

Metachrosis Literary



Issue 3, Winter 2023.

Cover Image: Galya Budagova, *The Fall*, Analog photo.

Metachrosis Literary

Issue 3. Winter 2023.

Reverberation
Catalyst
Ascent

Edited by Ellen Harrold

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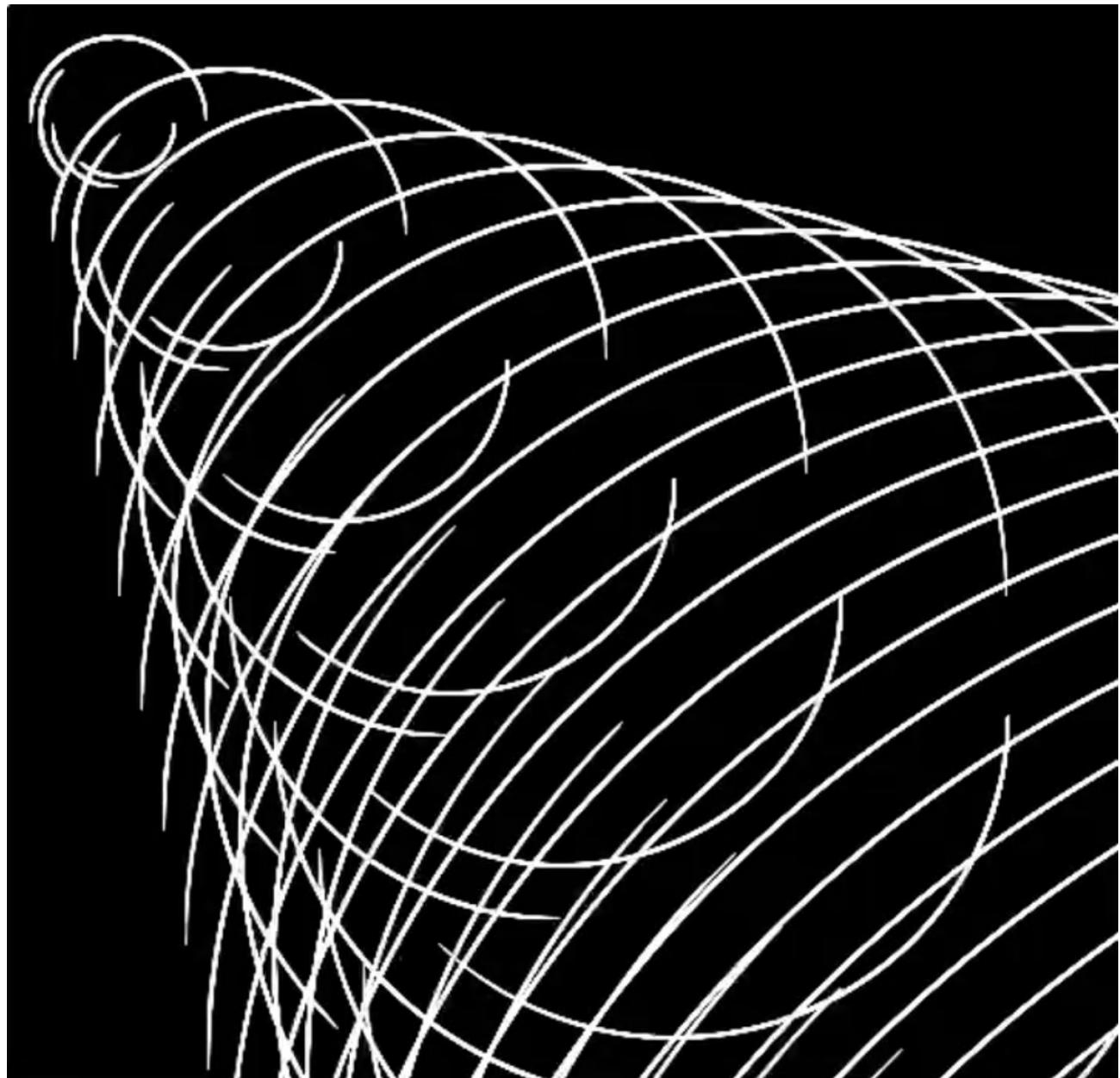
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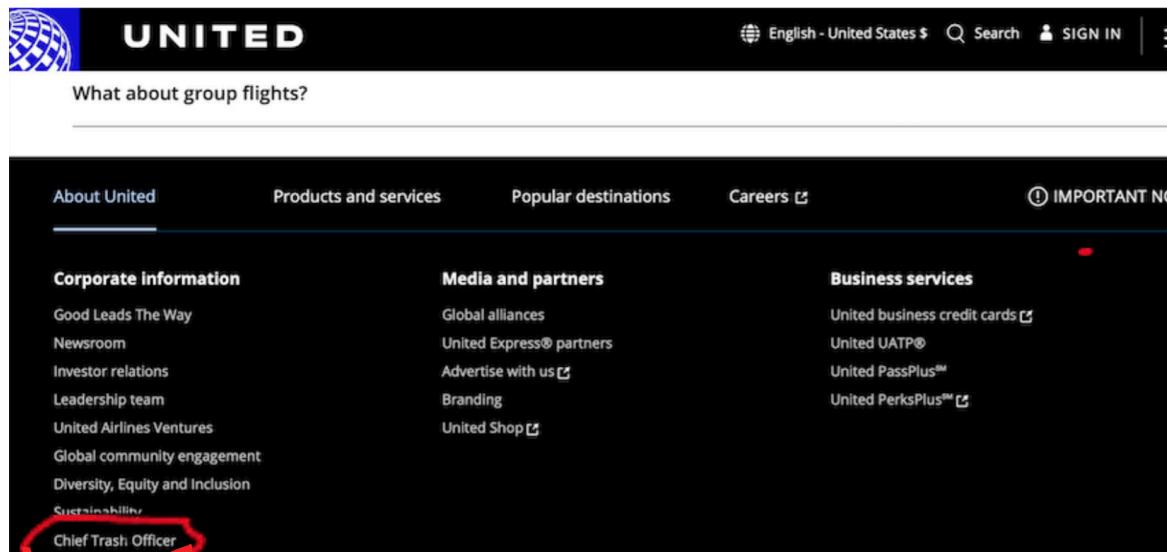
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Chapter 1: Reverberation



Claudia Tong, *Ripple Effect*, code/video.



The screenshot shows the United Airlines website's footer menu. The 'Corporate information' section includes a link to 'Chief Trash Officer', which is circled in red. Other links in this section include Good Leads The Way, Newsroom, Investor relations, Leadership team, United Airlines Ventures, Global community engagement, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Sustainability. The 'Media and partners' section includes links to Global alliances, United Express® partners, Advertise with us, Branding, and United Shop. The 'Business services' section includes links to United business credit cards, United UATP®, United PassPlus™, and United PerksPlus™.

CTO To Rescue!
Gerard Sarnat

Now dirty United
Airline stand-off
Have not flown
Once yet since
Corona virus

But then your
New concern
About nasty
Ur-variant
Fall surge

We make-->cancel
Res from Silicon
Valley to France
(Paris)+perhaps
Italy (Tuscany)

Although at
Last agreed
Just maybe
Costa Rica
Butterflies

Before a suggestion
To beat jet lag Ger/
Partner can stay
Very close to
Present

Thus tour during
Mucho warmer
Weather...I
Attempt to
Contact

PST Time zone
Plus re-book
To see our
Santa Fe
Lovies

Chief Trash Officer?

Kith and Kin
Jerome Berglund

kitchen is closed
still
he must have his order

Hey Siri.... Hmm?
Developing a rapport —
hasn't called her **** in days...

waves of déjà vu
startling birds from bush
surfin' usa

tractor treads
circling orange sand
diamond without umpire, bases

have to open
on funeral...some roots
unsquarable



Becky Long-Smith, *In The Darkness*, Screen Print.

IN PREPARATION FOR A BODILY OFFERING

TOM OKAFOR

They bring the fog with them when they come. They are nameless, formless; still, yet tumultuous, silent, yet catastrophic.

The watchers sound the bells at the sight of them tonguing from the skyline. We cage ourselves in our cellars, melt lavender candles, and coat our skins with hot wax.

We don coveralls sewn from sacks, gloves crocheted with thick, black human hair, and boots stitched together from rubber melded into horse's hide.

We must abstain from wine, and scented oils; avoid our lovers: never look into their eyes or hold their hands; never reassure them that the blaze of passion scorching our hearts remains unquenched; we must not give room to emotion, lest we stumble—encumbered by desire—and fail.

We keep our eyes open as they slip into our cellars through cracks, holes, fissures, and fractures. They are not the fog; they're in the fog. Souls. Centuries old. Women, men, children, others. Generations of insatiable ghosts, lives stolen by the great plague, all returned to live anew.

They slither to us—warm, gentle, patient.

We abnegate our bodies. Resist: be consumed; be overwhelmed by emotion: perish!

They lick the lavender wax off our skin, graze our sack coveralls, sniff our gloves, dismember our boots, stretch them into bands, and with the stretched rubbered hide they bind themselves to us.

We watch them seep into our nostrils, ears, pores, and mouths. They become us. We become them.

They free themselves from the cellars—our bodies, their bodies. The children play and are merry. The witches cast their spells, bringing time to a halt. Alchemists pull chlorophyll from greens; they spin straw into silk. The ladies play dress up, painting their faces, manicuring their nails.

Fathers and sons slurp ale between bouts of laughter. Mothers and sisters intone long-lost melodies, telling the tales of their old bodies and crafting stories from the scars on the bodies they now possess.

Lovers reunite. Brother becomes sister's lover; mother becomes son's wife. Our fathers and our uncles find unfulfilled romance in each other's bodies. Entire families desecrate themselves. Yet, the souls do not care.

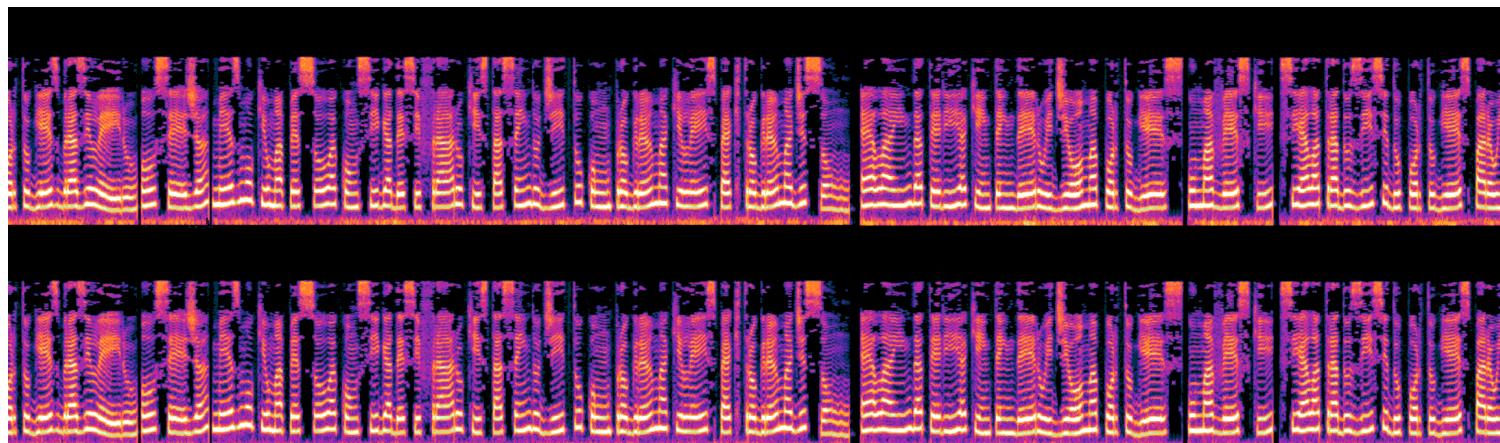
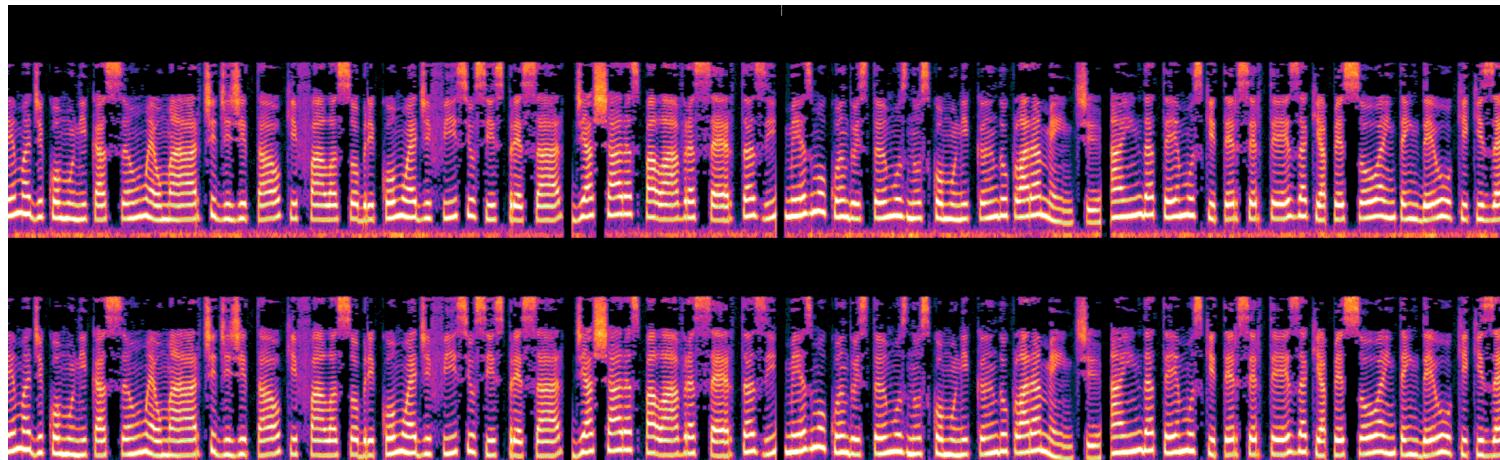
They do not grant us the mercy of erasure. We remember everything. When they've had their fill, they leave our bodies sprawled in wanton conditions, too weak to even pilfer a breath. We convince ourselves it wasn't us. Yet, we remember our sisters' lips pressed against our breasts, our brothers' tongues tracing the lines on our rib cages and our fathers' hands caressing our thighs.



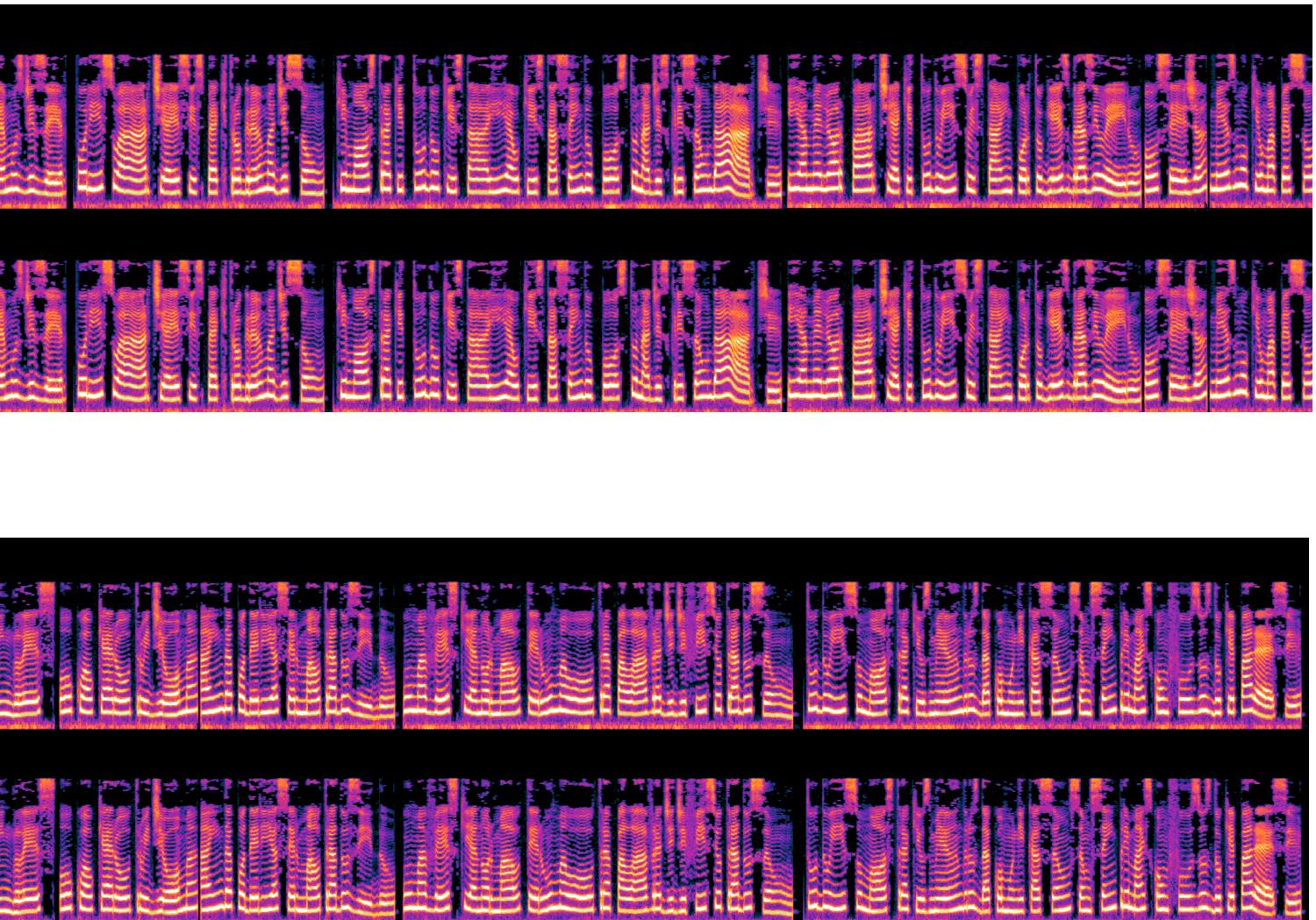
We will never forget our shame, but we will be spared. Us: safe, but not the recalcitrant. They will not prepare their bodies, nor will they relinquish themselves. They will not—even for a fleeting moment—let go their passions. They resist. Fools! They fight. Hence, they are consumed, rid of all organic compositions and metamorphosed into a humanoid agglomerate of quartz and silica grains. No tongue shall speak their names. No finger shall crumble their forms. They shall, must, be forgotten.

And so we wait. We let them perform the infernal calculus that establishes the hour of their return. One year, maybe. Perhaps two years or two sunny days away. We'll never know. But when dark amorphous shapes blanket the skies, and muddy rain descends on us, then we must appoint watchers, we must prepare our bodies, and we must offer ourselves again. Willingly. Wholeheartedly. Joyfully.

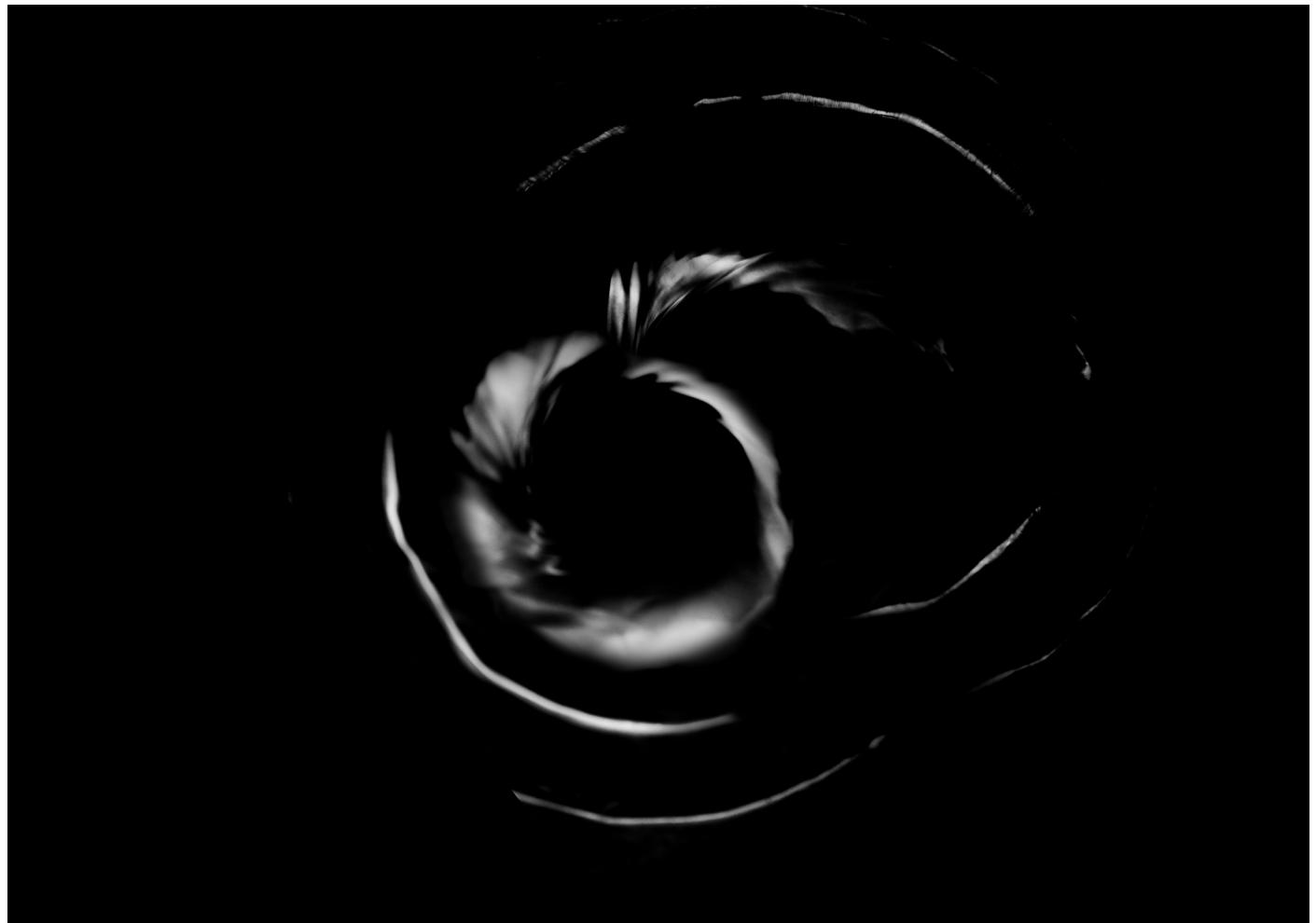
THE END.



Lucas Rebelo, *Problema de comunicação (estéreo)*, Digital art.



Chapter 2: Catalyst



Lewis Andrews, *Gravitational Waves I*, Giclee Print on Paper.

Oxidations

Jordan Alejandro Rivera

1.

Oxygen is not just an atom, it's a word.

From Greek roots meaning “sharp” and “genesis”.

A word as sharp as a knife.

A blade carried through pulmonary tissue in a sip of air.

2.

I stick my head in the freezer, windpipe syrupy with inflammation. Pulling in cold to quench its rage.

3.

Smoke billows out of the oven,

stuffed as a storage cabinet with pots, pans, plastics. Preheated to 420°.

4.

My uncle pulls in the sweet smoke of a Marlboro, holding the fumes in his chest for a matter of seconds before

Release.

5.

Time is not an object.

It's a build-up of knives. On the face, they cut lines. Along the smile.

Along the eyes.

Group Selfie As a Displacement Reaction

Rhys Pearce

I want to go home so deeply
 that the places I've been thus disappear,
 and I'd like to know where it is that I'd go
 when I say 'I don't want to be here'.

I want to erase myself from all of the group photos;
 I'd like to slip your wall without a trace
 or leave a stain you can't just plaster over:
 an absence that you can't ever replace;

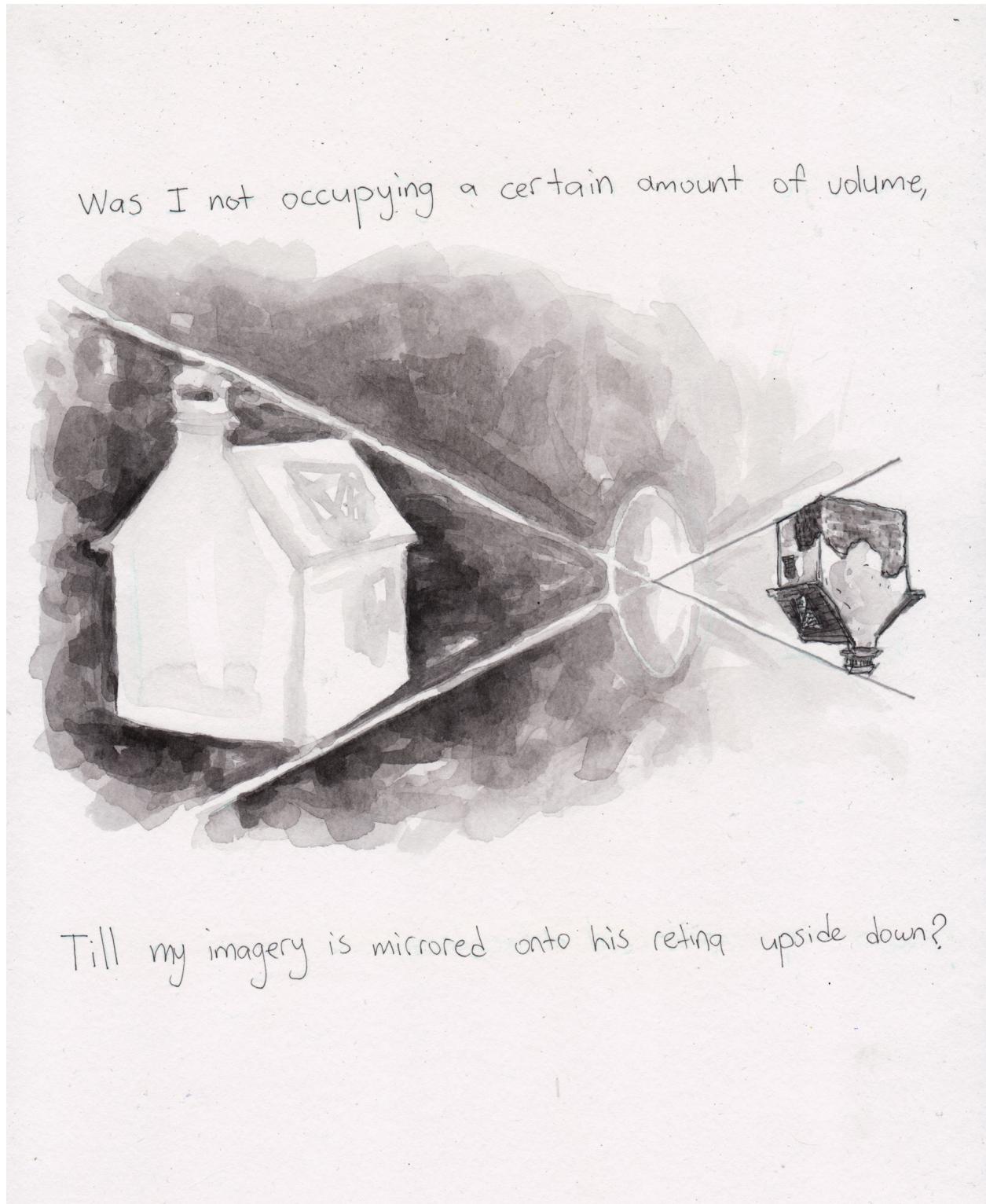
'cause I don't care that it's over - I can't wait to make off
 while you're making out with all you call a friend,
 but I just can't move on in these attempts to abscond
 'til I've figured out just how we reached this end -

so I'm circling round the scene of all my murders
 making notes from the periphery of crime
 marking the particulars, precursors
 pondering how I survived each time

the relationship crashed and I clung to a plank –
 this time, there looks to be no survivors.
 I'll pass my Sundays shuffling the deck chairs
 on Friday nights, go clubbing with advisors.

And if $A + BC = AC + B$
 then I calculate 0 fucks to be given
 but maybe I'm wrong, and the world is really ending –
 I was never much of a mathematician.

So if the apocalypse comes and I just don't notice
 then, I guess, feel free to send a note.
 We're inside out and upside down in this reaction to displacement and I see that your
 sweet core's a sugar coat.



Ezgi bıçakçı, *Poem 7*, Ink Painting.

The Dump Man

by Leonardo G. Luccone

When I descend the slope where the grass lets you think of but a gathering of discards, he stands there, on his throne, frighteningly, and snarls.

I wish I could say something more about Dump Man, but I'd be afraid of imprisoning him with a melody that would not resonate with the consistency of his presence. I am sure there's no past tense in his eyes. Not to share with us. A new language is needed when you're talking about Dump Man. What I write here is the evidence of my mouth's limitations.

Dump Man examines the transgressors at the entrance, he judges as we pass through. He seems to be calculating something—the value of things. He's the supreme discriminator of faults; he only needs a nod to indicate where you should be thrust to. We all fear his rejection: what could you do with the refusals you can't eliminate?

Those of us fortunate enough to have dump access tried to act casual, but as soon as he appeared, we couldn't help but gather around him. After a polite nod of respect, we waited eagerly for his next words.

We cry in silence for his verdict. We are naked in his untrembling world, longin' for the judgment. When it's finally our turn we speak our trembling words, decipher his face and then proceed. We—heavy from our discards—hope to return home with the fulfillment of relief.

He's still a handsome man—his beard bristles with the atrocity he comes under without any magnifying glass. Everything about him is old except his eyes, even if they are the same color as the dump. He has no place for levity, only pride in his duty.

He seems to suck strength from this broken place, but there is nothing noble in being superior where memories have to wait.

People ignore thriftiness, they prefer the corrosive burn of accumulation—people sicken out of urgency to get rid of things, pretending that their situation would become clearer.

A dump is nothing but a deposit of rubbish, but if you see through a dump you will see the perfect portrait of humankind. The dump is much more than our dead archive.

It is the first time for Rachel, her initiation. She's got a small sack. She can't be separated from anything she owns.

She needs to duplicate almost everything she considers vital. Two cellphones, two mattresses, two coffee machines, two toothbrushes, two refrigerators, two bicycles, two iPads, two twin cats. It seems like there's no intelligible scheme in her duplication, but the result is an overaccumulation of indecision. Sometimes she uses one object until it's ruined and then she uses the new old one (and hurries to buy another second one). She has to be sure she won't run out of anything; it happens that she uses them simultaneously (as in the case of the coffee machines or the shower heads—she swaps them every week—or, of course, the cats. A friend of hers said: you have two cats, not one cat and a spare cat).

No one knows how many lampshades, portable AC units, irons, running shoes, pencils, ukuleles (you can hear her playing and singing loud) Double Rachel has.

They're her duplicate tools. Just-in-case-tools. Water for her invisible burning anger.

She became the princess of duplicates after her divorce. She doesn't need Dump Man to know that duplicating is the logical result of bifurcation.

“Why?”

“...”

“I really can't find the reasons for all this.”

“I told you.”

“I don't like it.”

It means he finds her motives impure. It means he thought/thinks there was/is no cure, no antidote.

No coupling for Double Rachel.

“It's vanity! You know, it's only for vanity.”

“How dare you—”

He meant she was insane.

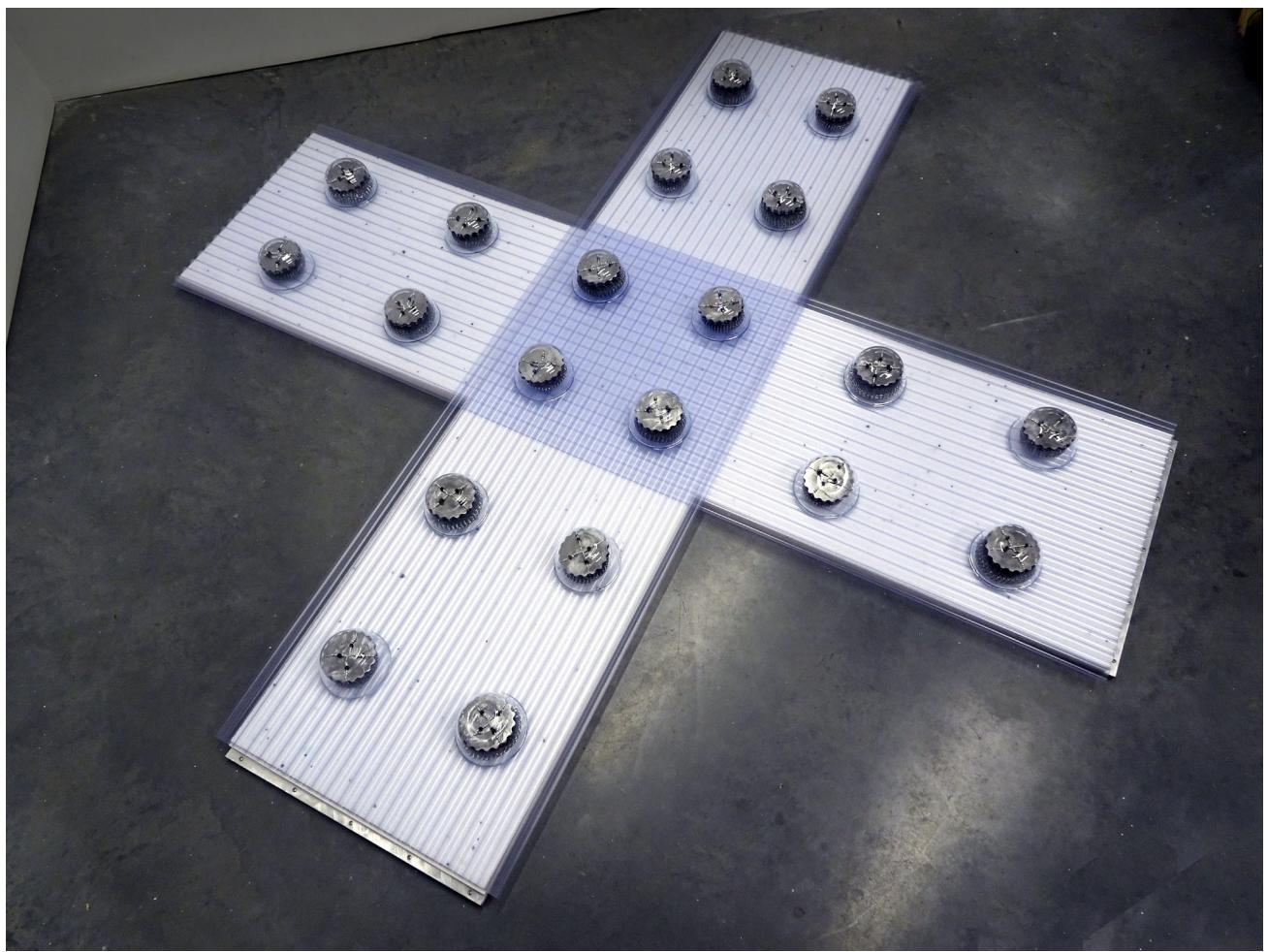
The divorce rubble is spread over the backyard, no one will spend a pleasant morning there, no one will take care of the wisteria, longing for its bloom.

I haven't mentioned that Double Rachel always uses a double space when she writes her documents. She can't get used to one space after a period (“stupid modern stuff”). She finds it absurd.

I got a passage from her secret journal of 1991-1992. “Professor Winston refused to read my essay because it had double sentence-spacing I didn't use the computer at the lab. I love Dad's Lettera 22. One space after a period is crazy, completely wrong, utterly unacceptable. I need more room; sentences need to breathe. Why does he want to cram the words like Chinese on a train? You know, words move continuously, they vibrate up and down, but they dolly in and out on the track. Let them move, they're fragile.”

A jumble of objects lay before me: coins, a stick, a keychain, a quick lock, notes that no one will ever read, playing cards, a chessboard, and a book with pages that had turned violet with age. The book, a monument to an unforgettable and forgotten evening, held secrets that I would never know. These objects, like tacit slaves without eyes, served us in strange secrecy, and they will last beyond our forgetfulness. They will never know that we have left them behind.

Chapter 3: Ascent



Paul Malone, *Particulate Aether Detector*, photo.

IC 2944

Jessica Swanson

Tell me, can you feel —telepathically—
the cackle of cosmic fauna, the smirk of space kin?
Tell me, Running Chicken, brunt of a joke universal.
Are you looking to cross wormholes, jump continuums
to some far-off other side—a galaxy unexplored?
Or are you skirting the inevitable, a snapped neck,
an impending soup, trampled beneath centaur’s hooves?
I’ll be offended for you, Phoenix Transition:
emitting, reflecting, strutting.
Your fiery form, an effusion of nebulae.
Who else, but you, could light the way—
a burst of red and a smattering of stars.

Dying I Dream**Peter Devonald**

Dissect me piece by piece, how did I die?
 What weary reason leaves me here, fading orange
 grey times pallid, anaemic and acerbic,
 whispering promises, assurances, broken.

Am I Frankenstein to you?
 As you dig into my hidden depths –
 the heart of me, blood, organs and awe
 no longer playing with desire.

I am earthed now, obsidian, grounded.
 No more dreams for me, no more miracles.
 Except this final one – distant horizons,
 yearning triumphs, beyond, beyond, blessed.

Amazing the human body ever works –
 now I see the mechanisms and meaning.
 Above the body, deranged and re-arranged,
 inside out, I can feel my memories fading.

Ambiguous appendixes, assembled randomly,
 where does my soul soar sour with regrets?
 Longing for you with promises of spring,
 arched ephemeral flowers, obsequious in denial.

So this is after life? All that noise and fury,
 now blurred faces, pale light, white scalpels slice
 and dice, to decide the reasons for our fate?
 I am cocooned from this, watching, passive.

To transcend the passing of the years, viewing
 of all your tears, solitude steps in moonlight glades,
 silent longing, regrets, clouds pass unseen,
 maudlin moons watch agile and obscene.

Cold clammy fizz of electricity, metallic taste,
 chemicals surge, flittering denials, regrets,
 softly falling into bright light epiphanies.
 I'm ready now, for whatever happens next.

FAULTY ALARM

SOUM

She shot up in bed, eyes round
As flying saucers, fight or flight,
Of what? She cannot say.

Senses reach out in the room's darkness
Probing for whatever has set off
Her internal alarm, wrenching her
From the soft sweet embrace of Morpheus.

Lamp on, nothing under bed or closet
Now firmly closed. Her abode double-checked,
Slides back into bed, a false alarm.

Light off, 6th sense still screaming,
Beware. Outside on the shadowy street below,
Under a solitary single light
It watches the room go dark.

THE END

Hostage
Rachel Orta

I'd like to speak with my nervous system,
 each branching nerve and one spinal cord
 If I peeled each layer back to expose, you
 think I could have a word? I feel something
 is always being digested inside of me
 too quickly, to take the news (death, violence,
 dread) so politely.

Maybe then this
 vulture who lives outside my door would
 finally offer to embrace me. If I were stripped
 down to meat on bones. I need enormous
 wings to engulf me where I have stayed un-
 touched. We can speak about what comes
 next, relish together my muddled sheath
 & tears puddled out of my body, weep-
 ing that we have both spent too much of
 our lives thinking only of decay.

It's true
 that everything eventually will be con-
 sumed. That when a star dies it does not
 know it is to become an explosion. Sublime
 as Saturn's rings, who even in picturesque
 memory remains an everlasting violent fury,
 pieces of a planet run t h r o u g h.
 As understanding goes, energy transferred
 means energy wasted. Yet a level of de-
 struction can make a thing captivating.
 Create in the dark an illumination. At
 least offer a moment of release from this
situation.



Galya Budagova, *The Fall*, Analog photo.

THE RESPONSE

Jeffrey Zable

“Gotta get some cash out of my account!” I said to the guard dog upon entering the bank.

“Well at least you have some real money!” he immediately responded. “I’m only paid in bones, and I sleep on a tired old rug at night. Besides that, customers look at me as if I’m dangerous; like I might bite their leg just for the fun of it. Surely, it’s because I’m a German Shepherd, a breed that has always had a reputation as being extremely volatile.”

Looking down at the shepherd with an empathic expression, I replied, “I would never think that you might bite my leg unless I was trying to rob this place, but I am a bit surprised that they hired you over a man or a woman carrying a gun.”

And to that he answered, “As you know, they’re cutting back everywhere, but don’t think for a moment that your money is less safe because a dog is guarding it!”

“Never crossed my mind!” I said, while simultaneously giving him a pat on the head, which elicited a snarl so loud that everyone turned in our direction. . .

blood-love-blood

GRSTALT COMMS

language

stretched so thin

if you wanted to you could:

lean forward

and puncture its

trembling membrane

with the tip of your nose

but you:

step back let it rend according to

its own deterioration

becomes gummy and ungainly

no longer tactile fun

but an encumbrance

Note from the editor:

Hope comes from the hard work of making the world a better place.

CONTRIBUTORS

Chapter 1: Reverberation

Claudia Tong: Claudia Tong is an artist and quantitative researcher based in London, creating in the intersection of art and science. She practice spans from painting, illustration and mixed media to visual computing and music. She graduated from Brown University, where she studied computer science and conducted research in cognitive neuroscience.

<https://linktr.ee/claudiaxt>

<https://www.instagram.com/cxt.art>

Gerard Sarnat: Poet and aphorist Gerard Sarnat is widely published internationally in print and online. He has been nominated for the pending Science Fiction Poetry Association Dwarf Star Award, won San Francisco Poetry's 2020 Contest, the Poetry in the Arts First Place Award plus the Dorfman Prize, and has been nominated for handfuls of Pushcarts plus Best of the Net Awards. Gerry's publications include 2023 San Diego Poetry Annual, 2022 Awakenings Review, 2022 Arts & Cultural Council of Bucks County Celebration,. He is a Harvard College and Medical School-trained physician who's built and staffed clinics for the disenfranchised as well as a Stanford professor and healthcare CEO. Currently he is devoting energy/ resources to deal with climate justice, and serves on Climate Action Now's board. Gerry's been married since 1969 with progeny consisting of four collections (Homeless Chronicles: From Abraham To Burning Man, Disputes, 17s, Melting the Ice King) plus three kids/ six grandsons — and is looking forward to potential future granddaughters.

Jerome Berglund: Jerome Berglund, recently nominated for the Touchstone awards and Pushcart Prize, has worked as everything from dishwasher to paralegal, night watchman to assembler of heart valves. Many haiku, haiga and haibun he's written have been exhibited or are forthcoming online and in print, most recently in Bottle Rockets, Frogpond, and Modern Haiku. His first full-length collections of poetry Bathub Poems and Funny Pages were just released by Setu and Meat For Tea press, and a mixed media chapbook showcasing his fine art photography is available now from Yavanika.

Becky Long-Smith: Becky Long-Smith is an artist based in the North of England. She works across a variety of mediums but traditional printmaking and collage are most frequently used. Ritual is an underlying theme within Becky's work; she sees the process of making work as a ritual and conceptually her work explores ideas connected to this.

Tom Okafor: Tom Okafor is a Nigerian writer, reckless daydreamer and Beyonc addict. He was shortlisted for the 2023 Bold contest. His stories have been published and are forthcoming in The National Flash Flood, A Coup Of Owls Press, Fiery Scribe Review, Entropy Squared, Ibua Publishing Journal and elsewhere.

Lucas Rebelo: Lucas Rebelo is an experimental audiovisual artist born and raised in Brazilian Amazonia. Born in 1991 in Sanatrém, Pará, moved to Belém, Pará, to study Multimedia and audiovisual production. As of 2023, he is back to his hometown. He works with film, music, digital art, photography and occasional writing, all of it with a greater focus on experimentalism and improvisation.

Chapter 2: Catalyst

Lewis Andrews: Lewis Andrews moved to Leeds in 2016 to study a BA(Hons) in Fine Art at Leeds Arts University. After graduating in 2019, Lewis continues to work in Leeds. In 2022, Lewis completed his Postgraduate Fine Arts Degree also at Leeds Arts University, graduating with a Masters Degree in the Creative Arts. During his Master's Degree, Lewis's practice became deeply focused on the methodology of translating information and data from sources within science into artworks. Lewis has continued to work and build upon this method in his work constructing a theory of working called 'The Informative Encounter'.

Jordan Alejandro Rivera: Jordan Alejandro Rivera is a 23-year-old queer Xicano writer living in Boston. Jordan is passionate about mutual aid and is involved with the Prison Book Program. Having studied Biology at NYU, he now works as a medical researcher. He has poetry forthcoming in partially shy, and Acedia Journal. Find him on Twitter @jordinowrites.

Rhys Pearce: Rhys Pearce is a writer and spoken word artist from South Scotland. Appointed a young makar by the Scottish Poetry Library, she has performed at festivals such as StAnza, Dandelion, and Wigtown. Her writing has been recognised by the Hippocrates Prize, the Perito Prize, the Christopher Tower award, and others.

Ezgi Bıçakçı : I am a carbon-based storyteller from Turkey. I got my BA in printmaking. I've showcased my art in Germany, Spain, London, Turkey, China, Serbia and India. I got my master's also in printmaking, now I'm in my 5th year of studying proficiency in art. I wrote my master's thesis about early comic book history. Working on my second thesis on the field. I'm working as a freelancer storyteller.

www.instagram.com/yaylacorbasi

Leonardo G. Luccone: Leonardo G. Luccone lives and works in Rome, Italy. His recent books include the nonfiction work "Questione di virgole" and the novels "La casa mangia le parole" and "Il figlio delle sorelle". He has translated and edited works by John Cheever and F. Scott Fitzgerald. He writes for "la Repubblica".

Chapter 3: Ascent

Paul Malone: I studied Fine Art at Reading University for B.A. Degree in 1976 and MFA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art in 1980. My main theatre of curiosity is in astrophysics and associated fields. As many of my artworks concern grand concepts I enjoy employing toys, scavenged material and crass stupidity as a humorous counterpoint.

Jessica Swanson: Jessica Swanson (she/her) is a librarian and a writer from Florida. She has a fondness for cats, cheese, and hot tea. Her work has appeared in or is forthcoming from Dog Teeth Lit, Voidspace Zine, Hearth & Coffin, and others. Follow her on X/Twitter at Cooljazsheepie or Instagram at everystupidstar.

Peter Devonald: Peter Devonald is joint winner FofHCS Poetry Award 2023, winner Waltham Forest Poetry 2022 and Heart Of Heatons 2021. Published extensively, Forward Prize and two Best Of Net nominations. Poet in residence Haus-a-rest. Screenwriter 50+ film awards, former senior judge Peter Ustinov Awards (iemmys) and Children's Bafta nomination.

www.scriptfirst.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pdevonald>

SOUM: SOUM (Screams of Unfettered Minds) is a newly-formed female trio whose poems lean towards the darker aspects of life. They champion bringing awareness to mental health and social issues. Their style is raw, unapologetic, unfiltered, cheeky, and always heartfelt.

Twitter: @SOUMpoets

Website: www.unfetterednfts.com

Email: screamsof@gmail.com

Rachel Orta: Rachel Orta (she/her) is from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She gravitates towards dream-like themes, often inspired by mysteries of nature and complexities of family. Orta's writing has recently appeared in Prose.onl and Livina Press. A full list of her published pieces and links to social media can be found at <https://linktr.ee/RachelOrta>.

Galya Budagova: Galya Budagova is a self-taught photographer. She was born in 1997 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan and raised in Moscow, Russia. Since 2016, she has traveled to countries in Asia, Africa and Europe, practicing her photography there. Working primarily with film photography, her work explores the themes of Intimacy and self-identity. Presenting photography as a personal diary, a visual language through which she can share personal experiences. She started out as a documentary photographer, now she works in the genre at the intersection of documentary and portraiture.

Jeffrey Zable: Jeffrey Zable is a teacher, conga drummer/percussionist who plays or dances classes and rumbas around the San Francisco Bay Area, and a writer of poetry, flash-fiction, and non-fiction. His writing has appeared in hundreds of literary magazines and anthologies, more recently in *Alba*, *Fleas on the Dog*, *Recesses Zine*, *The Hooghly Review*, and many others. . .

GRSTALT: GRSTALT offer literary content for dead readers.

GRSTALT are partners in a global initiative to erase the author.

The GRSTALT project is neither a machine thing or a human thing, but something else.

<https://linktr.ee/grstaltcomms>

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