanted to hang out with her, he learned quickly he had to do it at the MCG in the winter. She never missed a home game. But he was slowly coming around to it. He liked the ritual of attending the game with his friends, wearing a ridiculously bright coloured scarf, and having a hot pie with some beers. It was something he'd missed all his life rowing alone down the Yarra, the comfort of friends in the sports space.

He handed Lily the cash. 'Where are the others?'

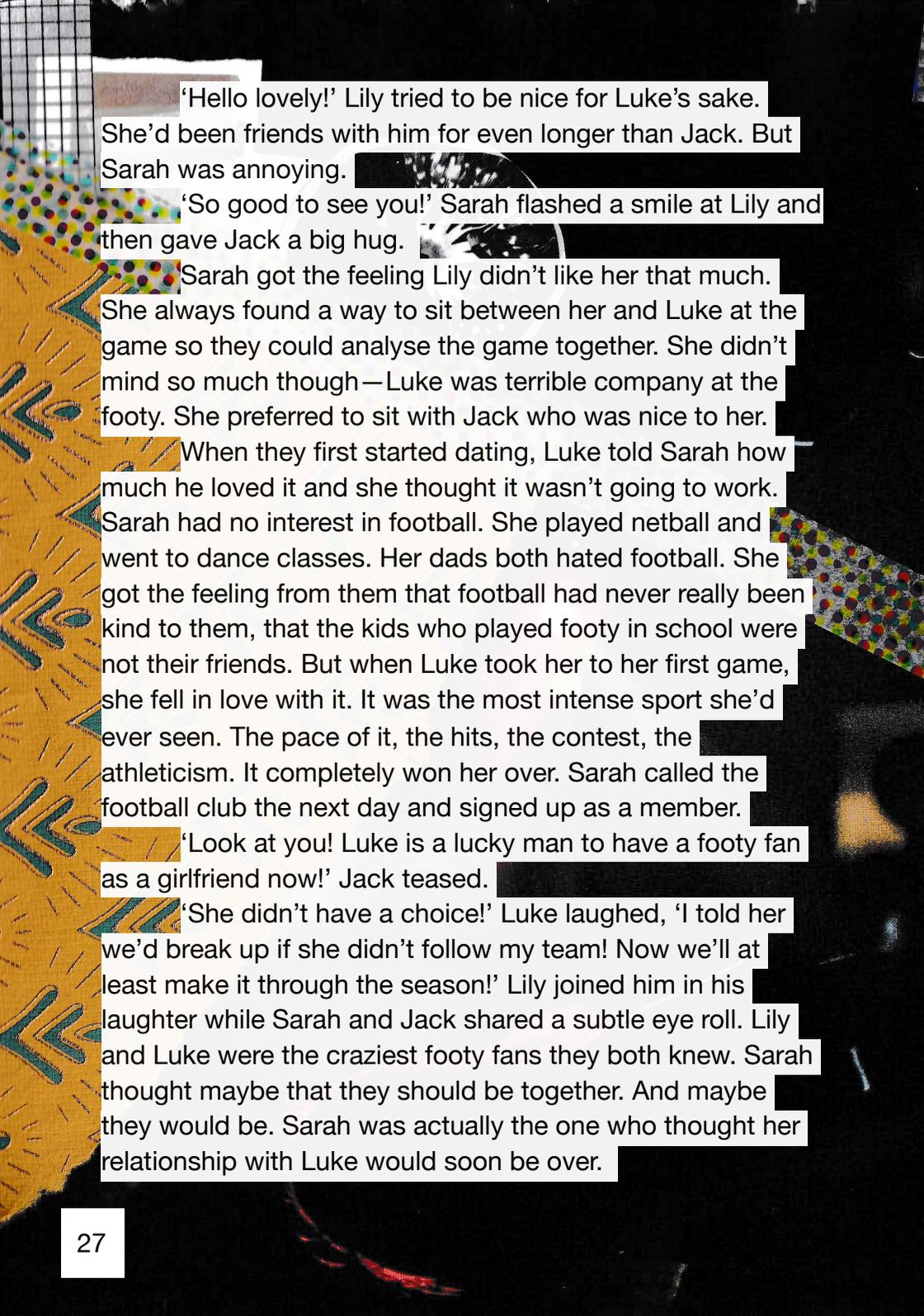
'Good question. I can't believe how late everyone is, I might head in and leave you here.'

'Leave me here alone?' Jack exclaimed.

'Yeah. You don't care as much as I do.' Jack laughed, but he thought Lily was being a bit unreasonable. There was still plenty of time until the start of the game. He didn't understand why she was getting so flustered.

'Hey guys!' They both turned around and saw Luke and Sarah approaching wearing their matching guernseys. Lily forced a smile. Sarah was definitely committed to winning Luke over but this was trying too hard. Sarah didn't even like football when she first met Luke. He told Jack and Lily this after he first started hooking up with her. Lily told him to break up with her. But Sarah seemed determined to put her claws into him and had conveniently become a football fan very quickly. Lily eyed her up and down. She seemed to be playing the part. Black skinny jeans, appropriate yet tasteful boots, black long-sleeve top under her guernsey and her long, dark hair ironed straight under her beanie. She made a convincing fan.

'Hi Lily!' Sarah hugged her.



'Hello lovely!' Lily tried to be nice for Luke's sake. She'd been friends with him for even longer than Jack. But Sarah was annoying.

'So good to see you!' Sarah flashed a smile at Lily and then gave Jack a big hug.

Sarah got the feeling Lily didn't like her that much. She always found a way to sit between her and Luke at the game so they could analyse the game together. She didn't mind so much though—Luke was terrible company at the footy. She preferred to sit with Jack who was nice to her.

When they first started dating, Luke told Sarah how much he loved it and she thought it wasn't going to work. Sarah had no interest in football. She played netball and went to dance classes. Her dads both hated football. She got the feeling from them that football had never really been kind to them, that the kids who played footy in school were not their friends. But when Luke took her to her first game, she fell in love with it. It was the most intense sport she'd ever seen. The pace of it, the hits, the contest, the athleticism. It completely won her over. Sarah called the football club the next day and signed up as a member.

'Look at you! Luke is a lucky man to have a footy fan as a girlfriend now!' Jack teased.

'She didn't have a choice!' Luke laughed, 'I told her we'd break up if she didn't follow my team! Now we'll at least make it through the season!' Lily joined him in his laughter while Sarah and Jack shared a subtle eye roll. Lily and Luke were the craziest footy fans they both knew. Sarah thought maybe that they should be together. And maybe they would be. Sarah was actually the one who thought her relationship with Luke would soon be over.

Sarah liked Luke a lot. She thought he was a great guy, smart and ambitious. He was going to be a lawyer.

But he did something to her last night.

She'd told him to stop, at least she thought she did, but maybe she didn't. He didn't stop anyway. He didn't use protection. They always did. But he didn't ask not to. It just happened. He said 'sorry' after, that he was too into it and she felt too good. He double checked she was on the pill and she said 'yes' and that was it. She didn't sleep all night. She wasn't OK. But she knew she was going to the footy the next day and she really wanted to go. She wanted to let the game she now loved make everything better. She wanted to escape. She was probably making a big deal out of nothing.

'Sorry! Sorry! Sorry!' Dylan came running up to them and hugged Lily around the waist.

'You're late!' Lily punched her playfully on the shoulder.

'I know, I know!' she cried, 'But I had to run to the merchandise van—I had to get this!' She flashed the player badge she'd just purchased.

Lily shook her head at her. 'You're pathetic!' she teased.

Dylan's first game was only last weekend and now she claimed to be hooked. Dylan fell in love with the team's captain was more like it. Lily wished she was just at the game with Luke. Everyone else seemed to be here for the wrong reasons. They weren't real fans. Maybe Jack could be but the others, she didn't think so. Lily sighed. Hopefully she could just sit next to Luke and ignore everyone else until the final siren. Football was too important. She didn't want to share it with people who didn't take it as seriously as she did.

Lily handed out the tickets.

## Fragmented Citations from My Mother

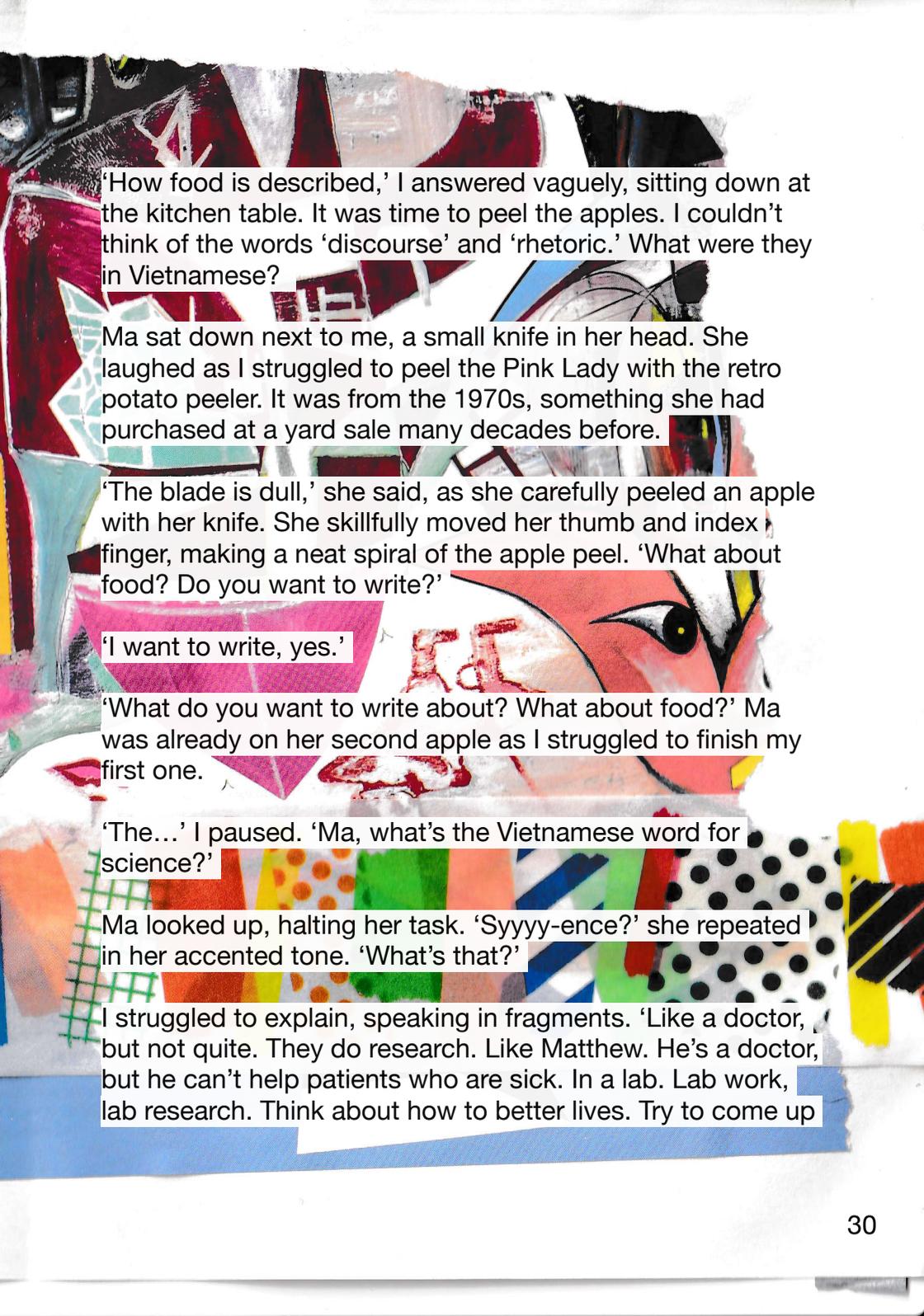
Anna Nguyen

'How are your classes going?' my mother suddenly asked. I was in the United States visiting her for the winter holiday. We were in the kitchen, where I was teaching her how to make homemade apple pie. We were rolling the dough into disks.

Ma spent a lot of time in the kitchen, but she didn't have a lot of kitchen gadgets. When I made dough for bread or pies in my small kitchen in Montreal, I always used my KitchenAid mixer. It was too big for what I made, and it took up too much space on my already small counter, but it made baking a lot easier. Ma insisted that we didn't need any fancy tools and suggested shortcuts. Instead of using cold unsalted butter, she would slightly warm a stick of it in the microwave for about 10 seconds. It made the dough a bit more wet, but Ma added just a bit more flour to firm it.

'Going well,' I answered in Vietnamese, wrapping my disk with plastic wrap. I speak Vietnamese quite fluently, but I found my understanding of my mother's native language a bit limited when I had to talk about my research. I didn't seem to have the sophisticated vocabulary to rationalize what I was studying to my mother. I placed the dough in the refrigerator.

'What are you studying again?' she asked, spraying vinegar on the counter. She asked me this question yearly, ever since I had started my master's program. I was in my second year of my PhD studies, and she was still asking the same question.



'How food is described,' I answered vaguely, sitting down at the kitchen table. It was time to peel the apples. I couldn't think of the words 'discourse' and 'rhetoric.' What were they in Vietnamese?

Ma sat down next to me, a small knife in her hand. She laughed as I struggled to peel the Pink Lady with the retro potato peeler. It was from the 1970s, something she had purchased at a yard sale many decades before.

'The blade is dull,' she said, as she carefully peeled an apple with her knife. She skillfully moved her thumb and index finger, making a neat spiral of the apple peel. 'What about food? Do you want to write?'

'I want to write, yes.'

'What do you want to write about? What about food?' Ma was already on her second apple as I struggled to finish my first one.

'The...' I paused. 'Ma, what's the Vietnamese word for science?'

Ma looked up, halting her task. 'Syyyy-ence?' she repeated in her accented tone. 'What's that?'

I struggled to explain, speaking in fragments. 'Like a doctor, but not quite. They do research. Like Matthew. He's a doctor, but he can't help patients who are sick. In a lab. Lab work, lab research. Think about how to better lives. Try to come up

with solutions for cancer or other illnesses. Like a doctor, but not like your doctor...'

Ma had been listening and staring at my face intently. She nodded slowly. 'Like your husband, who is a doctor but not really a doctor like my doctor,' she repeated. '*Khoa hoc?*'

'*Khoa hoc*. That sounds right.'

'They write about food?'

'You know, the kind of advice on what's healthy, what's not. You told me you ate Japanese potatoes because your friend read somewhere that it's healthy.'

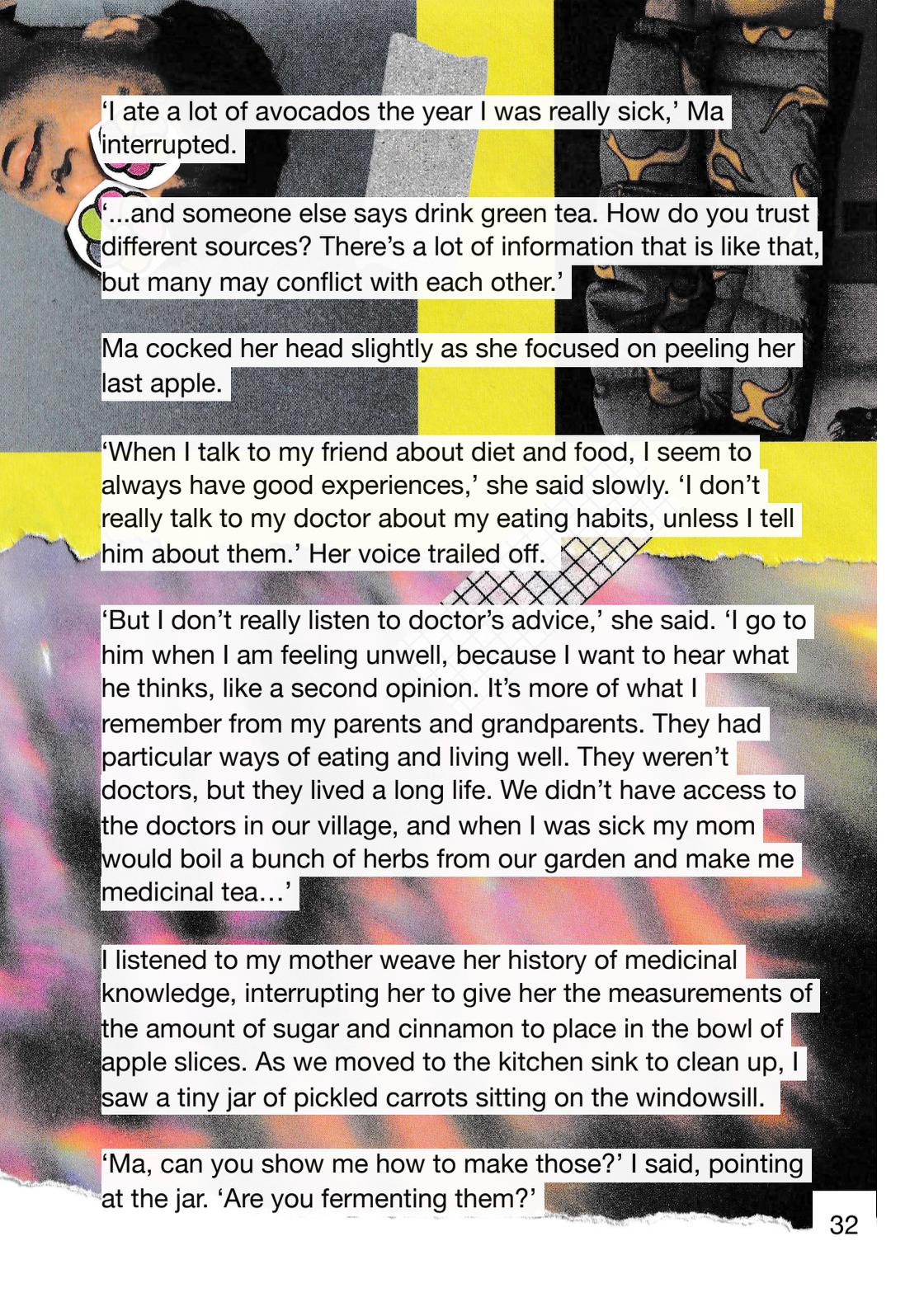
'It *is* healthy,' Ma said. 'My friend's doctor said it is good for you. It helped some of my swelling go down.'

I was now slicing the apples on Ma's old cutting board. It looked as old as her peeler.

'It might be,' I answered diplomatically. 'But do you think everyone believes that Japanese potatoes can cure everyone with bumps and swellings?'

'But a doctor said this. My friend didn't make it up.'

'I don't think she made it up, but there are a lot of endorsements for healthy food. One person says Japanese potatoes, another says avocado...'



'I ate a lot of avocados the year I was really sick,' Ma interrupted.

'...and someone else says drink green tea. How do you trust different sources? There's a lot of information that is like that, but many may conflict with each other.'

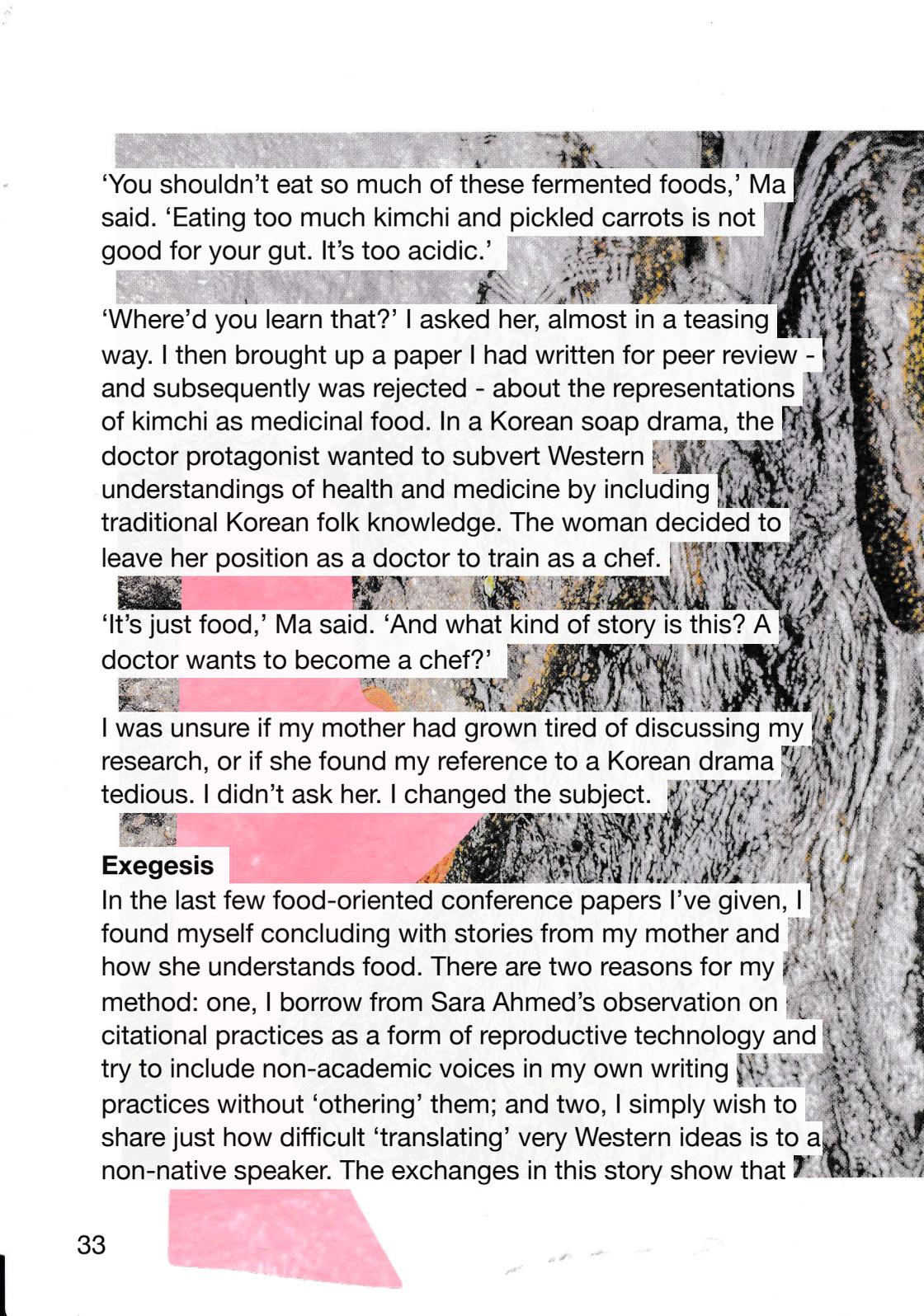
Ma cocked her head slightly as she focused on peeling her last apple.

'When I talk to my friend about diet and food, I seem to always have good experiences,' she said slowly. 'I don't really talk to my doctor about my eating habits, unless I tell him about them.' Her voice trailed off.

'But I don't really listen to doctor's advice,' she said. 'I go to him when I am feeling unwell, because I want to hear what he thinks, like a second opinion. It's more of what I remember from my parents and grandparents. They had particular ways of eating and living well. They weren't doctors, but they lived a long life. We didn't have access to the doctors in our village, and when I was sick my mom would boil a bunch of herbs from our garden and make me medicinal tea...'

I listened to my mother weave her history of medicinal knowledge, interrupting her to give her the measurements of the amount of sugar and cinnamon to place in the bowl of apple slices. As we moved to the kitchen sink to clean up, I saw a tiny jar of pickled carrots sitting on the windowsill.

'Ma, can you show me how to make those?' I said, pointing at the jar. 'Are you fermenting them?'

The background of the page is a grayscale photograph of a tree trunk with rough, textured bark. A large, semi-transparent pink shape, resembling a triangle or a trapezoid, is overlaid on the left side of the page, partially behind the text blocks.

‘You shouldn’t eat so much of these fermented foods,’ Ma said. ‘Eating too much kimchi and pickled carrots is not good for your gut. It’s too acidic.’

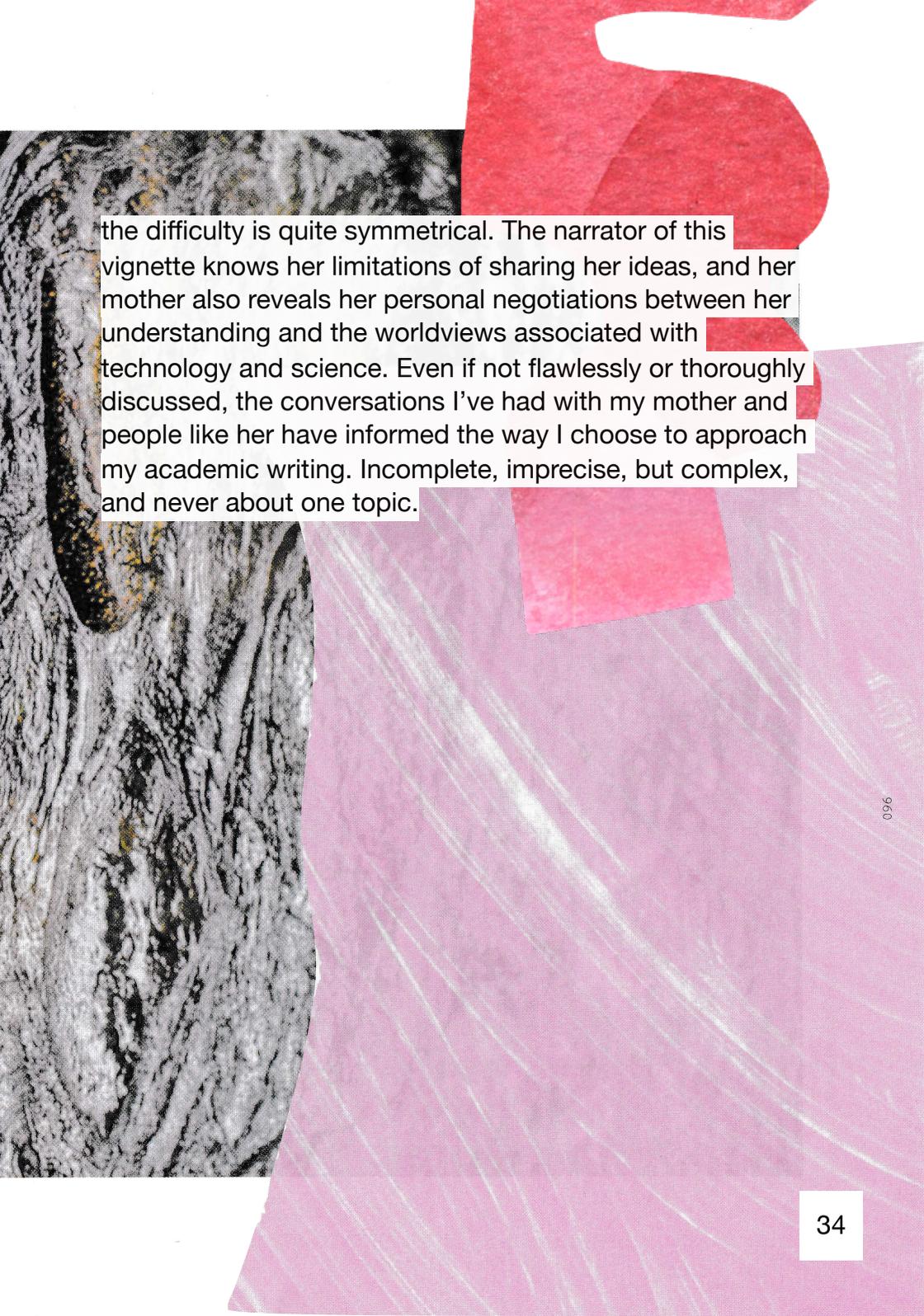
‘Where’d you learn that?’ I asked her, almost in a teasing way. I then brought up a paper I had written for peer review - and subsequently was rejected - about the representations of kimchi as medicinal food. In a Korean soap drama, the doctor protagonist wanted to subvert Western understandings of health and medicine by including traditional Korean folk knowledge. The woman decided to leave her position as a doctor to train as a chef.

‘It’s just food,’ Ma said. ‘And what kind of story is this? A doctor wants to become a chef?’

I was unsure if my mother had grown tired of discussing my research, or if she found my reference to a Korean drama tedious. I didn’t ask her. I changed the subject.

### **Exegesis**

In the last few food-oriented conference papers I’ve given, I found myself concluding with stories from my mother and how she understands food. There are two reasons for my method: one, I borrow from Sara Ahmed’s observation on citational practices as a form of reproductive technology and try to include non-academic voices in my own writing practices without ‘othering’ them; and two, I simply wish to share just how difficult ‘translating’ very Western ideas is to a non-native speaker. The exchanges in this story show that



the difficulty is quite symmetrical. The narrator of this vignette knows her limitations of sharing her ideas, and her mother also reveals her personal negotiations between her understanding and the worldviews associated with technology and science. Even if not flawlessly or thoroughly discussed, the conversations I've had with my mother and people like her have informed the way I choose to approach my academic writing. Incomplete, imprecise, but complex, and never about one topic.



## Render

Roger Patulny

I fear the green gods rising  
amidst the render of the new,  
for what they will become as  
what we worship comes true.

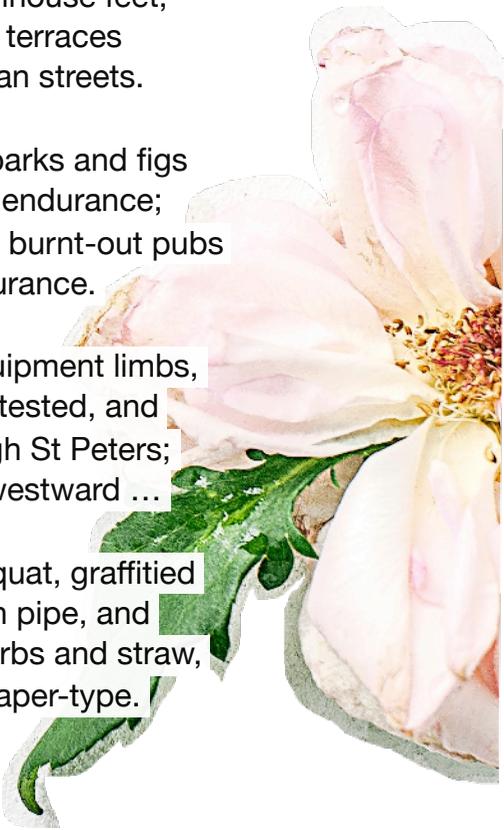
Through smoke, casino, fireworks,  
strides *Merivacton*, towering;  
his lap-pool heart beats angrily  
behind his solar paneling.

Sixteen-story apartment legs  
and enormous townhouse feet,  
crush jacaranda terraces  
and crack suburban streets.

Rapacious, gorging parks and figs  
and art space past endurance;  
his maw consumes six burnt-out pubs  
stinking of insurance.

He stretches gym-equipment limbs,  
his lobby-hand, untested, and  
pissing liquid through St Peters;  
sprays a highway westward ...

... past *Weirhouse*, squat, graffitied  
a mess of rust-iron pipe, and  
community garden herbs and straw,  
and faded newspaper-type.



*Weirhouse* hides a patch of earth  
for his children; gentle,  
younger, greener, souls  
who tremble in their rentals ...

... until *Merivacton* spies him,  
his crane arms lift like spears;  
penthouse head in two bedroom hands,  
he roars like an auctioneer!

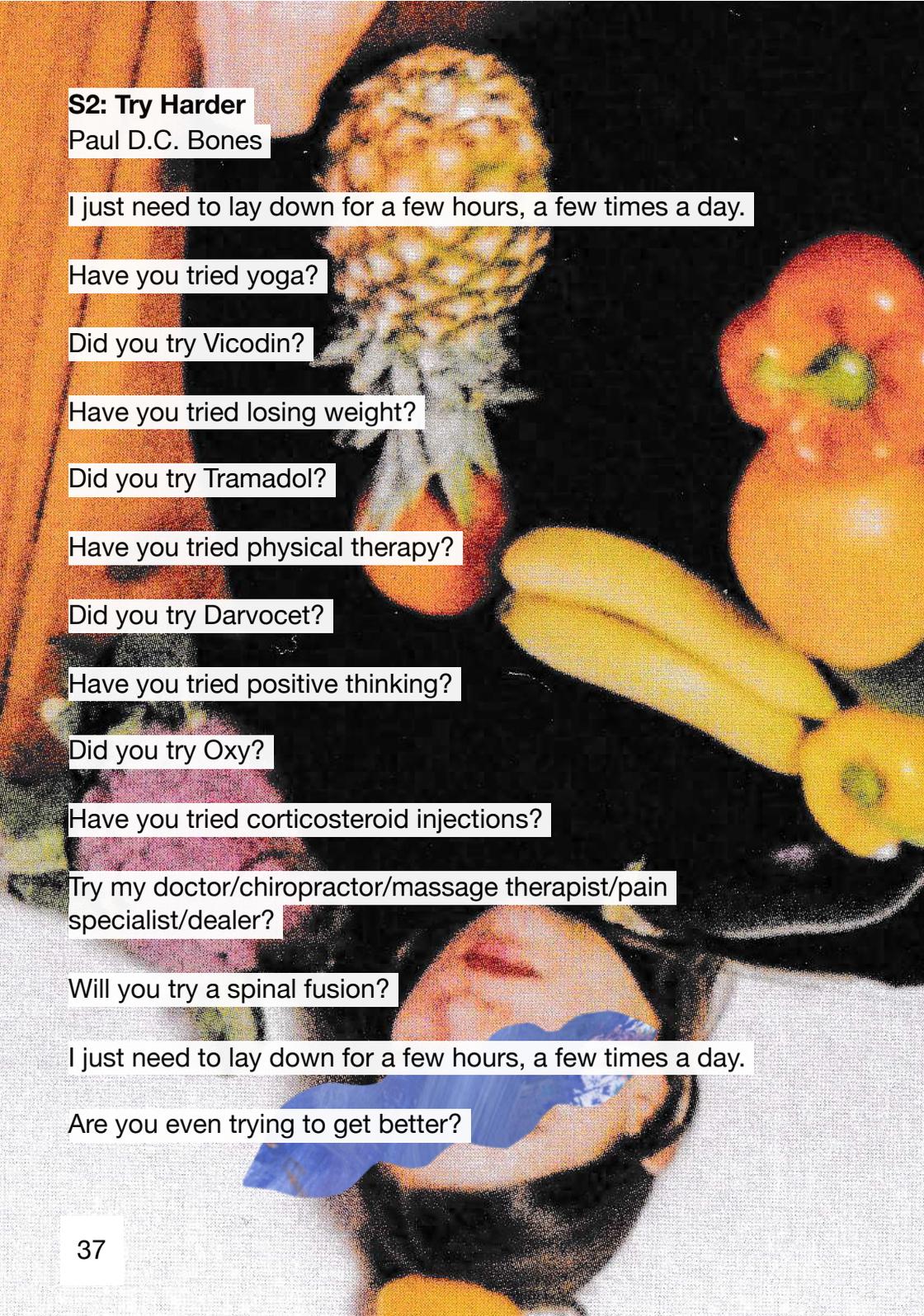
Rushing old *Weirhouse*, he crushes  
him to his tennis-court chest,  
and punctures charcoal-blackened bricks  
with a white-washed rendered fist.

*Weirhouse* tears at *Merivacton's*  
show-room face; he puffs  
and cuffs at tufts of vertical garden  
that drift like green dandruff.

But *Merivacton* spears him square,  
and injects liquidity,  
he refits, casts, and subdivides  
the old street anatomy ...

... and *Converted Weirhouse* rises;  
white fixtures, subway tiles,  
and craft beer piping, varicosely  
rendered round his smile.

And he sets his strata-children  
to consume beneath the lash; and  
I watch their green fade, wilt to white;  
like avocados, freshly smashed.



## S2: Try Harder

Paul D.C. Bones

I just need to lay down for a few hours, a few times a day.

Have you tried yoga?

Did you try Vicodin?

Have you tried losing weight?

Did you try Tramadol?

Have you tried physical therapy?

Did you try Darvocet?

Have you tried positive thinking?

Did you try Oxy?

Have you tried corticosteroid injections?

Try my doctor/chiropractor/massage therapist/pain specialist/dealer?

Will you try a spinal fusion?

I just need to lay down for a few hours, a few times a day.

Are you even trying to get better?

## Becoming-Regret

Jack Redden

The whine persists. It is the dull ache of everything, including a body motionless, sitting and constantly still. It is also the whine of a dream that is ending, a noise of awakening to the realisation that these days now are the same as any to come and always will be. It is the hoped for encounter, underserved, with something exciting and full of joy: this is the whining growing louder, to tell you it will be leaving soon and then it does because it always was already.

What's left is the whining of your irritability and mine as it transforms into a kind of internal hum that starts up again when the duty to be patient is not met because you did not want to just forget it since this is your life and saying nothing now would mean being heard never again and fuck that, however petty.

The hum and the whine are both felt and heard, both painful and a reminder and a warning of a failure imminent and already here.

## **A Glimpse into a Colony-Wide Primary School Sociology Lesson in 2298**

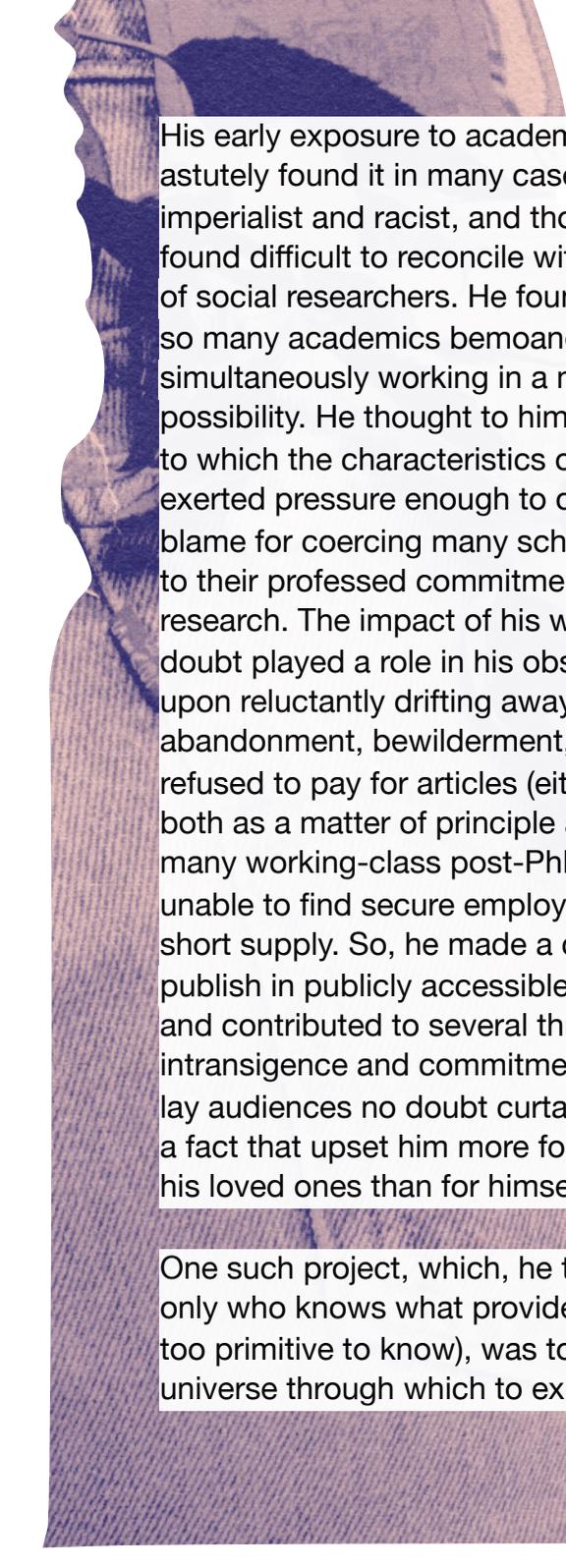
John-Paul Smiley

The teacher, conscious of their duty, began the mandatory weekly sociology lesson. 'Good morning Junior Citizens.'

The Global Class, watching through their retinal implants, responded in perfect, synchronised unison, 'Good morning Teacher.'

'Junior Citizens,' the teacher continued, 'today we will continue examining the Global Sociology Association's database of sociological thinkers. Let us begin with this week's mystery profile:

There once was a man. He was a quiet, stocky man, somewhat limited in cognitive function, its development retarded by the insecurities which accompanied a poor, precarious upbringing. He was born and lived for most of his life in Europe, and was the child of working-class immigrants. At school, as was common for those of his background, he was an underachiever, leaving with few formal qualifications, and as a result he spent much of his early adulthood working in minimum wage customer service and warehouse jobs. After several years of this, however, he began to feel unfulfilled and decided to return to education and study social sciences, ultimately culminating in him earning a doctorate. But this was not a happy period overall for him, and fear, doubt and insecurity were amongst his only constant companions at that time, much as he tried to shake them.



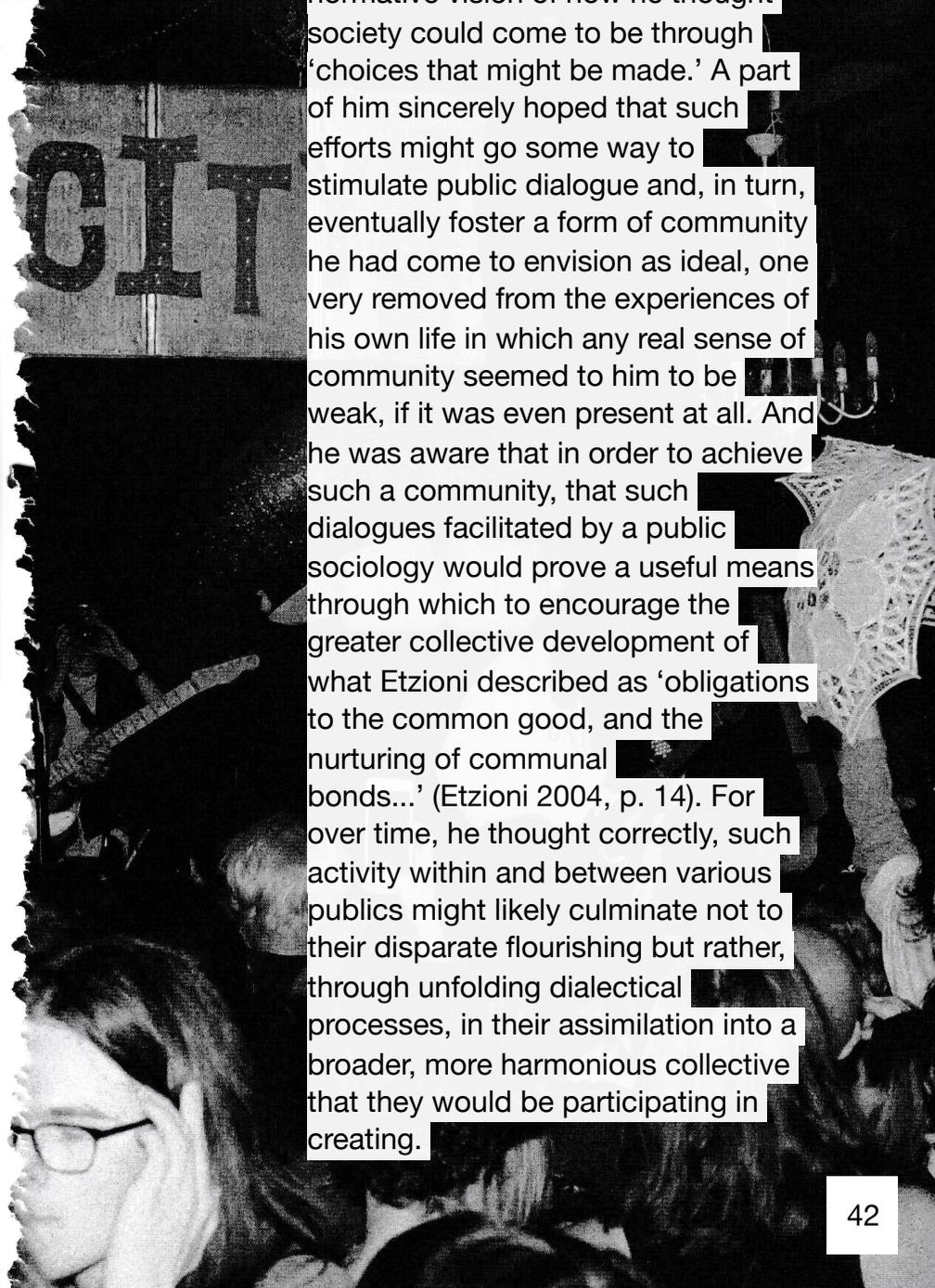
His early exposure to academic culture left him uneasy. He astutely found it in many cases to be unconsciously imperialist and racist, and thoroughly classist – traits he found difficult to reconcile with the supposed reflexiveness of social researchers. He found it a particular curiosity that so many academics bemoaned a lack of public impact whilst simultaneously working in a manner which reduced its very possibility. He thought to himself that it must be the degree to which the characteristics of the social system of the time exerted pressure enough to deny rapid change that was to blame for coercing many scholars to act in manners contrary to their professed commitment to the cause of accessible research. The impact of his working-class upbringing no doubt played a role in his obstinance on this matter and, upon reluctantly drifting away from academia with a sense of abandonment, bewilderment, and resentment, he steadfastly refused to pay for articles (either to access or to publish), both as a matter of principle and because, as one of the many working-class post-PhD researchers of the period unable to find secure employment, money was constantly in short supply. So, he made a conscious decision to try to publish in publicly accessible formats, whenever suitable, and contributed to several throughout his career. His intransigence and commitment to making work accessible to lay audiences no doubt curtailed his formal academic career, a fact that upset him more for the very real effects it had on his loved ones than for himself.

One such project, which, he thought, came about through only who knows what providence (humans of his period were too primitive to know), was to develop a fictional futuristic universe through which to explore sociological themes and

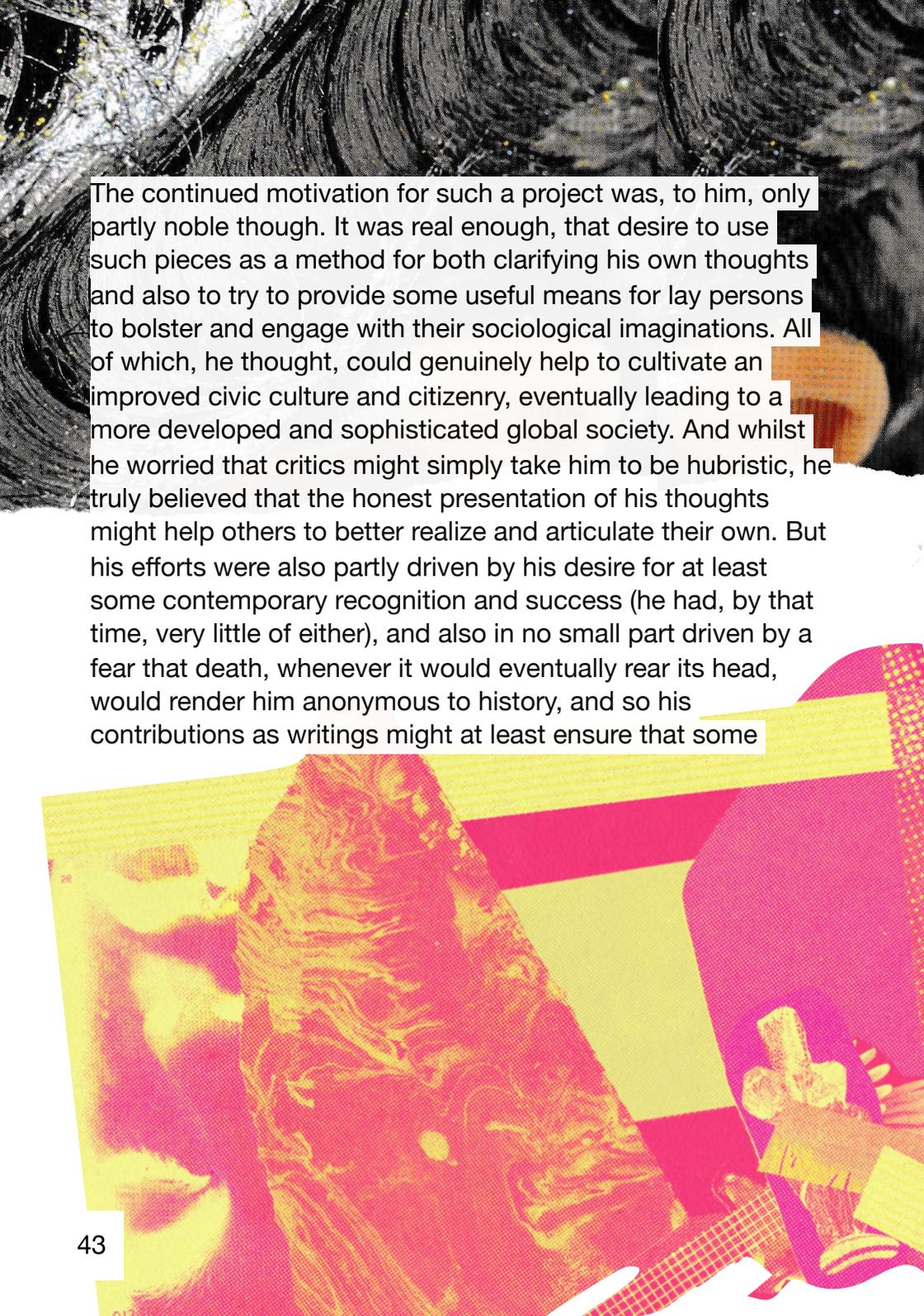


topics. He did not know why he was driven to imagine such a particular world, only that he was. He came to think of it as a healthy exercise in which he could cultivate and share publicly new imaginings of how society might be remade in order to perhaps bring about change in a world he considered to be fundamentally pathological. He thus saw it as a way to explore, as Gans once said, ‘...an old, recently forgotten question: what is a good society and how can sociology help bring it about?’ (Gans 1989, p. 5). By presenting a vision of the future, by fleshing it out, he thought and hoped that readers amongst various publics would be confronted with ways of living sufficiently different to their own, to jar them into considering their own implicit value assumptions and norms, in the process raising their sociological consciousnesses. An influence on his line of thinking made clear to him the importance of explicit articulations of options in order to cultivate a mature civic imagination, and he was fond of the following quotation from that scholar:

‘Except roughly and vaguely, I know of no way to describe – or even to understand – what my relevant evaluations are for, say, freedom and security, speed and accuracy in government decisions, or low taxes and better schools than to describe my preferences among specific policy choices that might be made...’ (Lindblom 1959, p. 82).



And so he presented an explicit normative vision of how he thought society could come to be through 'choices that might be made.' A part of him sincerely hoped that such efforts might go some way to stimulate public dialogue and, in turn, eventually foster a form of community he had come to envision as ideal, one very removed from the experiences of his own life in which any real sense of community seemed to him to be weak, if it was even present at all. And he was aware that in order to achieve such a community, that such dialogues facilitated by a public sociology would prove a useful means through which to encourage the greater collective development of what Etzioni described as 'obligations to the common good, and the nurturing of communal bonds...' (Etzioni 2004, p. 14). For over time, he thought correctly, such activity within and between various publics might likely culminate not to their disparate flourishing but rather, through unfolding dialectical processes, in their assimilation into a broader, more harmonious collective that they would be participating in creating.



The continued motivation for such a project was, to him, only partly noble though. It was real enough, that desire to use such pieces as a method for both clarifying his own thoughts and also to try to provide some useful means for lay persons to bolster and engage with their sociological imaginations. All of which, he thought, could genuinely help to cultivate an improved civic culture and citizenry, eventually leading to a more developed and sophisticated global society. And whilst he worried that critics might simply take him to be hubristic, he truly believed that the honest presentation of his thoughts might help others to better realize and articulate their own. But his efforts were also partly driven by his desire for at least some contemporary recognition and success (he had, by that time, very little of either), and also in no small part driven by a fear that death, whenever it would eventually rear its head, would render him anonymous to history, and so his contributions as writings might at least ensure that some

vestiges of him remained. His fear with regards this was borne out and, upon his passing, mourned only by immediate family and a smattering of acquaintances, memory and trace of the man soon began to fade. His resurrection, both literally and figuratively, only occurred much later, when the Supreme Artificial Intelligence system judged his work to be worthy of inclusion in the designated Canon.

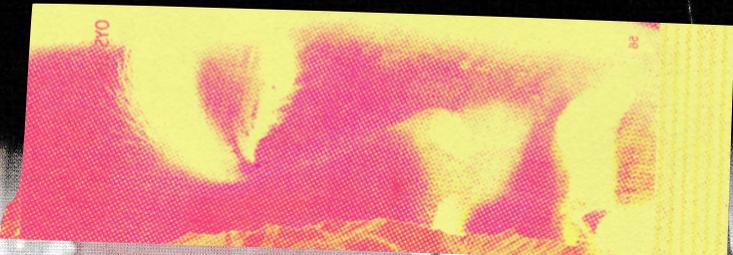
And that concludes our mystery sociological profile for this week, Junior Citizens. Can anybody tell me who it is? Yes, Junior citizen 08956, that is correct. Very good. Next week we will continue with another profile of those persons influential in Cassini's genesis.'

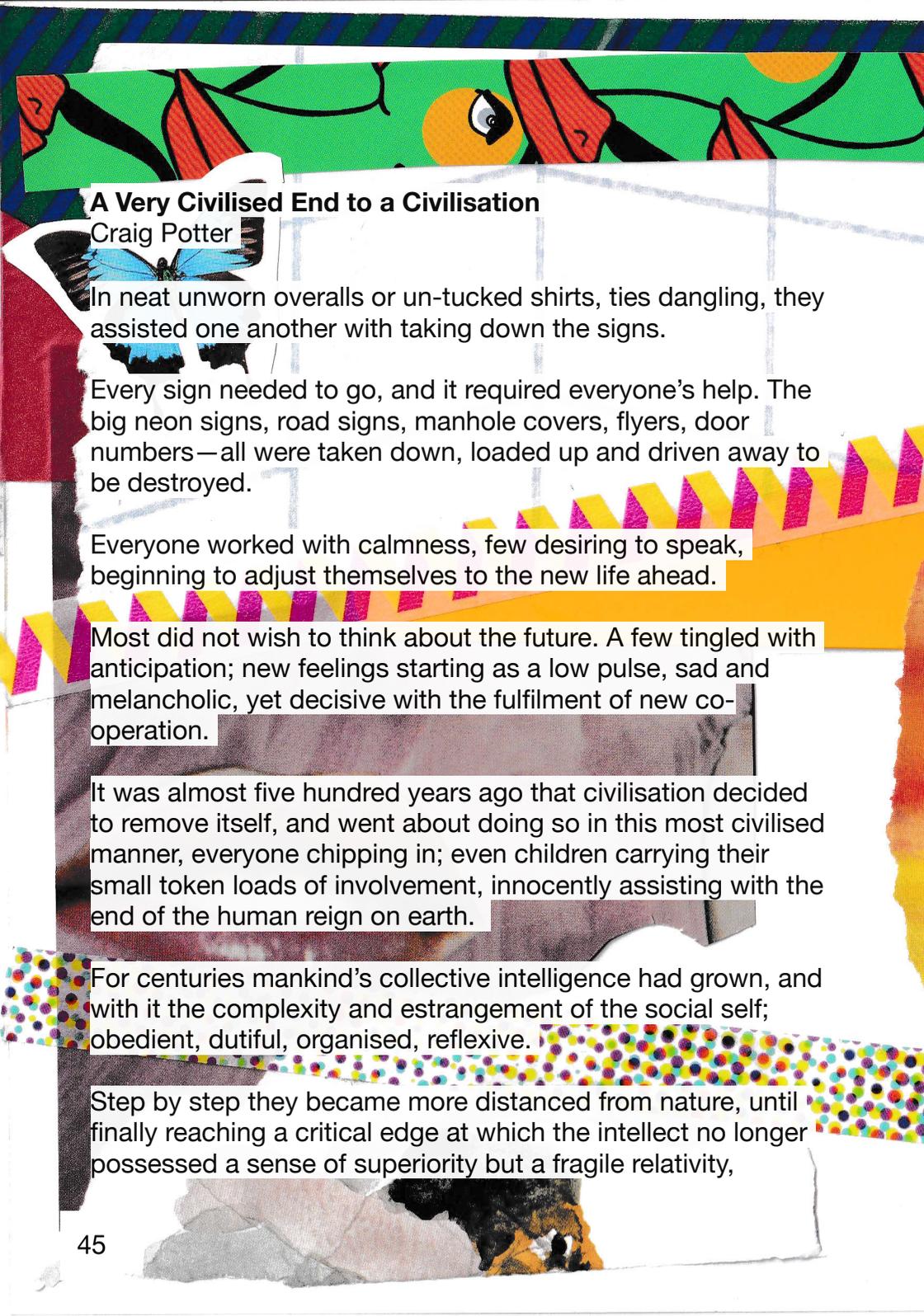
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## A Very Civilised End to a Civilisation

Craig Potter

In neat unworn overalls or un-tucked shirts, ties dangling, they assisted one another with taking down the signs.

Every sign needed to go, and it required everyone's help. The big neon signs, road signs, manhole covers, flyers, door numbers—all were taken down, loaded up and driven away to be destroyed.

Everyone worked with calmness, few desiring to speak, beginning to adjust themselves to the new life ahead.

Most did not wish to think about the future. A few tingled with anticipation; new feelings starting as a low pulse, sad and melancholic, yet decisive with the fulfilment of new co-operation.

It was almost five hundred years ago that civilisation decided to remove itself, and went about doing so in this most civilised manner, everyone chipping in; even children carrying their small token loads of involvement, innocently assisting with the end of the human reign on earth.

For centuries mankind's collective intelligence had grown, and with it the complexity and estrangement of the social self; obedient, dutiful, organised, reflexive.

Step by step they became more distanced from nature, until finally reaching a critical edge at which the intellect no longer possessed a sense of superiority but a fragile relativity,



reflecting back upon the contingency of the repressed, rigid conformity of a wholly manufactured species, post-evolutionary, unchallenged master of the world.

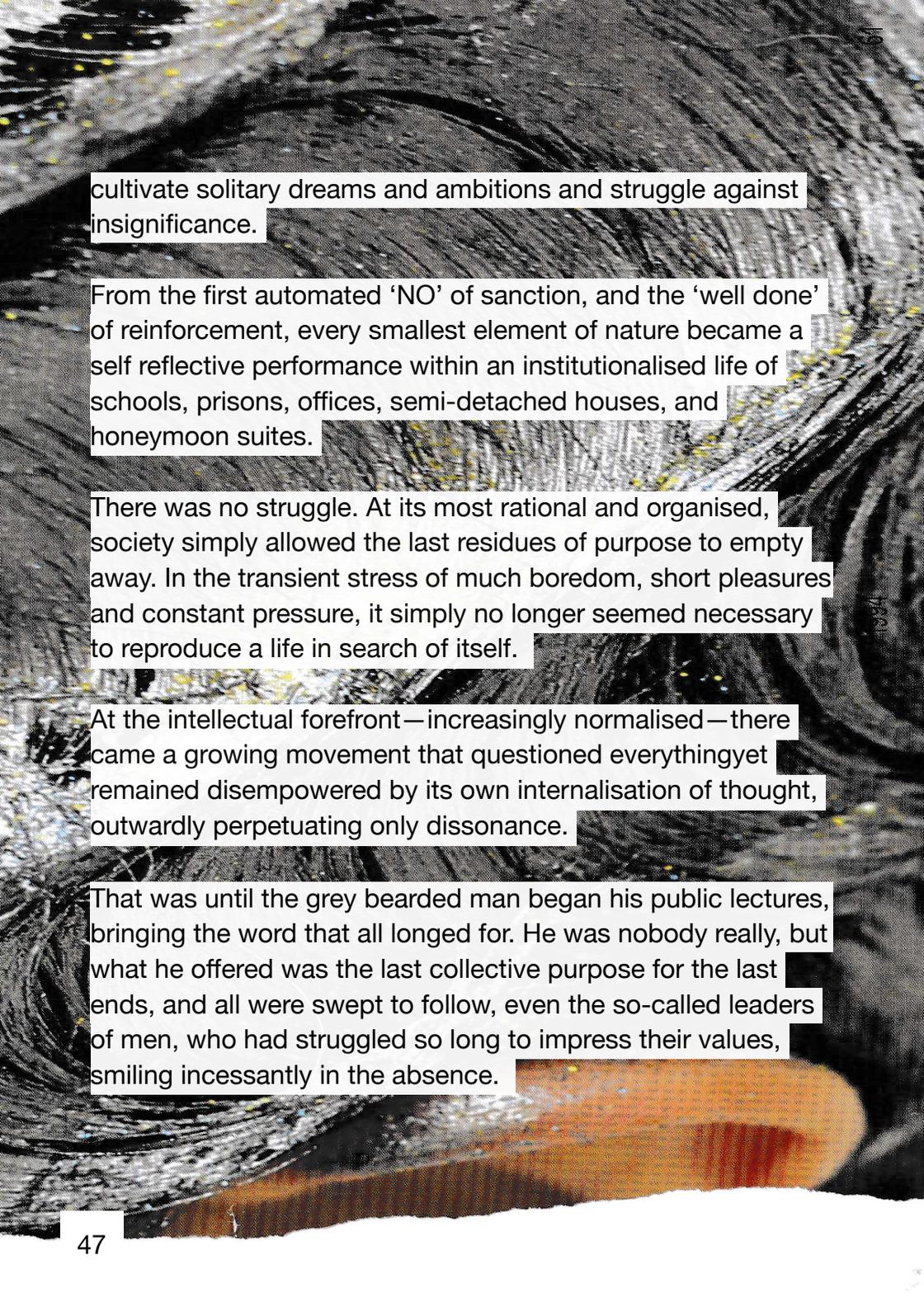
The old stubbornly fell into self-imposed exile, the middle-aged drank themselves to death, while the young subverted expectation and rebounded, until age took them too and the next cult of youth followed, on until every movement had finally run its course.

The media and the factory perpetuated order by demonising all deviation, supporting a mental singularity, as the dream of civilisation nevertheless came crawling to its end; beginning with the steadily declining birth rate amongst those with the best education, the brightest future, the greatest insight; the trend setters at the vanguard of human progress.

Society fell not by some cataclysm, but at the point at which nature had been conquered, at the very peak of their knowledge and productive capacity; when one by one, empowered by contraceptive control, equalised by inexhaustible education and affluence, couples together asked, 'why?'

At their most lucid, they wondered how strange it is that we only know how to make children in our own image; and what a hollow, fabricated image it had become!

God was dead, yet children were still taught right and wrong, educated from birth to unlearn all instinct so as to achieve their own personal loneliness, form an ego and character to



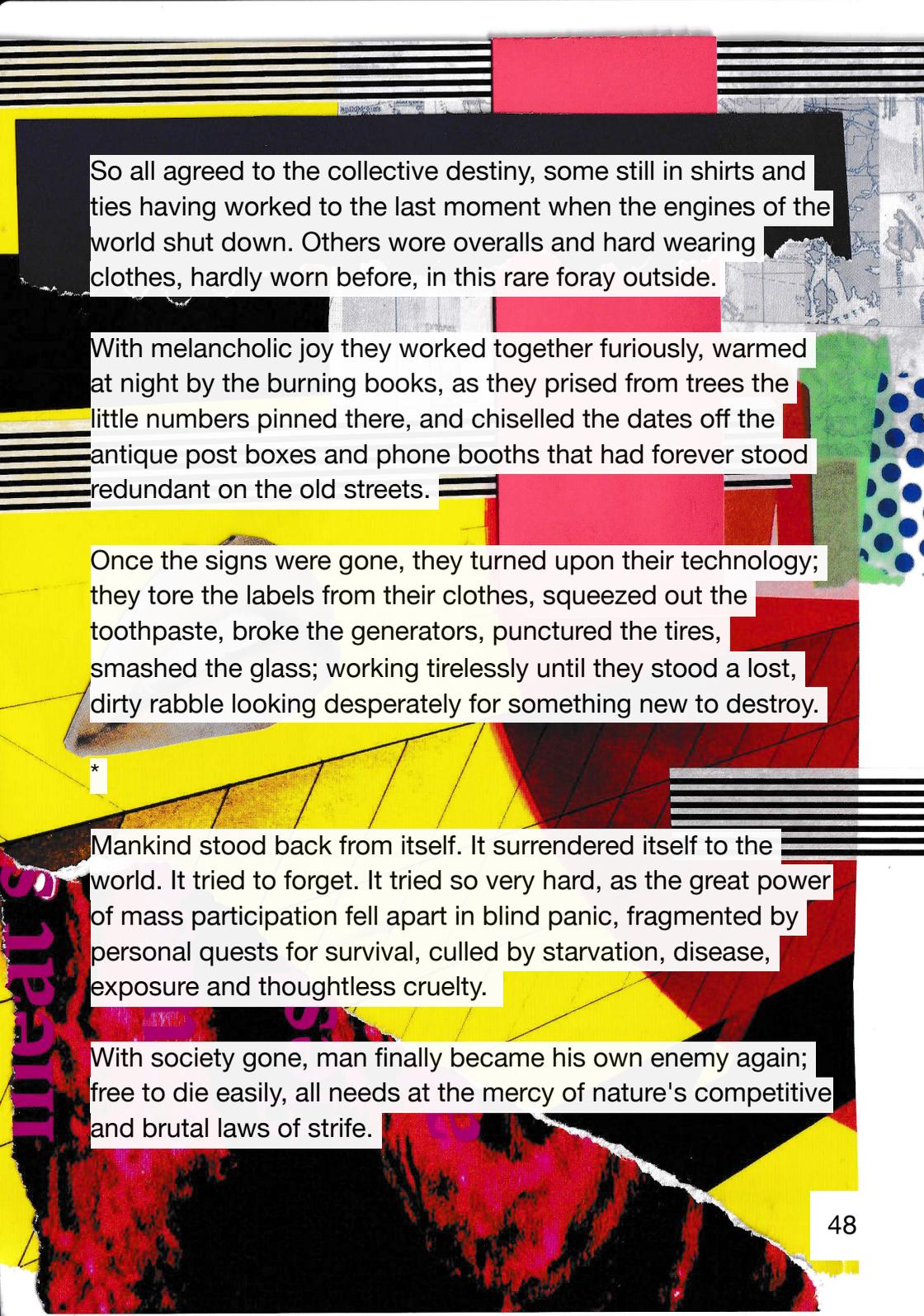
cultivate solitary dreams and ambitions and struggle against insignificance.

From the first automated 'NO' of sanction, and the 'well done' of reinforcement, every smallest element of nature became a self reflective performance within an institutionalised life of schools, prisons, offices, semi-detached houses, and honeymoon suites.

There was no struggle. At its most rational and organised, society simply allowed the last residues of purpose to empty away. In the transient stress of much boredom, short pleasures and constant pressure, it simply no longer seemed necessary to reproduce a life in search of itself.

At the intellectual forefront—increasingly normalised—there came a growing movement that questioned everything yet remained disempowered by its own internalisation of thought, outwardly perpetuating only dissonance.

That was until the grey bearded man began his public lectures, bringing the word that all longed for. He was nobody really, but what he offered was the last collective purpose for the last ends, and all were swept to follow, even the so-called leaders of men, who had struggled so long to impress their values, smiling incessantly in the absence.



So all agreed to the collective destiny, some still in shirts and ties having worked to the last moment when the engines of the world shut down. Others wore overalls and hard wearing clothes, hardly worn before, in this rare foray outside.

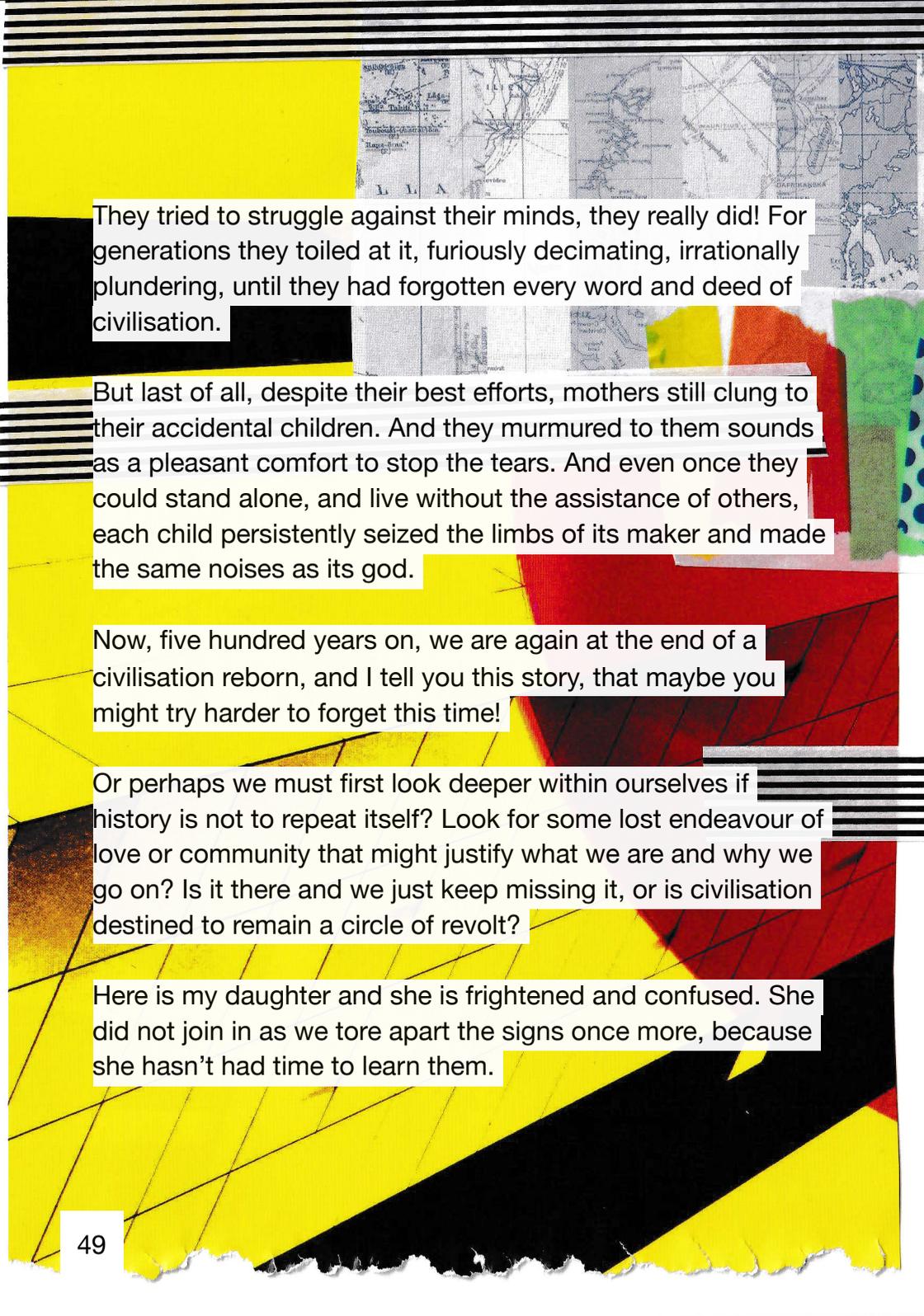
With melancholic joy they worked together furiously, warmed at night by the burning books, as they prised from trees the little numbers pinned there, and chiselled the dates off the antique post boxes and phone booths that had forever stood redundant on the old streets.

Once the signs were gone, they turned upon their technology; they tore the labels from their clothes, squeezed out the toothpaste, broke the generators, punctured the tires, smashed the glass; working tirelessly until they stood a lost, dirty rabble looking desperately for something new to destroy.

\*

Mankind stood back from itself. It surrendered itself to the world. It tried to forget. It tried so very hard, as the great power of mass participation fell apart in blind panic, fragmented by personal quests for survival, culled by starvation, disease, exposure and thoughtless cruelty.

With society gone, man finally became his own enemy again; free to die easily, all needs at the mercy of nature's competitive and brutal laws of strife.



They tried to struggle against their minds, they really did! For generations they toiled at it, furiously decimating, irrationally plundering, until they had forgotten every word and deed of civilisation.

But last of all, despite their best efforts, mothers still clung to their accidental children. And they murmured to them sounds as a pleasant comfort to stop the tears. And even once they could stand alone, and live without the assistance of others, each child persistently seized the limbs of its maker and made the same noises as its god.

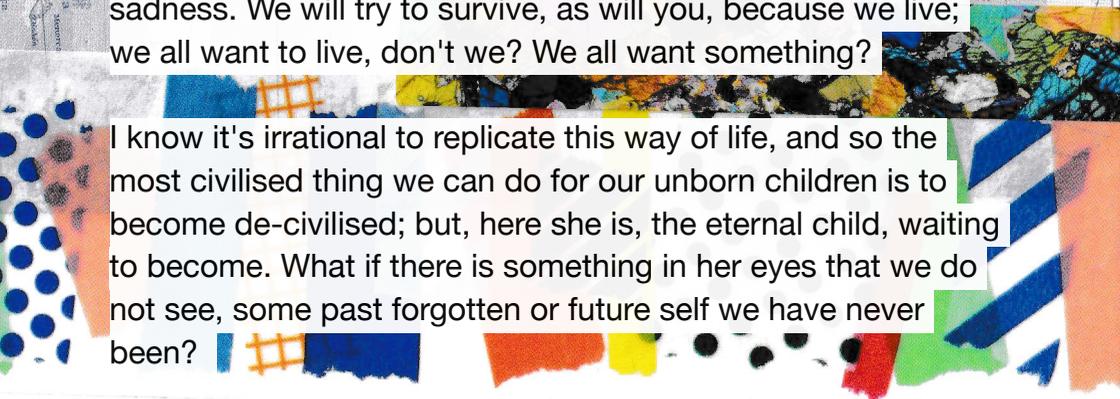
Now, five hundred years on, we are again at the end of a civilisation reborn, and I tell you this story, that maybe you might try harder to forget this time!

Or perhaps we must first look deeper within ourselves if history is not to repeat itself? Look for some lost endeavour of love or community that might justify what we are and why we go on? Is it there and we just keep missing it, or is civilisation destined to remain a circle of revolt?

Here is my daughter and she is frightened and confused. She did not join in as we tore apart the signs once more, because she hasn't had time to learn them.



When we again disperse, I shall take my child by the hand and lead her to safety because I must. I will create silly noises to make her smile because I do not want to be hurt by her sadness. We will try to survive, as will you, because we live; we all want to live, don't we? We all want something?



I know it's irrational to replicate this way of life, and so the most civilised thing we can do for our unborn children is to become de-civilised; but, here she is, the eternal child, waiting to become. What if there is something in her eyes that we do not see, some past forgotten or future self we have never been?

Is there still hope were we only to live up to our own image, to re-learn our learning, to become a master of the world and not be mastered by it?



Today, I start to believe again, but I don't know what for or why; for how could we most civilised people possibly know ourselves?

## How to break a hill

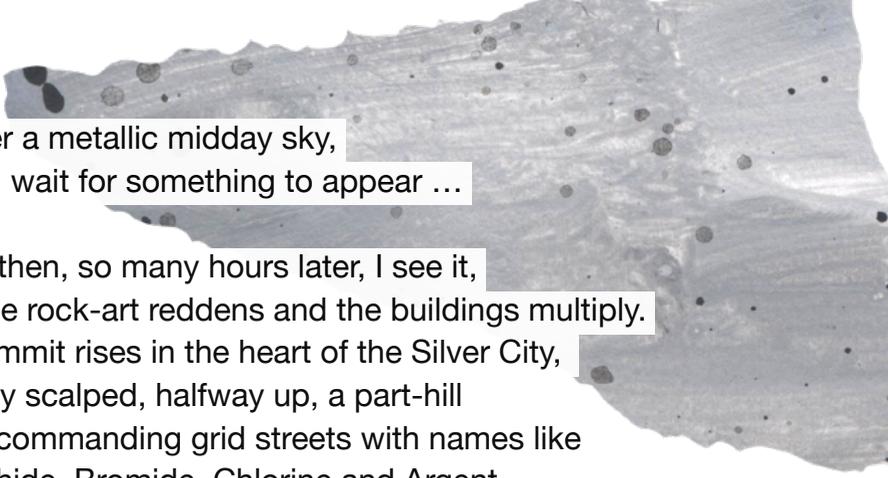
Roger Patulny

Time flies backwards as I drive westwards, by which  
I don't mean the digression of the time zones,  
or the western suburbs,  
but the recession of the far west,  
where favonian dust glows hotly in the sunrise,  
and a red question sleeps in the sagging embrace  
of the crumpled arms  
of a mountain of slag.

How do you break a hill?

I don't see it  
the jagged sore tooth in the distant chain  
of the Barrier Ranges,  
the protruding tip of the boomerang  
line of lode that once gleamed silver  
in Sturt's eye, half flush, part ruined,  
unfortunately rich,  
now nothing.

I drive through sharp triangles of midmorning shadow  
cast by undulations of grey and white sand,  
and watch the trees diminish  
and whither bucolic,  
till only the grandparents of ash-green shrubs remain,  
chewed by an infinity of goats,  
and the docile kangaroos they are replacing  
along the Sturt highway  
stretching to the endless horizon,



under a metallic midday sky,  
and I wait for something to appear ...

And then, so many hours later, I see it,  
as the rock-art reddens and the buildings multiply.  
A summit rises in the heart of the Silver City,  
neatly scalped, halfway up, a part-hill  
half-commanding grid streets with names like  
Sulphide, Bromide, Chlorine and Argent,  
a transection of hewed memory and chemical grandeur!

But it's not The Broken Hill.

It's just a heap of slag.

19th century detritus,  
a packed mountain of burnet tailings  
with trace memories of zinc, dull silver, and shiny lead  
topped by viewing platforms and big things for tourists,  
big chairs, big dreams, a big history  
that I climb up onto to watch the cloudy, waterless dusk settle  
as the lights come on  
across the footprint of a grand city,  
with the population of a small town,

where they have a Social Democratic Club,  
instead of an RSL,  
and the ghosts of black-coated white workers march proudly  
in the sepia photos beneath the streetlights  
of the nine pubs that are still open,  
and the sixty that have long closed  
and squat silent, awnings creaking in the twilight,  
on every street corner.



How do you break a city?

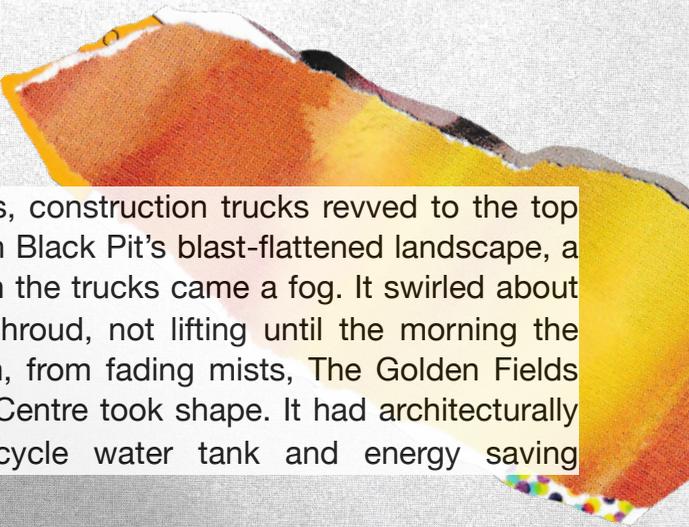
There was once a broken hill,  
but they mined it all away.  
Now there are only whole hills,  
and half-remembered things.



Golden C

## Dark Templates

Anne Turner



Like metallic monsters, construction trucks revved to the top of the only elevation in Black Pit's blast-flattened landscape, a mountain of slag. With the trucks came a fog. It swirled about the mountain like a shroud, not lifting until the morning the trucks left town. Then, from fading mists, The Golden Fields Community Wellness Centre took shape. It had architecturally special spires, a recycle water tank and energy saving triangular windows.

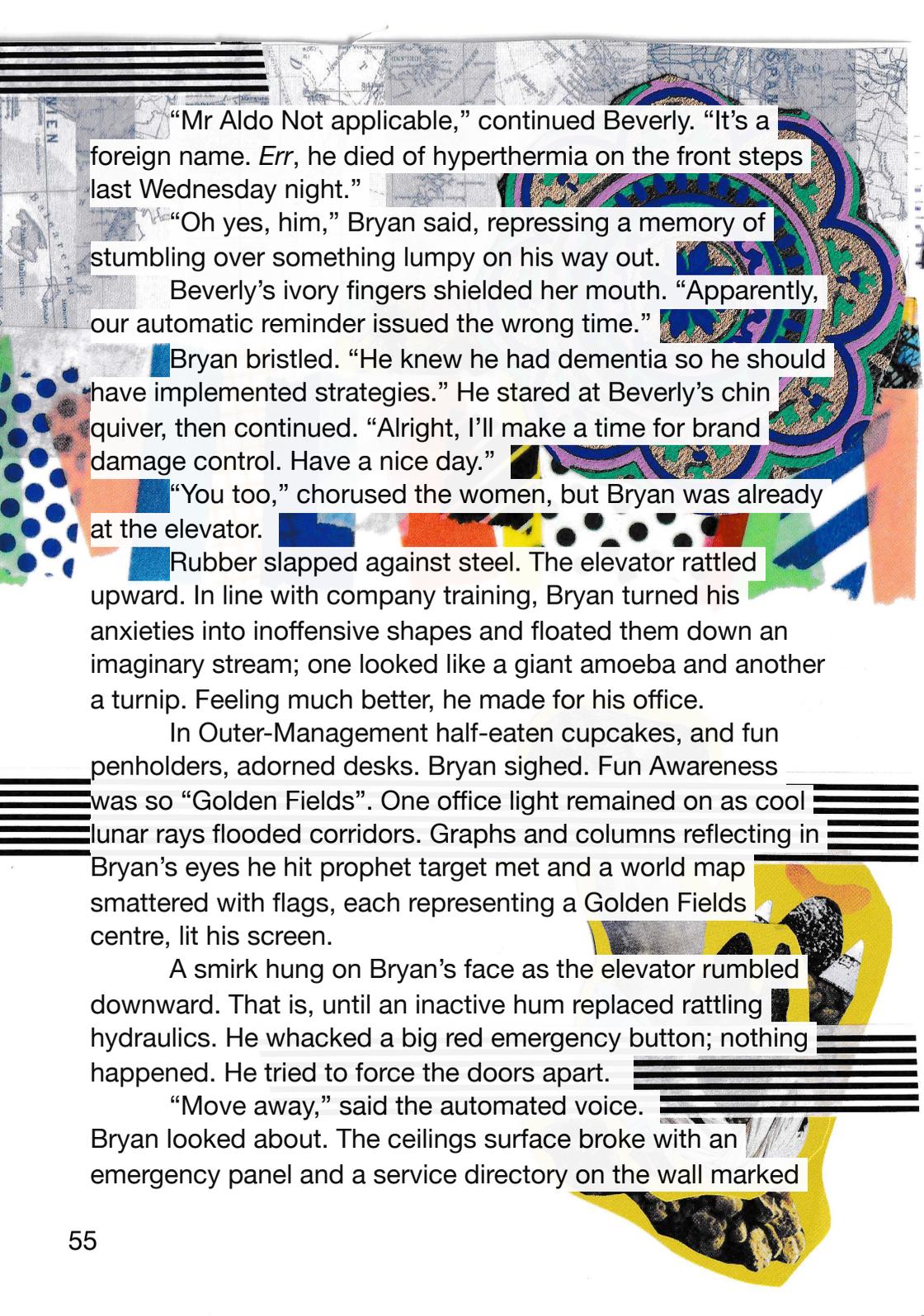
#

Bryan Peevis lifted the corners of his thin lips as his CEO security card pinged Golden Field's entrance lock. He mostly only smiled at others' mistakes but it was a special morning; it marked the buildings—his building's—first anniversary.

But at reception, Bryan's smile twisted as his lips fluttered with indecipherable words. At his feet, black mud, thick and sticky, smothered a once crisp direction to "Queue Here". The doors whooshed open and social workers Bree Pinkerton and Beverly Smyth flurried towards him, chiffon layers billowing. Bree rattled her regulation client calming beads and Beverly cleared her throat but Bryan didn't lift his gaze.

"Bryan, about Mr Notapplicable, they've done the autopsy and—"

"Who?" interrupted Bryan, more concerned about whether or not there were medical-strength hyperventilation bags in the reception cupboard.



“Mr Aldo Not applicable,” continued Beverly. “It’s a foreign name. *Err*, he died of hyperthermia on the front steps last Wednesday night.”

“Oh yes, him,” Bryan said, repressing a memory of stumbling over something lumpy on his way out.

Beverly’s ivory fingers shielded her mouth. “Apparently, our automatic reminder issued the wrong time.”

Bryan bristled. “He knew he had dementia so he should have implemented strategies.” He stared at Beverly’s chin quiver, then continued. “Alright, I’ll make a time for brand damage control. Have a nice day.”

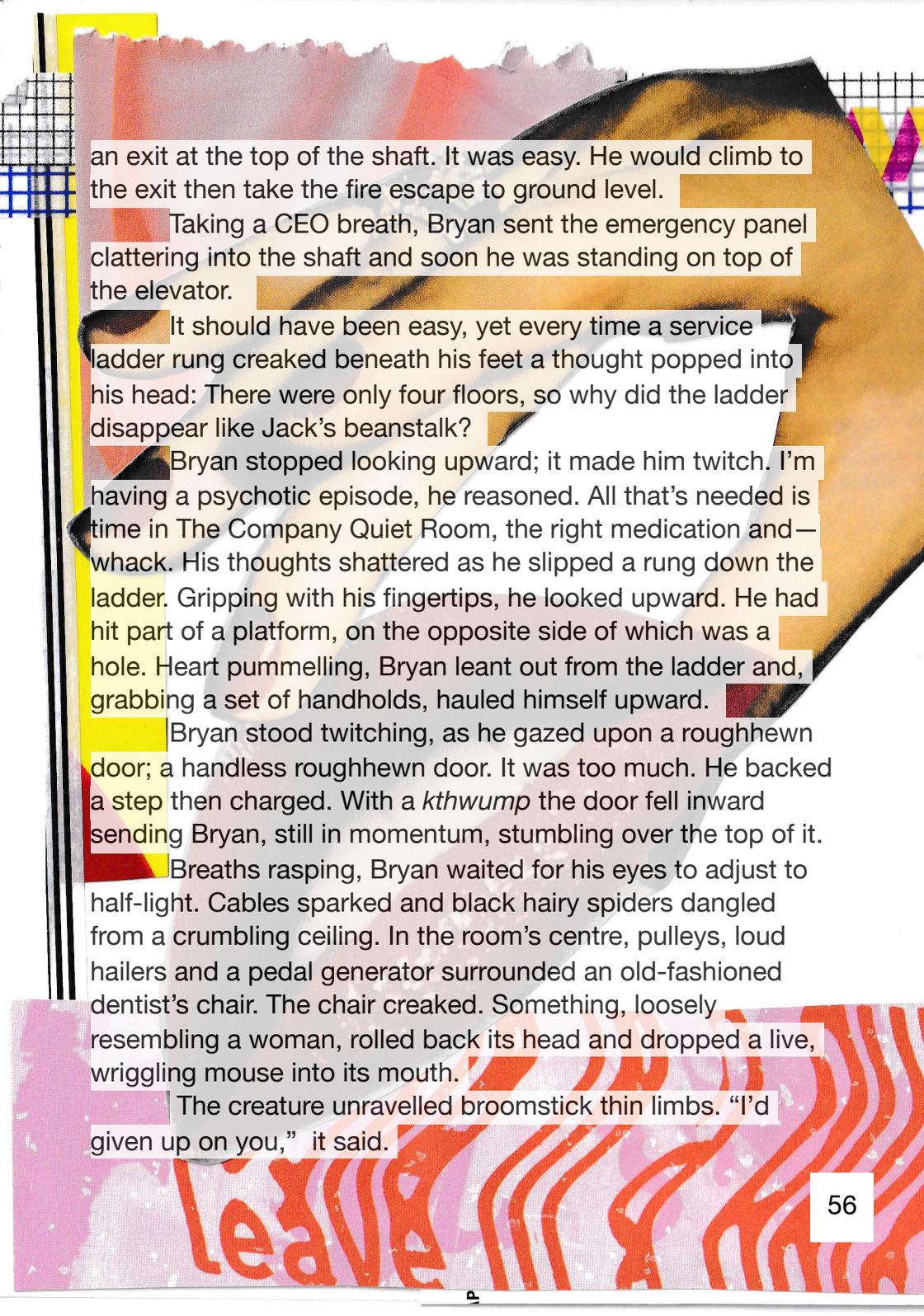
“You too,” chorused the women, but Bryan was already at the elevator.

Rubber slapped against steel. The elevator rattled upward. In line with company training, Bryan turned his anxieties into inoffensive shapes and floated them down an imaginary stream; one looked like a giant amoeba and another a turnip. Feeling much better, he made for his office.

In Outer-Management half-eaten cupcakes, and fun penholders, adorned desks. Bryan sighed. Fun Awareness was so “Golden Fields”. One office light remained on as cool lunar rays flooded corridors. Graphs and columns reflecting in Bryan’s eyes he hit prophet target met and a world map smattered with flags, each representing a Golden Fields centre, lit his screen.

A smirk hung on Bryan’s face as the elevator rumbled downward. That is, until an inactive hum replaced rattling hydraulics. He whacked a big red emergency button; nothing happened. He tried to force the doors apart.

“Move away,” said the automated voice. Bryan looked about. The ceilings surface broke with an emergency panel and a service directory on the wall marked



an exit at the top of the shaft. It was easy. He would climb to the exit then take the fire escape to ground level.

Taking a CEO breath, Bryan sent the emergency panel clattering into the shaft and soon he was standing on top of the elevator.

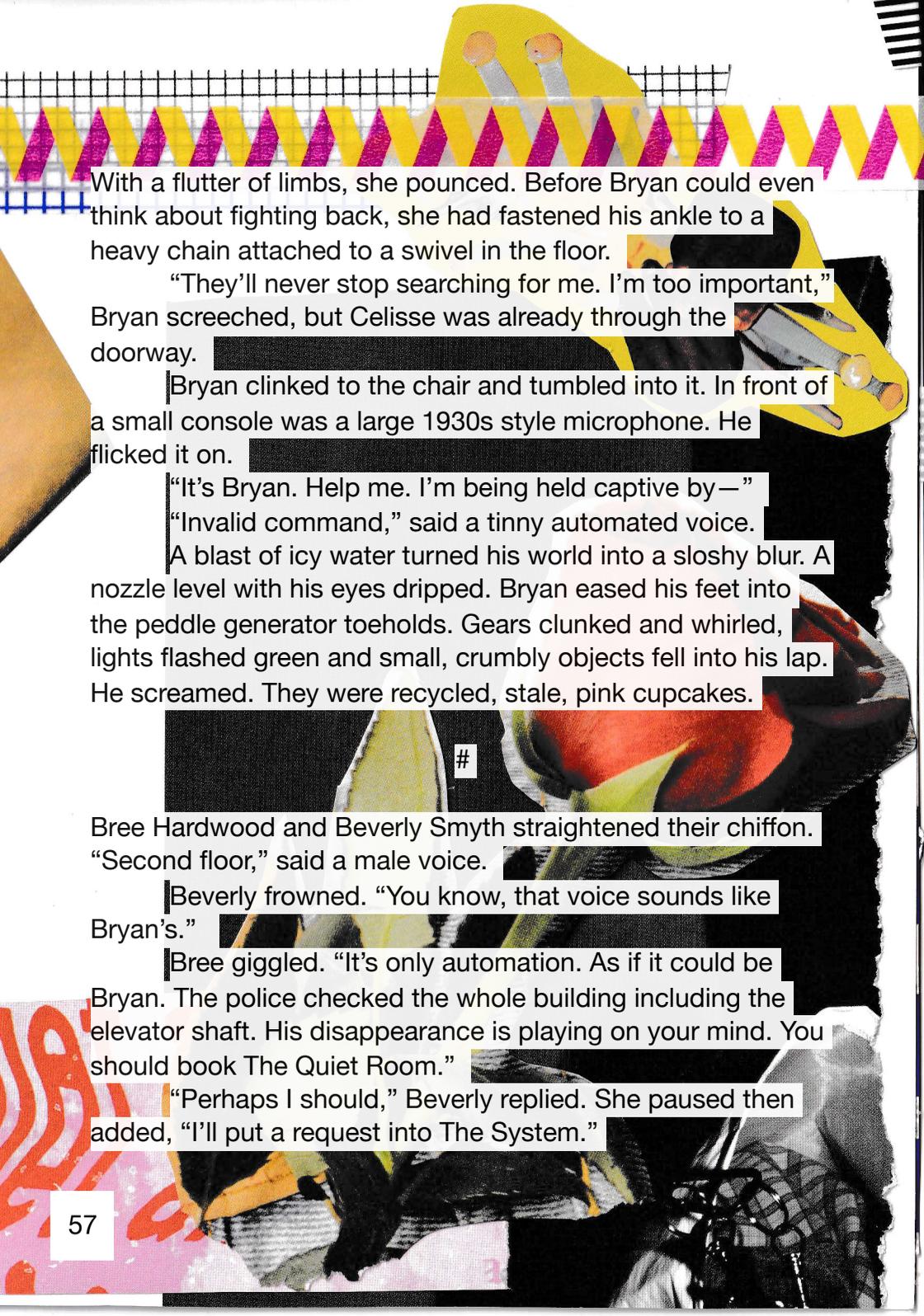
It should have been easy, yet every time a service ladder rung creaked beneath his feet a thought popped into his head: There were only four floors, so why did the ladder disappear like Jack's beanstalk?

Bryan stopped looking upward; it made him twitch. I'm having a psychotic episode, he reasoned. All that's needed is time in The Company Quiet Room, the right medication and—whack. His thoughts shattered as he slipped a rung down the ladder. Gripping with his fingertips, he looked upward. He had hit part of a platform, on the opposite side of which was a hole. Heart pummelling, Bryan leant out from the ladder and, grabbing a set of handholds, hauled himself upward.

Bryan stood twitching, as he gazed upon a roughhewn door; a handleless roughhewn door. It was too much. He backed a step then charged. With a *kthwump* the door fell inward sending Bryan, still in momentum, stumbling over the top of it.

Breaths rasping, Bryan waited for his eyes to adjust to half-light. Cables sparked and black hairy spiders dangled from a crumbling ceiling. In the room's centre, pulleys, loud hailers and a pedal generator surrounded an old-fashioned dentist's chair. The chair creaked. Something, loosely resembling a woman, rolled back its head and dropped a live, wriggling mouse into its mouth.

The creature unravelled broomstick thin limbs. "I'd given up on you," it said.



With a flutter of limbs, she pounced. Before Bryan could even think about fighting back, she had fastened his ankle to a heavy chain attached to a swivel in the floor.

"They'll never stop searching for me. I'm too important," Bryan screeched, but Celisse was already through the doorway.

Bryan clinked to the chair and tumbled into it. In front of a small console was a large 1930s style microphone. He flicked it on.

"It's Bryan. Help me. I'm being held captive by—"

"Invalid command," said a tinny automated voice.

A blast of icy water turned his world into a sloshy blur. A nozzle level with his eyes dripped. Bryan eased his feet into the peddle generator toeholds. Gears clunked and whirled, lights flashed green and small, crumbly objects fell into his lap. He screamed. They were recycled, stale, pink cupcakes.

#

Bree Hardwood and Beverly Smyth straightened their chiffon. "Second floor," said a male voice.

Beverly frowned. "You know, that voice sounds like Bryan's."

Bree giggled. "It's only automation. As if it could be Bryan. The police checked the whole building including the elevator shaft. His disappearance is playing on your mind. You should book The Quiet Room."

"Perhaps I should," Beverly replied. She paused then added, "I'll put a request into The System."

## Stupidity

Jack Redden

If you chose to take seriously  
those ideas which you currently don't,  
and applied them to what you see  
and what you experience  
in your own daily life,  
they would not apply.

Who is this other person  
that must be dealt with?  
I know you have never met them, not really.  
I cannot speak for you  
but I do know the rhythms of your life  
and what little they collide with.

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## Imagining Community

Julia Bennett

### Garfinkel Community Social Media Page

Open to members of the community only

*Sid and Jean*

Community meeting on Monday night. All welcome. Last time only us 2 turned up so if you want a say in how your community is run please do come along.

*Jan*

Hi,

Our cat has been missing for 2 days now. Could people please check there sheds and keep an eye out for him? He is black and white with a red collar.

Thx x

*Sue*

Oh I hope you find him soon. Will keep an eye out. I did see a dead one on the side of the road – that wasn't him was it?

*John*

I hope it was if he's the one that keeps doing his business on my front path.

Sue

OMG – you didn't run him over did you? How could you that's awful.

John

No of course I didn't. And I would hardly admit to it on here would I?

Sunny

Hey all – don't forget the new yoga classes are starting at the community centre tonight. I need as many of you to come as possible so I can actually earn a living wage from this! If you all donate to my crowdfunding page I will be able to attend a teacher training course too.

Roz

I'll be there. Do you do a discount for students?

Lyn

Can you help? I have a bad back, knee replacement and ideally will sit down for most of the class.

Keith

Warning: I saw someone I've never seen before at the park today. I don't know what they were doing in our park but they were speaking on the phone in a foreign language my friend said it might be Geordie. Watch out for this person and keep your children away!



*Kate*

OMG That's so weird. I overheard 2 people talking in another language today at the bus stop. They seem to be infiltrating our community.

*Neil*

They aren't the homeless people are they who are sleeping in the bins in the car park? Please don't feed these people or give them money. They WILL take advantage.

*Jane*

I spoke to the homeless people and it seems they have nowhere to live so having to sleep in bins. I feel sorry for them and bought them some deodorant to hide the smell.

*Neil*

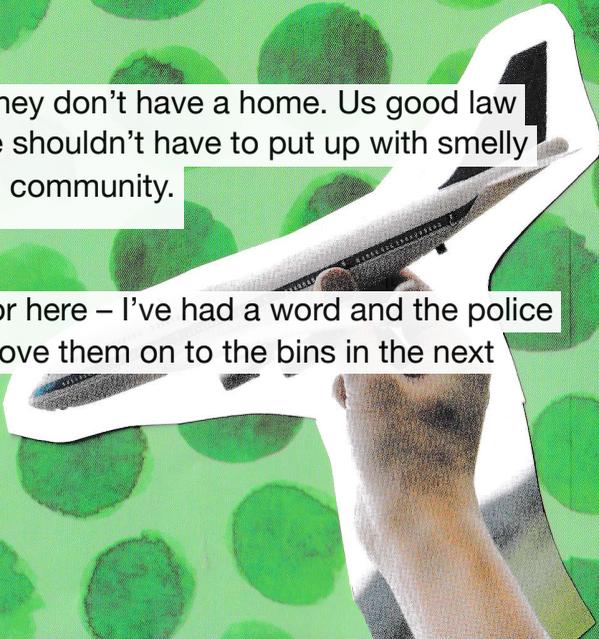
I don't think we should give them anything or they will stay forever.

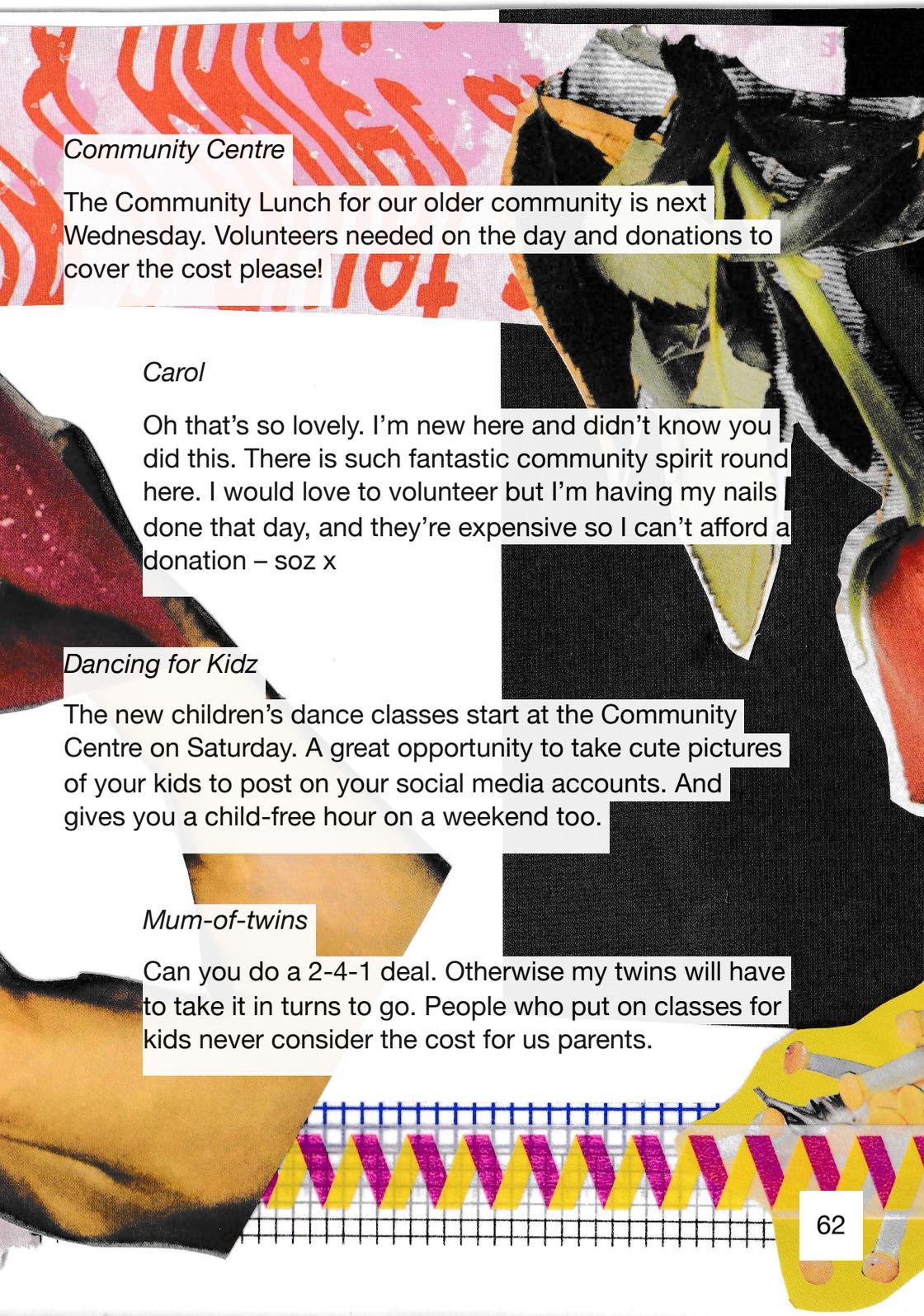
*Keith*

It's their fault they don't have a home. Us good law abiding people shouldn't have to put up with smelly people in OUR community.

*Rich*

Local councillor here – I've had a word and the police are going to move them on to the bins in the next parish.





### *Community Centre*

The Community Lunch for our older community is next Wednesday. Volunteers needed on the day and donations to cover the cost please!

### *Carol*

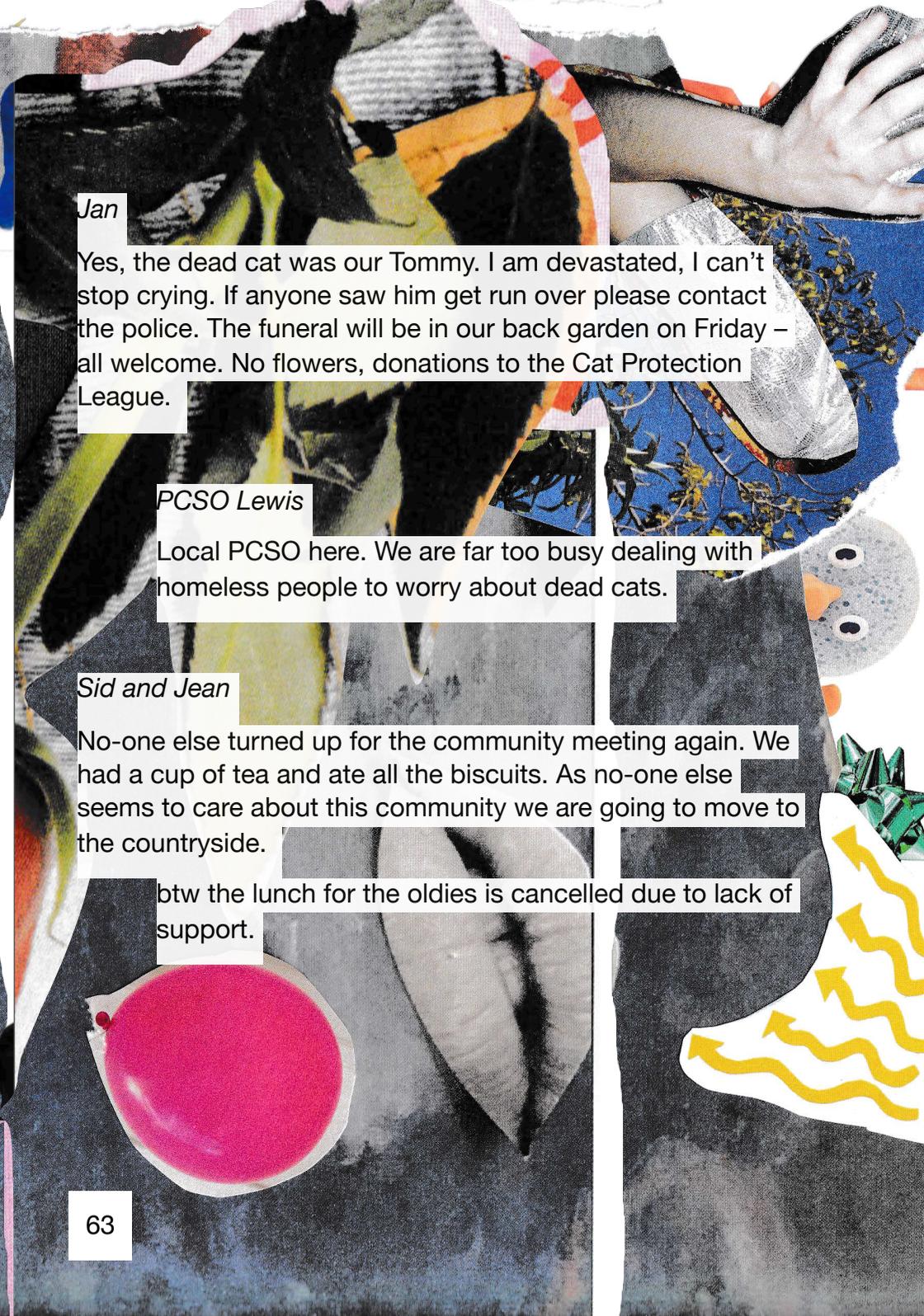
Oh that's so lovely. I'm new here and didn't know you did this. There is such fantastic community spirit round here. I would love to volunteer but I'm having my nails done that day, and they're expensive so I can't afford a donation – soz x

### *Dancing for Kidz*

The new children's dance classes start at the Community Centre on Saturday. A great opportunity to take cute pictures of your kids to post on your social media accounts. And gives you a child-free hour on a weekend too.

### *Mum-of-twins*

Can you do a 2-4-1 deal. Otherwise my twins will have to take it in turns to go. People who put on classes for kids never consider the cost for us parents.



*Jan*

Yes, the dead cat was our Tommy. I am devastated, I can't stop crying. If anyone saw him get run over please contact the police. The funeral will be in our back garden on Friday – all welcome. No flowers, donations to the Cat Protection League.

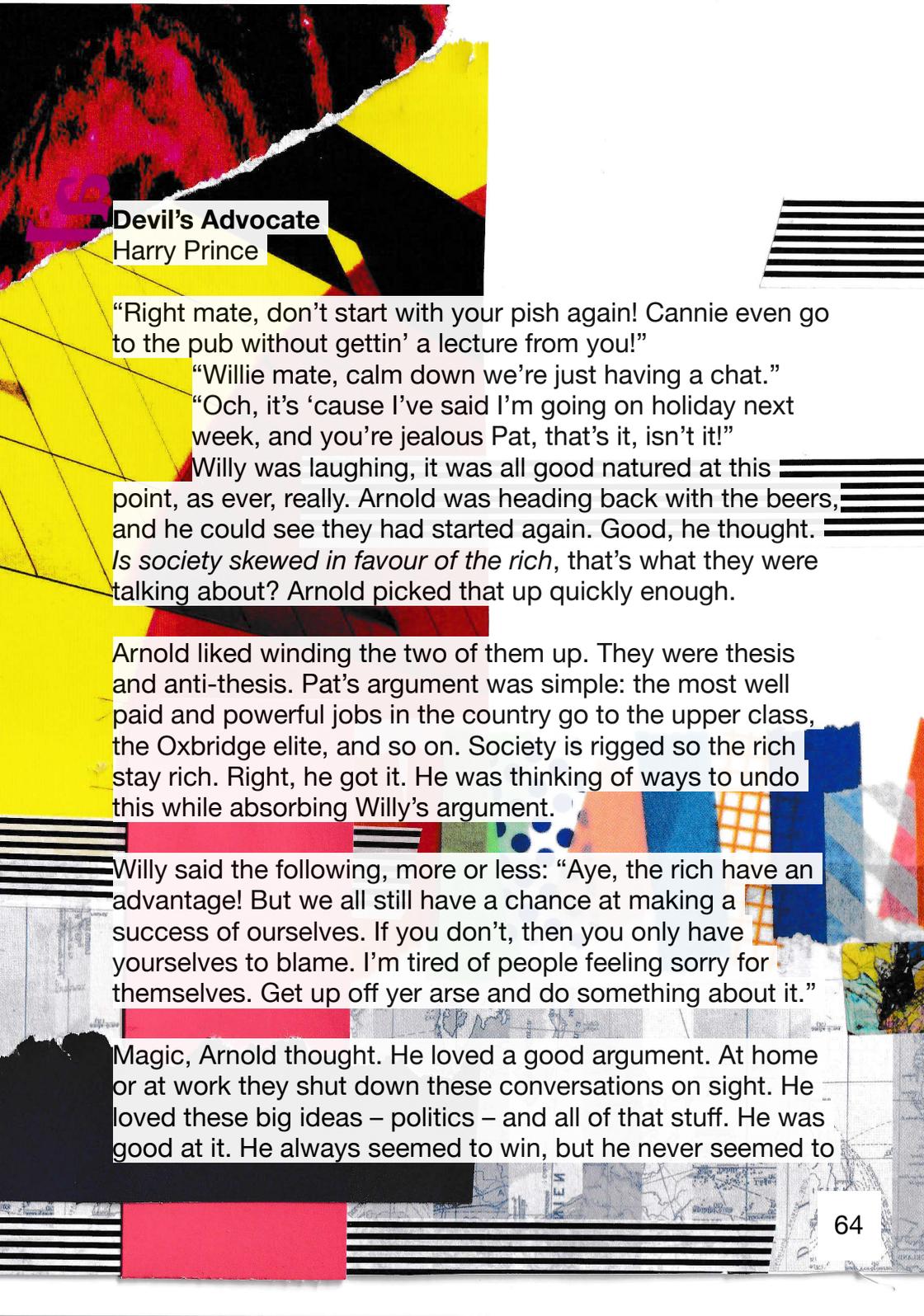
*PCSO Lewis*

Local PCSO here. We are far too busy dealing with homeless people to worry about dead cats.

*Sid and Jean*

No-one else turned up for the community meeting again. We had a cup of tea and ate all the biscuits. As no-one else seems to care about this community we are going to move to the countryside.

btw the lunch for the oldies is cancelled due to lack of support.



## Devil's Advocate

Harry Prince

“Right mate, don’t start with your pish again! Cannie even go to the pub without gettin’ a lecture from you!”

“Willie mate, calm down we’re just having a chat.”

“Och, it’s ‘cause I’ve said I’m going on holiday next week, and you’re jealous Pat, that’s it, isn’t it!”

Willy was laughing, it was all good natured at this point, as ever, really. Arnold was heading back with the beers, and he could see they had started again. Good, he thought.

*Is society skewed in favour of the rich*, that’s what they were talking about? Arnold picked that up quickly enough.

Arnold liked winding the two of them up. They were thesis and anti-thesis. Pat’s argument was simple: the most well paid and powerful jobs in the country go to the upper class, the Oxbridge elite, and so on. Society is rigged so the rich stay rich. Right, he got it. He was thinking of ways to undo this while absorbing Willy’s argument.

Willy said the following, more or less: “Aye, the rich have an advantage! But we all still have a chance at making a success of ourselves. If you don’t, then you only have yourselves to blame. I’m tired of people feeling sorry for themselves. Get up off yer arse and do something about it.”

Magic, Arnold thought. He loved a good argument. At home or at work they shut down these conversations on sight. He loved these big ideas – politics – and all of that stuff. He was good at it. He always seemed to win, but he never seemed to

start it. He never seemed to be involved. He was a stoker, you might say.

Time to have some fun. Arnold began, "Look lads, let me ask you this. A wee experiment maybe... Imagine you were at a hospital the day Boris Johnson was born. And you swapped the wee Boris baby for another baby that was from some shite-hole estate in the East End. What happens to them when they grow up?"

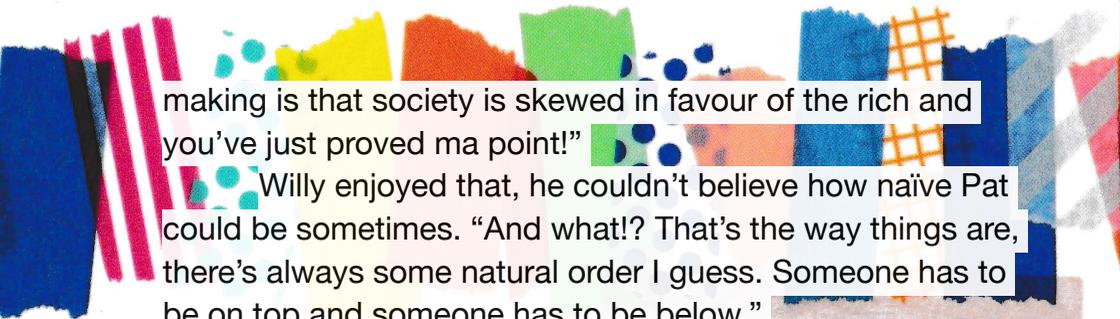
Willy shook his head. Pat was concealing a burp. But they were hooked on the beginning of Arnold's premise, so they kept listening.

"If Boris Johnson grew up in a council estate in the East End of Glasgow, would he still grow up to be a cabinet minister? And if the wee scheme baby grew up in some cosy mansion in England, would he still grow up to be a waster?"

Pat looked smug. Willy told Arnold to fuck off. But he had to admit, he had a point, and was modest enough to let him know that. Willy wasn't one to roll over and show his belly though. Fuck this, he thought, these two boys are living in a dream world, I'm going to go off on one here.

"Aye, aye, good point. But have you ever thought that the best man for the job should get the fucking job? So what they get the best education, and have the best connections. Aye, I'll gie you that. But if you're good enough, and you work hard enough, you'll make it man. As a said, folk need to stop making excuses."

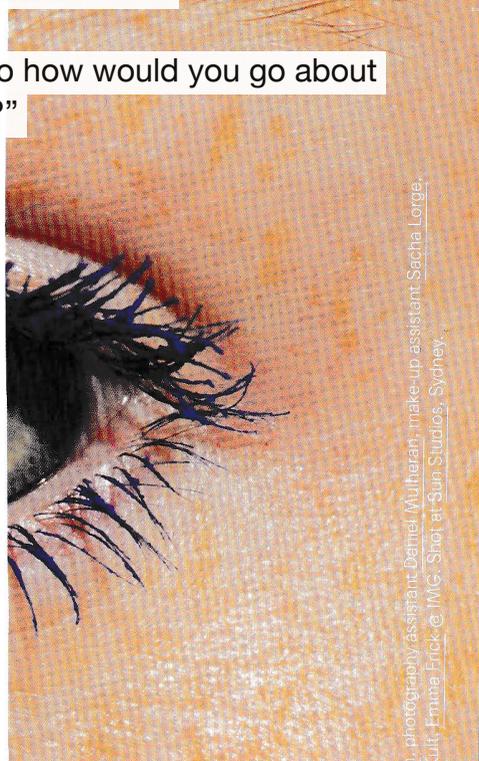
Pat sipped his beer and gave a condescending raise of the eyebrow. "That's not the point lads. The point that I was



making is that society is skewed in favour of the rich and you've just proved ma point!"

Willy enjoyed that, he couldn't believe how naive Pat could be sometimes. "And what!? That's the way things are, there's always some natural order I guess. Someone has to be on top and someone has to be below."

Arnold was in heaven. "Aye, so how would you go about making things equal then Pat?"



in, photography assistant Daniel Mulhearn, make-up assistant Sachia Lorge, Kulti, Emma, Erick © IMG, Shot at Sun Studios, Sydney.



Yes, Ishmael, the same fate may be thine

Marshall Bennett

I will write these words on my windshield  
And read them while I ride.

Gawking through glass at dirt fields,  
Blue-eyes wide with Western Pride.

So what? I know we're better

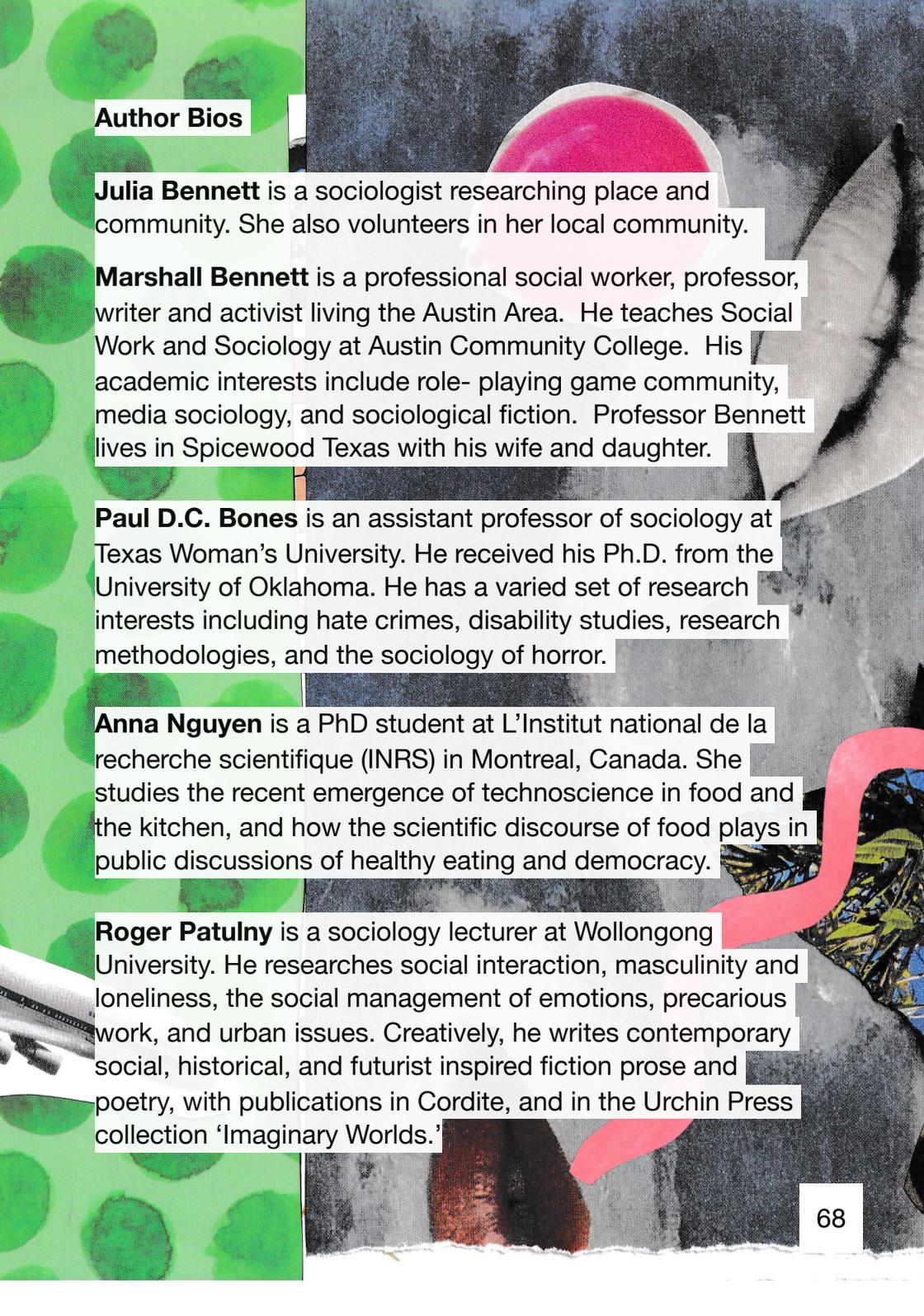
Than this conquered hoard.

We came to loose their fetter—  
Yet sleepy eyes get bored.

A lovely Western soldier

Lets his head hang down to sleep,

\*click\* **BOOM!**



## Author Bios

**Julia Bennett** is a sociologist researching place and community. She also volunteers in her local community.

**Marshall Bennett** is a professional social worker, professor, writer and activist living the Austin Area. He teaches Social Work and Sociology at Austin Community College. His academic interests include role- playing game community, media sociology, and sociological fiction. Professor Bennett lives in Spicewood Texas with his wife and daughter.

**Paul D.C. Bones** is an assistant professor of sociology at Texas Woman's University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. He has a varied set of research interests including hate crimes, disability studies, research methodologies, and the sociology of horror.

**Anna Nguyen** is a PhD student at L'Institut national de la recherche scientifique (INRS) in Montreal, Canada. She studies the recent emergence of technoscience in food and the kitchen, and how the scientific discourse of food plays in public discussions of healthy eating and democracy.

**Roger Patulny** is a sociology lecturer at Wollongong University. He researches social interaction, masculinity and loneliness, the social management of emotions, precarious work, and urban issues. Creatively, he writes contemporary social, historical, and futurist inspired fiction prose and poetry, with publications in Cordite, and in the Urchin Press collection 'Imaginary Worlds.'

**Craig Potter** is a sociology graduate from Nottingham, who believes the future of our discipline is outside the institution.

**Harry Prince**, originally from Glasgow, recently graduated with a masters in cultural sociology from the University of Amsterdam. He works as a waiter and volunteers in the PR department at the Electric Tram Museum.

**Jack Redden** lives in Chelmsford, Essex with his partner Daisy. He currently works as an administrator at Birkbeck College, University of London.

**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.

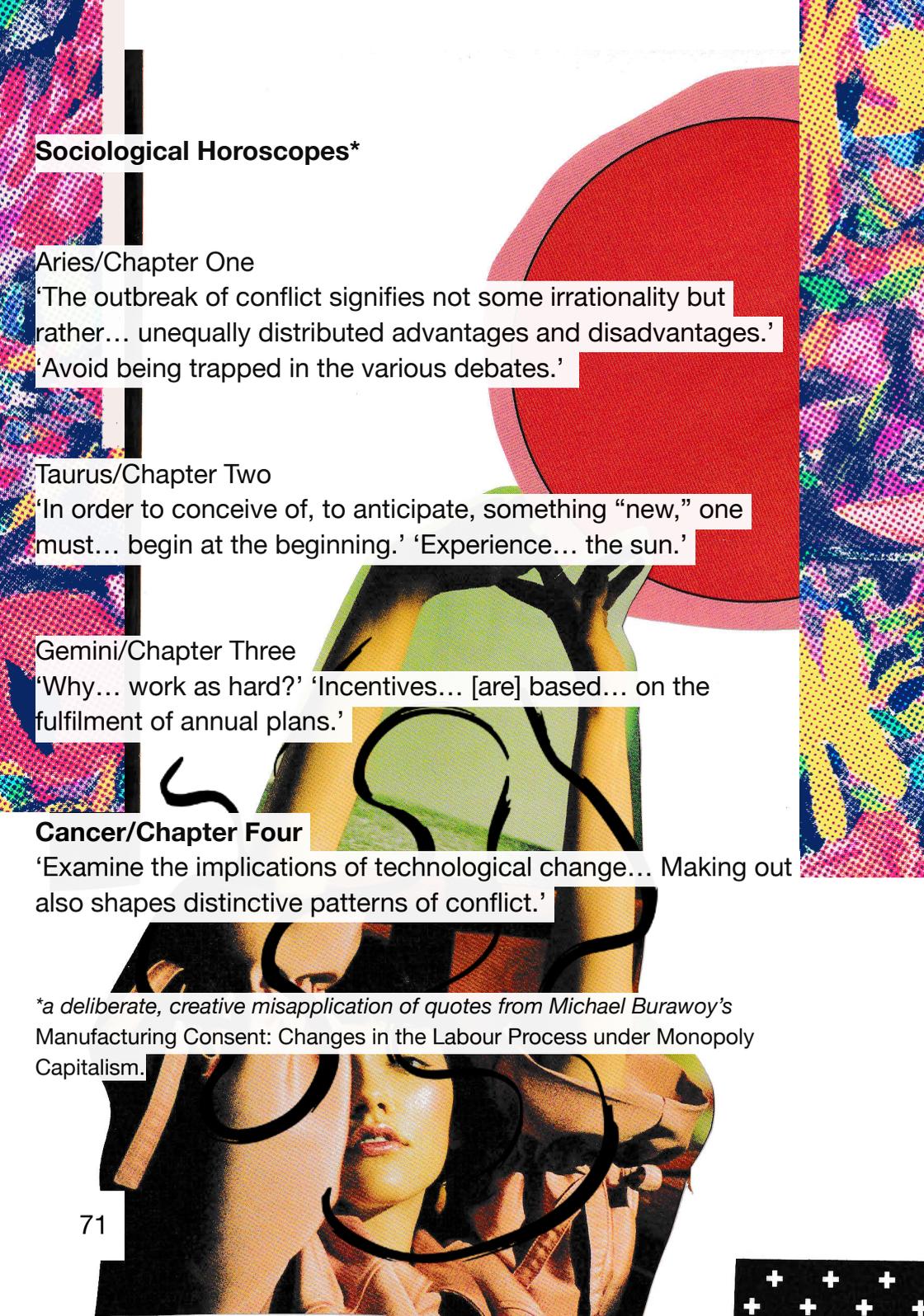
**Kasey Symons** is a freelance writer, PhD Candidate at Victoria University and Research Fellow at Swinburne University in Melbourne, Australia. Her work addresses questions of gender performance in relationships female fans have with other fans, especially other women within the fan space of elite male sports.

**Kate Carruthers Thomas** is a Senior Research Fellow and Athena SWAN Project Manager at Birmingham City University, UK. She specialises in interdisciplinary enquiry into contemporary higher education, inequalities and gender; in spatial methods and analyses. Kate uses both poetry and graphics as methods of disseminating her research in these fields. [kate.thomas@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:kate.thomas@bcu.ac.uk) @drkcarrutherst [www.thegword2017.wordpress.com](http://www.thegword2017.wordpress.com)



**Anne Turner** lives on a small property in the Wimmera with her partner of thirty years, pony, wallabies and dogs. She is trying to convince herself she isn't living a dystopian reality and spends much time writing satirical speculative fiction.

**Ashleigh Watson** is the creator and editor of *So Fi Zine*. She is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Vitalities Lab, University of New South Wales, Sydney.



## Sociological Horoscopes\*

### Aries/Chapter One

'The outbreak of conflict signifies not some irrationality but rather... unequally distributed advantages and disadvantages.'

'Avoid being trapped in the various debates.'

### Taurus/Chapter Two

'In order to conceive of, to anticipate, something "new," one must... begin at the beginning.' 'Experience... the sun.'

### Gemini/Chapter Three

'Why... work as hard?' 'Incentives... [are] based... on the fulfilment of annual plans.'

### Cancer/Chapter Four

'Examine the implications of technological change... Making out also shapes distinctive patterns of conflict.'

*\*a deliberate, creative misapplication of quotes from Michael Burawoy's Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process under Monopoly Capitalism.*



## Sociological Horoscopes\*

### Leo/Chapter Five

‘A deep ambivalence... is not enough to obscure... the rewards of... relieving boredom.’ ‘But the moral remains: when there is too much uncertainty, players cease to play the game.’

### Virgo/Chapter Six

‘There [is] little advantage in moving to another job. On the contrary, it [is] probably a better idea to gain more experience... so as to improve one’s chances.’

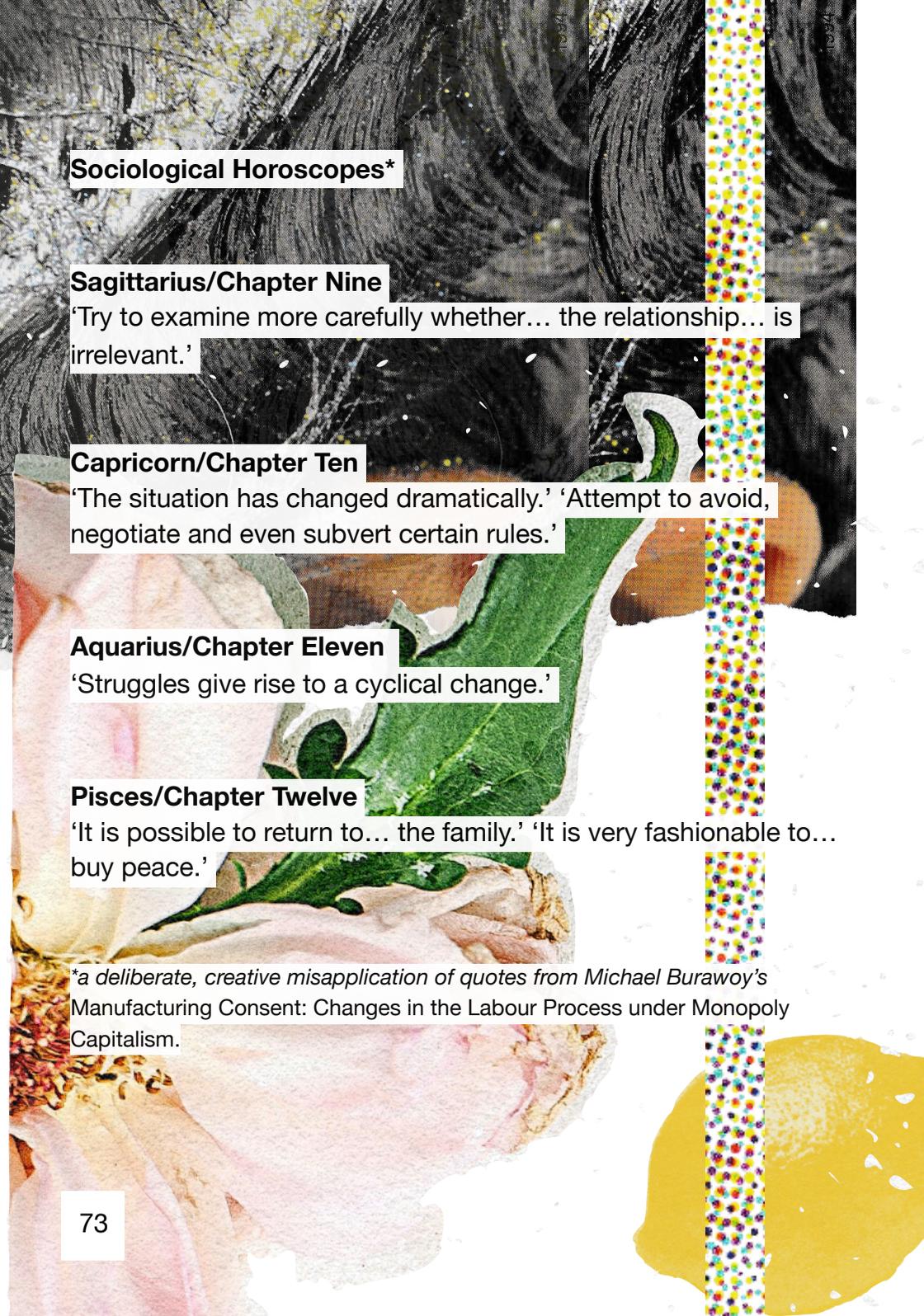
### Libra/Chapter Seven

‘Examine the implications of... the limits of choice.’ ‘Decide to stay at home.’

### Scorpio/Chapter Eight

‘A clearer picture will emerge.’

*\*a deliberate, creative misapplication of quotes from Michael Burawoy’s Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process under Monopoly Capitalism.*



**Sociological Horoscopes\***

**Sagittarius/Chapter Nine**

‘Try to examine more carefully whether... the relationship... is irrelevant.’

**Capricorn/Chapter Ten**

‘The situation has changed dramatically.’ ‘Attempt to avoid, negotiate and even subvert certain rules.’

**Aquarius/Chapter Eleven**

‘Struggles give rise to a cyclical change.’

**Pisces/Chapter Twelve**

‘It is possible to return to... the family.’ ‘It is very fashionable to... buy peace.’

*\*a deliberate, creative misapplication of quotes from Michael Burawoy's Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process under Monopoly Capitalism.*



Keen to contribute?

Submissions for the next edition of *So Fi Zine* will open in August 2019

Edition #6 is inspired by Deborah Lupton's digital, creative, more-than-human and future-oriented work

Pieces are invited that creatively explore sociological futures—bodies, spaces, disciplines and things

*So Fi Zine* publishes short stories, poetry, illustrations, photography and other creative works



idunt tellus sed enim maxim  
felis placerat. Nunc henderit posue  
o congue placerat tortor id rutrum. Inter