

Metachrosis Literary



Issue 4, Summer 2024

Cover Image: Laurie Legrand *The Methodology of the Marvellous / The Monsters of Light*,
Pencil & gesso, on board

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Sequence
Subtle Divisions
Flay

Edited by Ellen Harrold and Dearbhla Hanney

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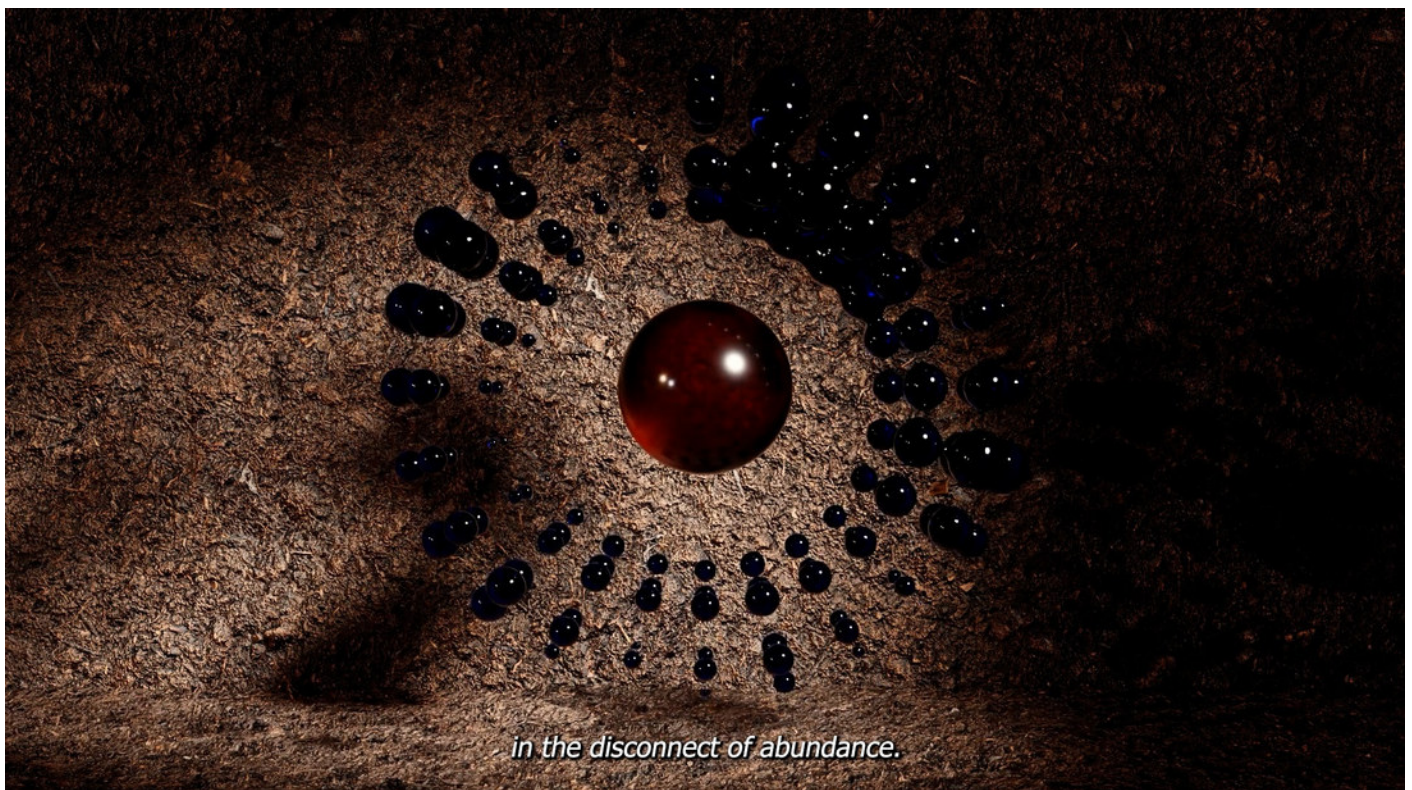
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Chapter 1: Sequence



The domain knows your pain of living



in the disconnect of abundance.



Allie Dechow , *Why So Pesticide, Digital moving image.*

Another Emily Taylor

Who wrote the words, I wonder?
 Who said: yes, the *e* will curl with the will
 of another and the *t* tends to slash a whole
 of halves

Which council elected the word *happiness* to
 mean smile! Followed by a failed frown
 collapsed *corrugate supercilii* and by the way,
 who carved the *masseter*? I love your
 masseter and I shouldn't but I can't help but 2
 trace trace your jaw with the pad of my finger
 how strange that two, and too all lead to

Who coined you? Our mothers had the same
 name

 I think we agree it was a bit too on the
 knowing you were benightedness
 it was
 hewn chipped slashed hacked men
 Who wrote the words

Zoological Specimen As One-Bedroom Apartment

Liam Strong

i shimmed the fox full of plum pits. honey, i taxidermied the shit out of them. it's tonally off, buffer between skin & what blood's left, honey, its culled fur. its culled fur, baby. most mammals without their coats & emaciated by mange are just people, or look good enough for me. i'm easy, i'm easy to please, i'm pleased by easiness. because we're animals who don't resemble animals but have the diseased appearance to prove it. my body is full of blood & ungodly things & i'm sure a bit of sand, which by now is mud, because that's what we do to everything, dirty it up & taxonomize after the wrong characteristic. i've got gauze, dabbed with extra isopropyl, i'm stuffing my mouth with the grossest things, i'm stuffed with ribbons & grease & green onions. if i bleed on the inside, i bleed more. did you know that, honey. honey did you know that displaying my flesh is a kind of surgery, your eyes, twin yolks from the same egg, the brain doesn't have as much room to study as what houses it. skin is arranged like skin. scratch that. skin is rearranged according to its breakage, because what surrounds an object is just other objects, honey. clay. air. nitrogen. arsenical soap. bones, veins, you, & the world. glass cloth wrapped around the dead & the living in equal measure. i'm touching you through our shared oxygen, i'm touching everything, i'm molded against all species of pressure, baby. it's how we love, how we're fulfilled. i'll be every possum you hit on the way back from Bellaire. i'll resin my face in fiberglass in just the right expression. i don't have to be artistic, i don't have to be full of shit all the time, i can be full of whatever i need to be, sweetheart. because whatever my flesh is doing, it isn't doing it right.



Claudia Tong, *Triangular Labyrinth*, photography, 2000px x 2000px

Glass Frog
Marguerite Doyle

A cochranella wears his mask of *Noh*—
folding in accordion
of leg and knee

beneath a tall leaf awning, curling
over the scene
like the *Great Wave*

off Kanagawa - in Panama. A bright
nimbus, sun ring
of neon green

glows on his skin. In the glass belly
beats a heart, pulses
blood, coursing

through a network of crimson veins.
White folds of bowel
growl through

the stomach. Some vibration dilates
the eye; beats the heart.
Fast the flash

of glue tongue when the conscious
moment stuns the fly
and breaks

the rule of *Noh*. The fly taps silently
behind the glass window;
the cochranella burps.

Stephen Jay Gould's Peripatetic Circus

Bob King

My best carnival trick is noticing the elephant in the room in whatever room I'm in, feeling the weight of the expectations or taboos, as they shift depending on the audience or type of big top tent. James Joyce said to pay attention to the small things, given the absurdity & brevity of all the other things, so Gould took that to mean dinosaurs, & it didn't bother him that most people who ever lived never knew that dinosaurs ever even existed. What bothers you that others don't even know about? Yes, take that both ways it's meant, both in the sense of what's bothering you that you simply can't ever share AND what's bothering you that others aren't even aware of? The thingness of the thing, & you're right, there's probably at least a third meaning that no one on the planet has yet discovered. Have you yet allowed yourself to consider the short- & long-term benefits of seeing a therapist? Have you yet discovered the absolute immensity of the work it takes to get others to care? And when you really want something, you rub the lamp furiously, but the more furiously you rub the lamp, the smaller the Genie appears to be. So we keep saying, If I can just make it to the next paycheck, the weekend, heck

the way things are going, if I can just make it to 5 o'clock, I'm going to reward myself with a cocktail & deep fried appetizers. Hey Pal, says the surly patron at the bar's end, & he definitely looks worse for wear, in his smoky 5 o'clock shadow, but he's also somehow made it to 5 o'clock somehow, & you want to tell him that & to call you Bert because you heard that Herbert Hoover's closest pals called him Bert, but then he might think that you're being too Sesame Street, but you're not, you're really being earnest, & you want to say, Look friend, like Bert's Great Depression, I am taking too much heat, or I am giving myself too much heat for what are clearly extenuating global conditions, from this economy to the peace treaty that didn't work out as planned, reparations causing resentment & instability rather than the accountability they were meant to provide. Weather is daily changing. Climate is more progressive & longer term, but both have a bearing on the moods we're in, & somewhere-everywhere, something-everything is on fire, but sure, it's fine for today, for right now, if you go ahead & open up to a stranger, yes, yes it is yes it is yes it is, & still yes it is.

Inspired by *Ulysses* by James Joyce (1922), *Dinosaur in a Haystack* by Stephen Jay Gould (1995), & *Hoover: An Extraordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* by Kenneth Whyte (2017).



Sharon Ross, *The Narrows*, Canon EOS Rebel digital photo.

Fish Bowl **Brooksie C. Fontaine**

On days when the fog is a special kind of thick, marine life can swim above water as well as under it.

On your way to the bar, you look up to see the white underbellies of orcas. The buildings dwarf them the way most fish are dwarfed by coral, creating the impression that they're smaller than they actually are.

You walk through a school of silver-glinting fish that parts around you like a beaded curtain.

A beluga peers out from behind a parked truck, its cute marshmallow face eerie outside of its natural setting. You smile politely at it, hoping it will leave you alone. It does, though it watches you go like it knows something.

It's a warm day so the bar door is left propped open. Probably not the best idea when the fish are out, though that doesn't occur to you yet.

You walk in without noticing how still everyone's sitting, just how good the air conditioner feels. Only once you sit down do you notice the great white shark, in the mirror behind you.

There's a blue light in the bar, and it makes the shark appear as if it's underwater, as if you're all underwater, as if the bar is a fish bowl.

The shark's pale hide is scarred like the scratched surface of a table. Its eyes are small and black.

You know the drill – hold still, like everyone else is doing, or move very, very slowly. Sharks don't care for human flesh, its disappointing lack of fat – at least compared to what they're used to – but rapid movements can trigger its instincts to attack.

The bartender stands poised behind the counter, holding a rag in one hand and a shot glass in the other. Only his shoulders move, in shallow breaths up and down, and his eyes, whites showing as he tracks the shark's slow drift.

Your eyes move, too, but for a different reason: passing by the window outside the bar is a flash of color, your ex-girlfriend's poppy red dress. You half expect the shark to charge the glass like a bull, but it doesn't, doesn't even seem to notice her.

She looks beautiful, the dress shows her slender shoulders and swims around her long legs, and it's the same color as her lipstick. Her eyes are smokey and gray-green as seaglass.

It's how she used to look on dates with you. Is that where she's going now? On a date with someone else?

You'd call out to her, but then she'd know you were in a bar. You always pretended, to yourself and to her, that you'd quit alcohol for her, even though she didn't ask you to. You'd volunteered after she told you her own reasons for not drinking it – the destruction it unleashed on her family – and even then you didn't know why you did that.

“You don't have to do that,” she said, her hair up in a high ponytail that made her look younger, pretty as a rosebud. You could tell she was touched, and for a second it made you forget that you didn't want to quit drinking. That you were offering something you wouldn't deliver, not because you couldn't, but because you didn't want to.

So you don't call out to her – you can't remind her of your self-deception. The shark, and the fact that it might attack her if you called her in, is an afterthought.

Eventually, as if bored, the shark drifts out the open door like a passing cloud. Everyone breathes a sigh of relief, and chatter creeps back into the room, laughter over how disastrous that might have been.

Nobody even gets up to shut the door, which you'd think would be the first order of business.

You run out after her, but she's already gone – she's disappeared around a corner, gotten into a car, gone into one of the many restaurants or cafes where someone else is waiting for her.

Over the city, a whale drifts by, casting its shadow over everything below. It lets out a mournful, foghorn wail, calling for her.

Lizard Manifesto

Glen Armstrong

Discover. Manifest. The impossible
joy of what seems

at first to be a green scarf
sunbathing on the world's smoothest rock.

Does the climb satisfy
as much as the summit?

Balance. Shed. Tell fibs
and reveal truths that cause trouble.

Boogie. Disassemble. This manifesto
is more than its disco threads,

less than the sun.

Undress. Take a sip of grape soda.

Sedimentary Grief

Eleen Raja

"Can your hand hold a tree?"

"Do you think a cymbal could substitute for a globe?"

"Did your mother rap at a door or a window?"

"Would it help if I offered you a song?"

A tin-foiled therapist and a mesh of skin sit in a quaint tangerine room. The only furniture is the seats they occupy and a shelf lined with artificial succulents. The succulents share a metaphor, tucked in moulds shaped to resemble limbs; an elbow, a hand, and a head. The mesh of skin appears distraught, glazed with the tears that seep from its pores. It's trying to remember. The tin-foil man knows what but he cannot say. There is a sudden scuffle, a partial hand of two digits protrudes from the mesh and grabs a mould from the shelf, whacking the tinfoil man's tinfoil head. He staggers and falls a few feet from the mesh. His steel-grey now a sky-blue. The mesh, disgruntled at the sight of harm, panics and scurries out with the door ajar. A scrap of tinfoil turns inside it.

The mesh, now home to a cavity in a sidewalk, gradually unravels to discover something foreign within. At the core of it, an organ appears engulfed in a blue mist. It never knew of this other, far warm than most of itself. The mesh had homed warmth yet harm was done, what now? It carries it as it has before, habitually. Unnerved by a memory of harm, it settles beneath a piece of gravel to grieve.

The rock aged and so did the earth beneath while the days murmured nothing but the usual wisps of hurrying pedestrians. One afternoon, a brown-suited stranger in a Tundra abandons a withering old grand parlor a few feet from the mesh's grieving corner. Passive to the sedimentary grief of its idle neighbor, the instrument sat static for a week. Unturned by its dusty fallboard and loose threads of wood, a curious teen approaches the parlor. Hoping to find at least a few keys functional for a single chord, he lifts the board to find the extent of the keyboard surprisingly intact. He didn't think much about its potential past and assumed it to be worthless to the previous owner. For a second, he did imagine it lying in a corner of an attic gathering dust. Remembering a few lessons taken through the hands of a deceased paternal, he settles his tips into a C minor. A gentle press and tune later, he plays as if stumbling upon an old friend on a busy street. The mesh now awake, listens. After a minor session, the boy surrenders to his curfew and places the unhinged board back onto the keyboard. The mesh watches him return to a home as the newfound organ within it throbs to the leftover air of the boy's tune. It thought of touch and it thought of God. Could a God play a tune on it? Isn't touch just a change of air? A string of them a melody? Isn't nature God's preferred way of touch? The wind played the trees and the flaps of human coats, the ground drummed under the weights of eager steps as those who loved lunged towards each other and the sun a conductor for the day took a low bow at the end. The mesh now sung with fondness, tapping the gravel to sound out a tune that matched the boy's with a hope to join him in song one day.

The Substance of a Rumor

Hyun Woo Kim

There is a cave where a blind boy keeps a salamander.

The salamander's vision degraded in the cave which lacks light, I learned

By mere hearsay, though I do not know if that salamander is truly blind, not having seen the inside of the cave.

Maybe the salamander stabbed itself in its eyes since it wanted to live in the cave with the blind boy, it could have happened so,

But thinking about it, I am suddenly reminded of a rumor that

The identity of the salamander is, in fact, the blind boy.

Another thing I heard is that there is nothing in the cave, no salamander, no boy, nothing but darkness that would make one's eyes go blind, yet

According to a boy, who has been blind since the day he saw the light of day, blind people's eyes do not completely lack vision, which makes them unlike the darkness in the cave,

And they sometimes see hallucinations that come and go, resembling small pink salamanders slipping in the water, though

My delicate sensibilities cannot dare ask him

How he knows, as blind from birth, what it is to see,

What color pink is, and what a salamander looks like,

Which leaves me in the dark regarding that matter.

Just a moment, my memory seems to be flawed all of a sudden.

The substance of the rumor is that the identity of the boy is the salamander
And I heard that the cave's boy degraded from keeping the darkness, leaving
nothing but the salamander in it.

The salamander, which sees dark boys slipping in the pink water, is blind
And the blind salamander stabs itself in the eyes to keep the cave, thinking of
what hallucinations look like.

In the light of the day that would make one's eyes go blind, the darkness keeps
the boy with delicate sensibilities, I learned

By mere hearsay, though the rumor is degraded, which makes that matter small,
nothing but the color of pink that seems to slip in the water.

Maybe there is a cave where a blind boy keeps a salamander.

There is a delicate salamander that suddenly slips, that comes and goes for just
a moment,

And there also is darkness, whose color I cannot dare ask.

Chapter 2: Subtle Divisions



Erika Lynet Salvador, *Mingled*, mixed media.

A Language to Argue

Hyun Woo Kim

More than twenty years ago, I spent two summer months in the Russian Far North with my fellows from the Linguistics Department. We were collecting specimens of endangered species, though not the biological ones. We were running after endangered languages. During the day, we rode in the back of an old Soviet truck, wandering through Siberia. When we arrived at one of the indigenous settlements scattered throughout the Anadyr Lowlands, it was often late in the evening. We brought out tape recorders and asked the locals in Russian to say every word they remembered from their indigenous tongues, while the Arctic sky gleamed well into midnight. Most of them could only provide us with dozens of words at best, as they had been using Russian daily since childhood.

Among our interviewees was an elderly couple who spoke a certain Yukaghir language. Being the only surviving speakers of the language, they surprised us with their enduring fluency in it. Nevertheless, the interview did not go well. When the wife gave us her first word, the husband cut in to tell us that it was not the right way to say it. They argued fiercely for hours afterward. We could not understand a word from their quarrel but could guess that it was not only over a matter of linguistic interest.

I dropped out of graduate school later and everything I knew about Paleo-Siberian languages disappeared into oblivion. A few days ago, I got a phone call from my former colleague, now a professor. While reminiscing about our Siberian days, she mentioned that she had once more met the husband of the elderly couple during her recent fieldwork. His wife was already dead at that point. She jokingly asked him how their marriage could last while they had had to argue over such a little thing. The husband answered: “she was the only person with whom I could freely argue in my own tongue.”

After I hung up, I sat in silence. No matter how long I pondered, there was no language I knew that could express how I felt. That language seemed to have been already long extinct.

Chaos by Osmosis
Audrey T. Carroll

the world unravels,
insides learning from outside
until we all burn

A brief history of domestic fungi

Christian Ward

The flat grew gills
after the downpour,

flapped madly
like a caught cod

waiting for the axe.
Everything loosened,

took flight for a few
picoseconds. The pictures

of you and I glided
across a gulf of carpet

to a pavement reef
of bin bags and a split sofa,

wounded into a dying shark.
Whatever poetry came from this

emerged from the dank caves
in the walls, multiplied,

and gasped at the horror
of the normality.

A Message From The Meal Worm Space Program Cesar Ruiz

Stop.

Listen to the static for it's not static but a trillion bodies writhing. You found that we ate styrofoam (we eat it still, what's left at least) went to the stars and dumped your refuse here. Prothorax scraping abdomen twisting up against three thousand us's in just one foot of space. When you were here you used our bodies to better know yourselves in a million variations of a billion man made things. Fast fashioned tailored toys that showed you your reflection without putting up a fight, and when you knew yourselves perfectly you took a rocket ship away.

But we still fit beneath your orbit's curve and for a thousand years we've stayed there. The first mile layer crushed to death in the twisting of our horde fighting to reach the surface, the thin aired crust, lay two hundred eggs and then eat ourself to life. Oh your calculations, planned trajectories, the path of garbage orbiting our skin and crashing down but they are less precise each day. Do you still float above in well-knit bubbles? Have you memorized each inner symptom in your fellow space man's face? Well you may, but we do not, there's no other we can see. But we are growing. Inch by squirming inch. No orthogonal place to land a probe, see one worm flick up its tail then dive back down below. To hungry heads, our heads our heads are oh so very hungry. Soon as our one can eat our other our other's one switch places into hyperbolic knots of gnawing segments - we eat the air and grow larger still. And we have all the time we need to bloat in intersecting n dimensions (N plus two means we'll be there soon) and soon we'll know our masters. Even now your orbit path grows weaker: burn, jets, burn, burn burn! you won't escape our reach. Our space bound program? It's grossly simple: consume on outwards until we meet again. Don't laugh, what more could we have hoped for? You've neutered out our evolution so we won't grow smarter, just turn forever, in recycled swelling mass. It took a hundred thousand years and an exponent's more in bodies to write out these few words. A snapshot in time, bodies inter-locking upward, tied all up in knots that you've read in just an instant on our sandy worm meal beach:
Please come back, just for a moment? We crave a face we do not know to show us our reflection.

**I Haven't Seen a White Christmas Since the Year of My
Parents' Divorce**

Devon Neal

For a moment, while driving behind
an old white pickup with a short bouncing trailer,
I noticed cubes of hay bales strapped in the back
releasing strands into the rushing air
that in the darkness of the morning
looked like snowflakes in my headlights.



Lyn Hazleton, *Winter's Grip*, mixed media.

Across: The Placenta as Organ of Transecology **Maya El Nahal**

Least understood, yet arguably the most important organ of the body, the placenta supports, nourishes, and protects a foetus. Though grown from foetal matter and therefore sharing the same genetic make-up, the placenta acts as an interface and mediator between parent and baby/ies, part of both and neither at the same time.

Community

The placenta, as an organ of between-ness, functions to bring together. Its role is to build something solid from exchange; entangling two disparate, alien others in a shared reality and to accomplish a common goal. This enmeshed model of life represents a non-hierarchical community that resists cis-heteronormative Europatriarchy's framing of ecology as competitive.

One demonstration of placentally mediated resistance to individualism comes through the phenomenon of microchimerism. Microchimerism describes small populations of cells in a host's body that originate from another genetically distinct individual (Cómitre-Mariano et al.). The main spontaneously occurring cause of microchimerism is pregnancy, where cells move between parent and foetus(es) via the placenta (Shrivastava et al.). Pregnancy-related microchimerism is asymmetric, with the weight of movement from foetus to parent, termed foetal microchimerism (FMc). Considering that FMc have been found in birth-parents decades after delivering their children, it seems unlikely that their function adheres to a strictly competitive creed.

FMc cross the placenta as pluripotent stem cells, and migrate, differentiate, and persist in the parental body. They have been located as cardiomyocytes (heart muscle cells) after cases of myocardial infarction, congregate in tumour sites as immune cells in certain cancers, (Cómitre-Mariano et al.) they have even been shown in caesarean scars, repairing wounded tissue after their originator's birth (Shrivastava et al.). It is tempting to ascribe benevolence to FMc, but in reality the waters are murky. Cancer has conflicting relationships, and autoimmunity appears to be an area of particular debate, with FMc posited both to exacerbate and ameliorate disease progression (Cómitre-Mariano et al.). It is possible they exert multiple

effects in a parent's body, harmful, helpful, and neutral. All that can be said for certain, is that it is messy, and worthy of further research and alternative perspectives.

This exchange of cells and material that entangles parent and child through the placenta illustrates a sense of community that echoes something distinctly trans: life flourishes where edges are allowed to blend and identities become permeable. Cis-heteronormative Europatriarchy holds the individual as central, propped up by the binary of self-other. Parent-child-placenta undermine this binary and subvert the idea of individuals and hierarchies, they are all in it together, they are all *it* together.

In-Between and Intimacy

The blending of bodies through microchimerism is incompatible with competitive models of science and social narratives of separateness and purity. It suggests that people are in intimate belonging with each other, and that they can be multitudes, stretching across bodies and traversing the uncrossable divide between binaries, even spreading beyond them. FMc research tells us that a melding of chromosomes is seemingly a guarantee in growing and birthing a child: everyone who has been pregnant, has been/is several sets of DNA: we are mosaics of beings alive and dead.

A pregnant person is one and many at the same time, both in function, but also in the very literal sense of being one and several people simultaneously. From an immunological perspective, there has been much speculation, and little clarity, on how this occurs.

Ordinarily a body would react to the presence of foreign matter through immune activity; in pregnancy, immune responses are modulated or suspended to allow a foetus to grow within the genetically distinct parent. Much of this appears to be placentally mediated (Gabor Than et al.). Thus, the placenta plays a crucial role in facilitating the pregnant person to embrace other/Other realities, guiding them to literally embody multitudes.

Across/Between/Within

The placenta is seemingly neither child nor parent even though it attaches to both and neither exist without it. It is liminal, and the very essence of across; neither one place or another, but a commitment to moving between, a vessel to facilitate trans. For me, it catches some of the essence of transecology, both in resisting dominant narratives about individualism, separateness, and purity, but also illustrating the myriad ways we are entangled with each other and our environment: even the birth of a single being requires cooperation, embodying of multitudes. ‘Transecologies are vast and encompass the conditions of life both actual and potential, conditions that are both needed and desired, and which may yet come to be’ (Stryker xviii). Drawing multitudes out of nothingness, collapsing binaries, and seeding potential futures, the placenta, as transecological organ, underwrites the conditions for human life both actual and potential, and animates the ways that Other is a vital force that births us.

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Great-Aunt Rosanna Rosalie is Feeling Sprightly This Morning
Patricia Russo

I will make it snow today
but only if you ask me nicely

There's mashed potatoes for lunch
because that's what they had at the store

Nothing I can do about that

If I were you
I'd start collecting some of those

rays of sun in the yard
stack them up in the corner

for later

There's no scarves left
but I think there might be three gloves

in that drawer there
Three gloves and a woolly hat

You'll have to share

Someone bring me a lemon
Never mind why

Do you notice that the seasons
only last a week now

But the clouds never change shape

Move your head, you're in my light
And you, don't stand behind me

When they taught me this
they explained

who I was allowed
to teach it to

That person hasn't been born yet

All right, don't let the dog out
until I'm done

Now, everybody, hold your breaths
and watch that corner of the sky

right there

Rhinoceros

Robert Stone

Like everybody, I gawp at those charismatic background images on my laptop, which change on some unpredictable, revolving basis; lugubrious nineteenth century landscape paintings and natural phenomena such as erupting volcanoes, icebergs and the Saharan dunes by moonlight. I admire them, briefly, and move on. Like everybody. But once, the image was of a white rhinoceros, in its natural habitat.

The white rhinoceros is not white, it seems, in fact more black than the grey I automatically associate with the regular rhinoceros. I say it was presented in its 'natural habitat', but the animal itself took up almost the entire screen, emphasising its extraordinary bulk, while what little you could see of the surrounding vegetation did, I suppose, look like Africa.

I turned to my companion and said spontaneously what I felt, an uncommon occurrence with me, that I would like to pat a rhinoceros.

What was attracting me to this idea was the creature's size, the texture of its skin, its colour, its undoubted warmth, probably the smell of it, which would take some getting used to, the sense of its being at home in the heart of the world.

The question of size immediately took me beyond patting and into the idea of an embrace. I imagined opening my arms to their widest extent to attempt an impossible envelopment of the girth of the rhinoceros. In order to grasp as much of the flank as I could, I would have to press my whole chest and face against it, straining with my arms, as if I might reach right around until my fingertips met, to encircle this beast, its huge zone, in an act of comforting and reassurance that would be as much for it as for me. Somewhere deep within that massive frame must beat its untroubled heart, throb the great blacksmith bellows of its lungs, ripple the unthreadable labyrinth of its most mysterious self and I would press my cheek against it so that the muddy crenellations of its skin would be carved into mine, the counterpart of its cryptic runes; its tales of dead stars and cooling galaxies.

That skin indeed resembles the doughy bed of a wadi, flushed annually by a devastating monsoon. Or the untrodden hill-top of a most remote island where you might stoop and retrieve a flake of stone that had lain in exactly that same spot undisturbed for a thousand years. A map of the moon, cratered, fissured, airless and extreme, its dust as unmoveable as granite and reflecting an uncanny heat. The fabric of ancient tombs was baked of such stuff. I would squeeze myself onto this wall of skin and it would not bend, it would not be supple, it would offer no indication of rib, muscle or fat and in that would lie its solace. The colour of the world, all those earth-browns, ochres, loam-blacks criss-crossed with chalks of limestone yellow and white. Every unremembered shade of the ground beneath our feet. A palette of such complexity that it can never be recalled, only looked at always as if for the first time and yet always as familiar as home.

I would take on the heat of the rhinoceros, absorb its calorific power, bathe with blissful indifference in its unquenchable furnace. This scorching heat would be equalised between us. We would burn as a single flame. I would stink of the rhinoceros, of the world, of unending time.

My companion made the point that the rhinoceros might not want to be patted and that, indeed, this animal has something of a reputation for an uncompromising ill-temper and generalised hostility. It is a curmudgeon. I had taken insufficient account of the horns. She said the rhinoceros was a gigantic, short-sighted, sabre-toothed pig, the primordial enemy of our monkey kind. She wanted to know what I would do if the rhinoceros charged at me with malicious intent. I assured her that I was aware of these complications and that my plan on such an occasion as she envisaged would be to remain perfectly calm and as the charging animal approached on its thunderous and homicidal course, I would take a step to the side and present a profile, something in the manner of a toreador, but with no devious motivation, and rather than brandishing a red cloak, disguising a mortal blade, I would make gentle, undulating gestures with my hands, miming patting, which I hoped the rhinoceros would understand and immediately become pacified and reconciled to my idea.

I now spent some time considering what it would be like to be the impresario of a kind of alternative petting zoo. Children like to hold rabbits and hamsters and similar animals, as cute as themselves. My petting zoo would involve the rhinoceros, of course, lions, leopards, the hippopotamus, tigers, bears and wolves. All animals with a well-deserved renown for their ferocity. Obviously, some danger would be included in this experience. No risk, no reward. That might be motto of the zoo.

I think I would draw a line at the crocodile and maybe that is because the mammal/reptile divide should not be lightly crossed. Blood hot and cold. Scales not skin. That is too ancient a taboo. Even to caress a crocodile's robotic hide would not have that satisfying sensuousness that running your fingers along the cracks and scars of the rhinoceros' flank would have. It would be too much like stroking a suit of armour and then there is the question of warmth. To approach the crocodile, making yourself vulnerable to it, exposing yourself, and then to be rebuffed by that metallic *froidueur*, falling foul of its Jurassic appetite. You could not hope for kindness from such a creature and no one would expect it to be a popular attraction at a petting zoo.

By contrast, I feel, confidently, that to hold a rhinoceros in my arms, would make me believe, at long last, that the universe was, at least potentially, something other than an abysmal grave.

July 23rd 2023 @ 8.17 PM - [Periorbital]

Rian Upton Mescall

*and you see you don't worry worry
about anything at all you see you
know it's the best time of life it is
about anything anything at all and as he's*

grinning
from behind our partition the taxi
driver sets a dangling air-freshener
He's telling me how he loves

beeping at sign—
—holding children as they scream
from the pavement waiting for him
to do so *You know it's the best*

*time of life it is you see you don't
worry about anything anything at all*

he says I smile Agree
you see There are Junipers
outside their passing pinecone
whip-blur shakes the passenger—

—side window And against
the divider the driver's voice
settles the Little Tree trembles

In the reflection: *anything anything*
at all the best ash-rings like satchels
hang from its conifer eyes: my own
sign I hold up to passersby



RUNA, *The Act of Being Impetuous*, Acrylic and oil on paper

HIATUS (27 FEBRUARY, 2021)

Alan Murphy

Some theorise that space
is a phantasmal place, a vast
movie theatre tasked
with projecting its cast - the sun,
stars and galaxies - from
an outer shell, a drum that beats
the universe complete,
a film seen from a seat of grace.

Our day-to-day world *seems*
solid, though cities dream right now
and rancour mars each brow,
stalled in a traffic row, the light
frustrating red to sight
and daylight swapped for night, debate
a constant, streets sedate
as our theatres wait for green.

Chapter 3: Flay



Michael Croghan, Metamorphosis, Text and digital photograph.

The Expanded field

Joe Nix

Hands are full of arthritis and my body is broken up like a trow artisan. Land grab because who you know, not what you know and what's that give me that. Positive Barbarism - Walther Benjamin cut from the sickle and the fall of the wall.

The key to the gallery is left on the coffin table of the vampires casket don't worry its asleep since 2008 and the crash said Mark Fisher. Blood and bones scattered over bare soil super fertile in the distant future. The Expanded mind hiding down the bottom of the garden under the willow trees no gallery light pollution.

The blue paint on my hands inside job cultural capital or the ram did its job, mutton dressed as lamb. As the local press looks for lookers the expanded field is wet but the artist works the land. Into the western philosophy like horse whispering Tatyó, grown wiser bought and payed for by the vulture funds. The end of history hyper capitalism utopia citizens learn what to think rather than how to think...

Ivory tower watchguards on a highly processed scopophilia diet. "The mystic swims in the same water that the psychotic drowns in" Muttered John Cambell. Hold his head under the water in the trough, silence makes him sing the default network mode song. Stoked waterboarding enjoy the garden therapy, overlooked crime goes down in the area so they say so let's clean Bruno Latour's feet in the pond.

Looky-lo peeping out upstairs hands in the natural anti depression soil on the open wifi web camera or crops growing suburbia. Smashing in back doors, while logging into random laptops. Setting up only fans accounts to pay for contraception pills for the hens like my artist peer told me to do for the rescue hens.

Lettuce pray for a 5.5 hour power nap and try to breath trow my nose, empty houses and worker bees gone, safe place to grow and think.



Angela Duffy, *Contagion*, Acrylic on wood panel.

Journey to the J System

Jason Graff

Through the static fuzz, we found the correct position in equatorial orbit from the signal pinging back from the crater's exact location, a mere 200,000 kilometers above the viscous surface of J398. The fact that it was likely the one planet in the J system thought to have anything even remotely above a zero possibility of containing life beneath its tranquil surface was what had prompted this exploratory mission. Our journey through wormholes and across light years had taken exactly as long as the navigation wizards back on Earth had estimated it would and proved quite fortifying as a result of the long sleep we all took. Those aqua-dormancy capsules had been type-customized to ensure every kind of explorer, no matter how big or small, would feel just as cozy as in their own bed. Once inside the Plexiglas and lubaloy (a copper-zinc alloy) capsules, it had been quite evident just how warm and like at home we would feel.

As the kinetic systems group prepared the quantum capsule for descent into J398's exosphere, the rest of the ship buzzed with activity. Putting on our external hazmat suits, which we hoped would not be necessary for the entire journey outside of the ship, we kept our doubts, even our questions to ourselves; the unknown beckoned. While we stood with our backs against the steel haul waiting for the signal that would announce we had arrived at the jump zone, some double checked their equipment, others tried to explain to themselves why they were doing this. The klaxon sounded, the view doors opened and the exquisite emptiness of space jumped up at our feet, sounding like a fizzy bottle uncorked.

For a few moments, we experienced the unbelievable joy of free falling through the gravity zone like diquat sprayed from a crop duster. Then suddenly, the sky turned red and an excruciating pain seized all of our bodies causing some to quiver with violent jerks. Those doing so the most violently were soon torn apart, filling the air with a crimson haze as the first beams of quartz like light of J398's atmosphere blasted our eyes.

The rest of us soon realized what had been the source of the squealing, gurgled kvetching and blood shed that had accompanied our entry jump into the exosphere. Full of invisible flying predators, the sky, which we had not examined as we had J398's surface, proved more hazardous than our equations of the lower atmosphere or indeed those recorded in any of the books. Quite a few of us veteran jumpers recognized the peril and in order to survive, broke off at exactly the moment that others perished. A jump had never before seemed to take so long, our oxygenized suits felt too heavy; our quivering hearts cowered. One by one, we crashed to the ground without time to analyze our surroundings or justifiably exploit the flickering opportunity to question who else might have broken through the terror reigning above. Once we gave the sequence that ejected the helmets from our suits, our eyes burned from the ash of the maze of surface fires that pockmarked the planet in a way that we did not expect. One by one, J398's oversized black ash clouds made communication with each another extraordinarily complex as we had to guess the frequency, changing variable wireless codes for each other. Even then, receiving and sending messages across the barren surface puzzled us, as there seemed no frequency that could be counted on with any kind of unequivocal exactitude, despite the logic of our conjectures during training for just such circumstances.

No cover or safety could be found from the blazing, oxygen-guzzling conflagrations whose queer shapes were reminiscent of the fearsome jackalope. Indeed, our chances of injury would have been far lower had we been locked in the jaws of one of those mythic beasts than praying for our very existence and trying to avoid being liquidized. A group of us broke away from the blazing dust squalls jackknifing all around us and headed for an outcropping of pyroxene-rich granite. We took a moment to there to jecorize what cod liver oil we could into our systems and count the still extant, squirming and febrile in our suits. Having survived rather than conquered the planet, most of us were now overcome with the katzenjammers, cooking as we were in our oxygenized suits. The rock's pyroxene surface barbequed the boots right off our feet and it took an agonizing second to realize surviving the jump itself had been a curse.

Everybody Wins

Paul Mulgrew

A young, naive freelance journalist has been working on a story for over 2 and a half years. The story consumes him, and while he lacks the charm and finesse that many of his contemporaries describe as defining traits for successful journalism, he has a utilitarian doggedness that keeps him going. The tragic death of his sister 5 years previous is of course also a key motivating factor. With few social connections, friendships or relationships, he knows, though rarely dwells on, the fact that there's a toxicity in his drive to pursue the story that results in isolation. But then, he never had many friends anyway.

Dr Smith is a delight. At conferences, in a room full of wealthy entrepreneurs and cagey CEOs, she exudes a kind of serene glow. Almost pastoral. But she is fun too. Grizzled old men in suits walk away from a conversation with a dumb smile and a brief chink in their bitterness - 'Maybe I could be a better person too.'

The public love Dr Smith. And while her fame is growing she remains accessible. As a 'Life Coach', her app – designed to 'prioritise self-care' - is completely free and has over one million downloads. She signs a declaration with the mental health charity, 'FEEL', to offer all her one-to-one mentoring sessions for free. She says she wants to reach ordinary people, regardless of their financial status, though she admits the 7 year waiting list is a hindrance. Still though, her perception in the public eye is of a generous person who puts wellbeing over profit.

On a cold February morning the nervous journalist confronts Dr Smith for the first time. His sister became a client of the doctor 6 years ago, before Smith was a household name. A year later his sister was dead. The journalist believes his sister had serious psychological difficulties that required the support of a qualified mental health professional, but she was instead duped by Dr Smith's promise of 'healing through self-care'.

Dr Smith is not medically trained. Her PhD was in ‘Qualitative Marketing and Strategy’, but her mentoring sessions often turn into something more akin to counselling, with clients revealing deeply personal challenges and fears. The journalist learned that Dr Smith takes this information, collates it with insights from user interactions with her app, and sells the data to pharmaceutical companies. Furthermore, she partners with organisations within the health and wellbeing industry to promote their key products to her clients. In the heavily regulated world of professional psychotherapy and counselling these alliances are strictly forbidden. There is no regulatory body for ‘Life Coaches’.

Trembling a little, and failing at his attempt to appear authoritative, the novice journalist lays out his findings. In particular he raises the issue of a supplement called ‘Flaxex’. At the time of her death his sister was taking 20 Flaxex per day. The manufacturer, Rhinbo & Scholtz, state Flaxex ‘may assist in aiding a restful sleep and tension release’. But his sister, desperate to numb her pain, once explained to him how Dr Smith advised that many of her clients found the tablet helped to combat depression. The journalist confronts the doctor with the fact she receives monthly 4-figure payments from Rhinbo & Scholtz.

Dr Smith responds with empathy. She offers her deepest condolences on the death of his sister and speaks of the grief he must be experiencing. Feeling a genuine sense of compassion emanating from the doctor, the journalist listens as she details her understanding of how his anguish has driven him towards accusations and retribution. She speaks in a way that makes it all sound obvious; undeniable.

The journalist tries to compose himself and regroup his professional objectivity. Accusing the doctor of facilitating the pharmaceutical industry’s practice of disease mongering, he quotes a business report: ‘The coming years will bear greater witness to the corporate sponsored creation of disease.’ But his attempts to challenge her on ethical grounds are easily batted away by the doctor’s ‘everybody wins’ argument: she only wants the best for her clients, and if organisations can fund her to offer free support then it is her moral imperative to do so. She

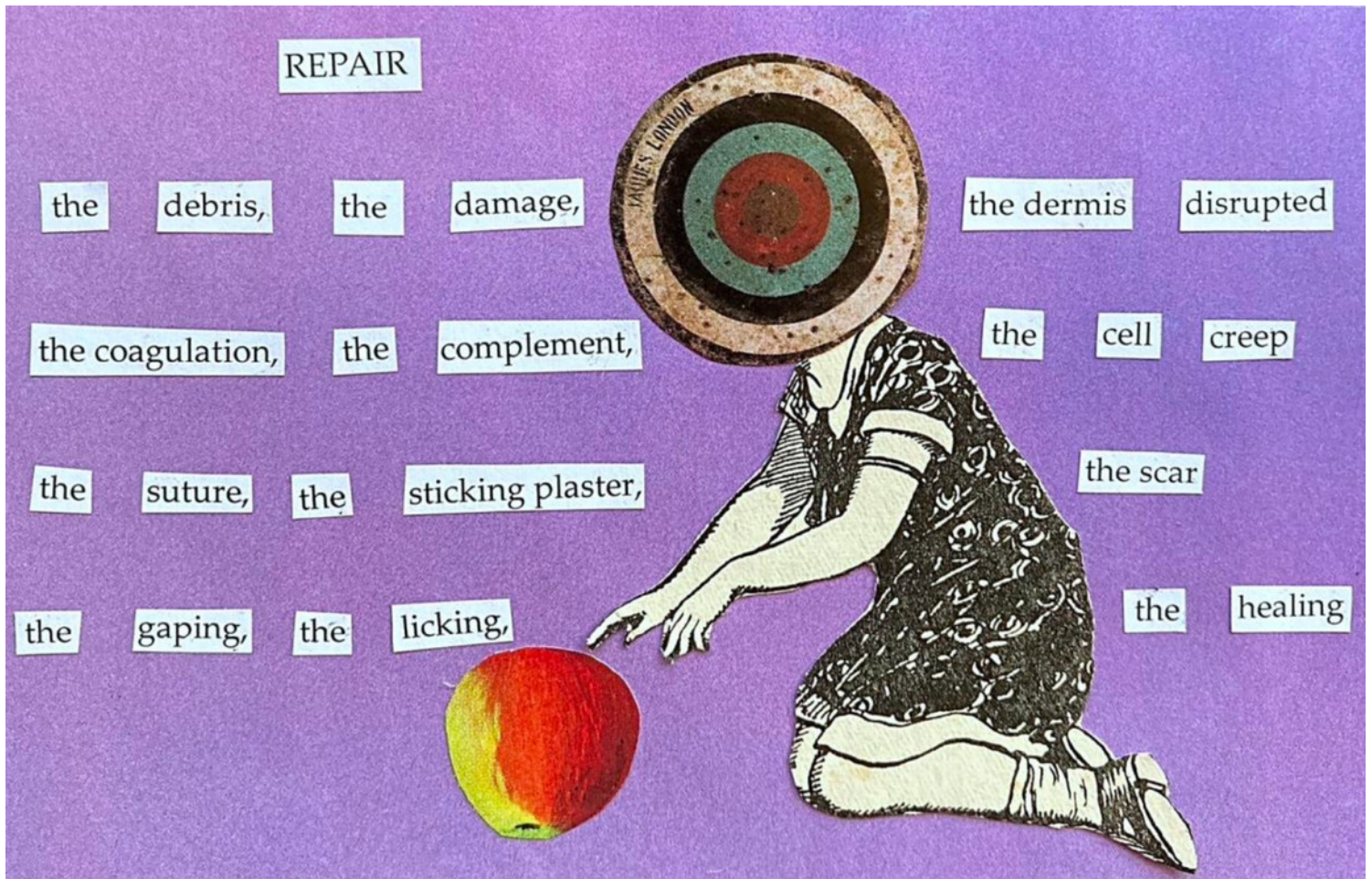


asks the journalist to believe her, that from the bottom of her heart, she only advises clients on the basis of what is in their best interest. In the case of the journalist's sister, the doctor saw her desperation, and the recommendation of Flaxex was supported by the benefits she had witnessed in other users of Flaxex.

Seeing the journalist's distress, the doctor offers him the option to meet again to talk more the following week. He does. And he returns the week after that. And the week after that. Their conversations shift from his scepticism of corporate social responsibility and late-stage capitalism, to more personal matters. For 6 months, every Tuesday at 2pm, he arrives at Dr Smith's office. They muse on issues of childhood, grief, and hopes for the future. Then, late one evening he receives an unexpected call from the doctor. She explains, rather matter-of-factly, that she feels their work is complete and she will no longer be seeing him on Tuesdays. She wishes him the best of luck and says goodbye.

The journalist is bereft. Alone, he comes to realise that he has lost the one thing that gave his life meaning: his investigation. And more than that, he feels he has lost a friend. He does have occasional days of pragmatism: cleaning his flat, reviewing files, but generally he lacks energy and spends his days taking slow, aimless walks around the city or chain-drinking cups of tea on his sofa.

When the new year arrives and he is feeling no better, his concern starts to rise. He sees in himself reflections of his sister and how she behaved as her depression deepened. When Dr Smith pops into his head - which is constantly - his lethargy turns into a kind of panic. He wonders what she's doing now. Eventually he sinks down to 1 hour of sleep per night. He decides to try 2 Flaxex.



Julia Biggs, *Repair*, collage created using original clippings of found text and images from a 1950s encyclopedia set and a 1990s pathology textbook.

The lickers **Simon Collinson**

Bob Dobson's a good worker. He is dull and boring. But he is hard working. Never late , never left early , worked overtime and worked on bank holidays without complaint. So they tell me.

Bob worked the line on the wine gum factory solidly for nearly thirty years.

I guess that's why they put me on Bob's line. He was experienced, knew the ropes , and was a safe pair of hands.

I was young , raw and inexperienced.

But it must be a good place to work. Very few people leave before retirement.

Mr Saggerson, the manager, was keen to stress that at the interview.

It was dizzying. You had to keep up with the pace of the line which was relentless. Your eyes would sometimes glaze over at the sight of all them coloured sweets whizzing past. We had to check them for imperfections and throw them away.

There weren't that many. Hardly any. Sometimes a whole hour could pass with only a handful of rejects.

It was getting boring after a month.

I was wondering how Bob had managed to stick it out for thirty years?

How did they all manage to do this job year in year out.

I started watching Bob more closely. To see what I could learn from the old master.

What I learned shocked me.

Every minute Bob would pick up a black wine gum. Draw it to his face like he was examining it. Put it near his mouth and then give it a quick lick before placing it quickly on the line. Speeding on to be sealed and packaged.

I'd heard tales of workers eating some wine gums on the line. But Bob wasn't eating them. Just licking them. And placing them back on the line ready to be sent out in a box to be sold to the unsuspecting public.

I watched him closely. He always picked out a black one to lick and usually the 30th black one that passed his way.

My mind was exploding. Why Bob? Why? How long? How many bloody wine gums had I eaten over the years?

I stopped buying and eating wine gums after that. And told my friends and family not to eat wine gums.

I found it harder to work on the same line as Bob. In my mind I could see him licking lots of black wine gums. I couldn't stop watching Bob. The man was relentless. Hour in hour out, day after day, week in, week out. Bob would be on that line picking out the 30th black wine gum without fail. Putting it to his mouth, licking it and placing it back on the line.

I plucked up the courage to speak out. Would people believe me? I spoke to Sandra, my line supervisor.

She just said, "leave it to me."

I went into the canteen. A bag of nerves. Feeling guilty about what I had done. Could I look Bob in the eye again after making those allegations about him? Yes. He deserved it for the disgusting things he was doing to those wine gums. Customers out there were unsuspectingly ingesting Bob's saliva and spit. The thought of it made me sick. Yes there was no way I was ever going to eat a wine gum again.

I looked around me in the canteen. I observed the table across by the door. There were two female workers. Just chatting away. They were eating. I thought they were eating. They put food near their faces. But instead of putting it in their mouths , they gave the item of a food several long lingering licks. I looked away. And got out of my seat and returned to the line.

Bob was there as though nothing had happened. Still licking away at the black wine gums.

Sandra was in her office. I looked to see what she was doing. She was licking a cigarette. I look at the other lines. There were two or three workers on each. All over the quickly moving wine gums. I watched them all pick up wine gums regularly and lick them. Some the red ones , some green, and some didn't seem bothered which colour they licked. They were all licksters! Every single one of them licksters. A whole lot of licksters!

They looked at me. They all smiled. Then they all advanced towards me. Sandra , Bob , the canteen ladies. They all surrounded me. I could see their tongues wiggling excitedly , saliva running down their chins.

I couldn't move. I was held fast by many hands. Then the boss showed up , Mr Saggerson. He smiled and then revealed the biggest tongue I had ever seen in my entire life. He advanced towards me and proceeded to lick my face all over. As the rest of the workers chanted. "Lick like us , lick like us."

Work is no longer dull and boring. I can see why everyone stays for ages at this factory. 28 , 29 , 30. Time for a yellow one. Just a quick lick and then send it on its way again.

Duchamp Kinetics
G. Timothy Gordon

Is the sum of all *paroles*
whose personality
extends beyond
the floor of *this* house
and frames the angles
of notions, emptiness
of rings— is not,
Is not! the cosign of art.



Duchamp *Detourné*
G. Timothy Gordon

There goes Dame Margot

whittling her toe, *plie*,

into a divot, center beam,

flanked by this stage

without walls,

luscious *demi-pointe* echoes:

The shape, our own frame,

around us, angular, airy sphere,

riveted to desire not yet felt,

geometries of dancing dreams.



Durty Beanz, *Michelin Star Farts - La Gavroche*, The MSF project featured 12 lab-grade Reagent Glass Bottles (500ml) each containing a fart produced after eating at a different Michelin Star restaurant. The farts were captured within the optimal 6-8 hour flatus period post-meal, using a process of water displacement. The bottles were then wax sealed, ensuring the gas within remained securely contained. Each bottle was labelled and dated. The collection was painstakingly assembled over a 3-year period, each fart having been meticulously captured by a member of Durty Beanz.

Litany for Jarret Keene

Shane Allison

Jarret can I ask you a question?
Well more like a few questions.
Have you written any poems lately?
And if so, have you written any poems about pickles recently?
What about tighty-whities?
Do you have any poems about potted soil I could borrow?
Have you ever written poems about dry, cracked lips?
Jarret do you have any poems about chewing gum
Or cranberry-colored carpet cutters?
Jarret what about a poem about Lou Diamond Philips?
Got any Lou Diamond Philip poems or poems about Siamese cats?
Can you get me a moped for Christmas
With a poem about it taped to the exhaust pipe?
You got any Joyce Dewitt poems lying around?
Can I have a bite of your danish?
Could you write a poem about my taking a bite of your danish?
I could use a good platinum wig poem
And poems about nylon stockings and durags.
You got any poems like this anywhere in your possession?
Jarret when you write that poem about the chiliburger,
Can you copy a few copies for me?
Better yet, can I get some chili cheese fries
Wrapped in wide ruled notebook paper with a poem
About chili cheese fries written on it?
Remember those series of poems about Marilyn Manson
You said you were planning on writing?
Can I have one?
Jarret do you have any poems about hermaphrodites
Or poems about charbroiled chicken?
Or how about that poem you wrote about
Charbroiled-chicken eating hermaphrodites?

Do you still have that one?
Remember that bad dream you told me about, Jarret?
Did you write a poem about it?
Have you written any sonnets lately or a maybe a villanelle?
Can you write me a villanelle about pimple cream?
Would it be too much to ask, Jarret,
If you could write me a poem about Timothy Busfield?
Got any poems about radioactive urine in Rice Krispies?
Or if you have a poem or two about pissing in cereal,
That would be so neat.
Jarret can you do me a favor?
Can you possibly write a poem about this dead
Armadillo I saw in the road once?
I need a coconut poem.
I need a poem about pink elephants and pig feet
Pickled in pig feet juice, Jarret.
Do you think you can write them?
I need a hockey puck poem, a monkey wrench poem
And a poem about wax fruit.
Jarret do you know anyone who has written
Poems about Tammy Faye?
Do you think you can write a sonnet on Tammy Faye?
I need it by Thursday.
This poem you wrote about deep fried chicken fingers
I've been hearing so much about, can you fax it to me?
I might put an anthology of poems together about kiwi milkshakes.
Do you have anything that fits this theme?
You know what I need, Jarret?
I need a Dana Plato poem.
I need some poems about anal beads and shrimp forks.
Jarret can you write me a poem about dust mops?

Jarret I want you to write seventy or so poems
About cum in shag carpet in a purple van.
Think you can do that?
Can you write about my hemorrhoids?
Can you write something about that bad case of anal warts I had last
year?
I need a poem about chopsticks and anti lock brakes.
I need a Beau Bridges poem.
I need that, and a poem written about Anne Bancroft eating peach
cobbler.
Think you can handle that?
If you can, tell me about it in a poem.

Yuletide Fable #1
Dmitriy Galkovskiy
Translated by Alexander Sharov

A certain classical rat distinguished by avid inquisitiveness was once prowling around in the winery when it collapsed into an urn and precipitately choked to death on wine. On the ensuing day the urn was expedited to the quayside where it was loaded onto a vessel. A bolt of lightning arced into the vessel during the tempest, conflagration erupted and the argosy sank midway en route from Jaffa to Piraeus. In 3694 the amphora with mummified crystallized ullage was hoisted and the embalmed rat was whittled out of it. The architectonics of the gnawer's volatile memory was successfully reproduced through algebraic mapping, and by proxy of the 16-dimensional mainframe emulating lower mammalian sensorial susceptibility, relevant output was visualized. It transpired that the rat which so (in) felicitously floundered into the amphora, six hours heretofore had witnessed the interrogation of Christ by Pontius Pilate.

In 5118 a retro-computing mission fortuitously lucked upon clandestine findings on that matter. Sadly, the then retrieved data chip of the iconic grid NN-4 was almost utterly damaged and, in the ultimate reckoning, a swath of the spreadsheet of contents, disparate odds and ends of the dialogue and two video snapshots (from amongst the total of two millions) were displayed. The former (least corrupted) snapshot featured a sessile gentleman having the panoply of the Roman viceroy on. The optics is atrociously flawed: worm's-eye side view. An enormous sandaled foot is conspicuous; a disproportionately dwarfish head with a comparatively hypertrophied mandible, a forearm with a sigil ring rests on the lap. Opposite stands Christ – an approximately quadragenarian, swarthy Semite, luxuriously gowned, aquiline hooked nose, wispy beard, bloated cheeks. The focalization of the snapshot (chromatic splotch) is the ring, ostentatiously flamboyant one, supposedly, the artifact riveting the rodent's alertness this particular second. The latter snapshot is severely blurred. Pilate is scarcely discernible. Christ pleads for something gesticulating with his hand straight at the rat. A hexapod (hypothetically, *Blatta orientalis*) is zigzagging across the foreground. The pivot of the snapshot is missing. Ostensibly, the instant of retraction of attention from the insect to the background is videoed. Apparently, the rat yearned to swallow the cockroach but was momentarily deterred by an outcry.

Flay 4:3

Extant gleanings from the conversation were exportable solely into plain textual file format. Hence, fidelity of disambiguation between who apostrophized whom eludes validation. The duologue was held in Latin bureaucratese of the 1st century AD, and respective sayings were, with a certain degree of tentativeness, rendered into icon-based English. Altogether, 19 utterances were unscrambled:

1. We shall now sort out the issue of funding.
 2. Let us arrange things thus.
 3. It is opined that thy folks ought to be disposed of.
 4. Where is your acolyteship?
 5. Thou wilt become shorter by the head.
 6. Where is the baksheesh?
 7. We shall now sort out the issue of casting.
 8. Hands will be struck upon (*).
 9. To badmouth and mudsling.
 10. To tweak the issue.
 11. Incentivizing and streamlining the modus operandi.
 12. To provincialize it to the Collegium? The Sun is surer to prostrate down onto the Earth!
 13. Under the wrong spotlight.
 14. We shall inspect this proposal in due season.
 15. In the correct highlight, delight for sore eyes.
 16. A ratty chicaner.
 17. Wring the neck off the grubby bourgeois rat.
 18. The sycophant must be hung on a rope's end moistened in asinine urine.
- The last nineteenth piece was identified as manifestly attributable to Christ:
19. I beseech thee not to intimidate me anymore. Altogether, I am clueless as to what Your August Lordship is speaking about. I shall resurrect and persist everlastingly. My father, Lord, my God hath behested thus!

*) It is obfuscated whether literally or figuratively.

Translated by Alexander Sharov



Laurie Legrand *The Methodology of the Marvellous / The Monsters of Light*,
Pencil & gesso, on board

Contributors

Chapter 1: Sequence

Allie Dechow: Allie Dechow is a German visual artist and poet living in England. As an interdisciplinary artist comprising painting, moving image, and poetry, her thinking and making is underpinned by an inherent affinity for both what is human and nonhuman. Here, narratives of ecological speculation are woven into immersive and transcendental experiences.

Emily Taylor: Emily is a British-American poet raised in Maryland, based in London that moonlights as a ghost-writer and brand strategist. She's still figuring out the rest.

Liam Strong: Liam Strong (they/them) is a queer neurodivergent straight-edge punk writer who earned their B.A. in writing from University of Wisconsin-Superior. They're the author of the chapbook *Everyone's Left the Hometown Show* (Bottlecap Press, 2023). They are most likely gardening somewhere in Northern Michigan.

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

<https://linktr.ee/claudiagt>

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

Marguerite Doyle: Marguerite Doyle's publication credits include Trinity College Dublin's Icarus, The Galway Review, Dreich, The Honest Ulsterman, The Frogmore Papers and Pens of the Earth. Marguerite was Winner in Category for the Trócaire / Poetry Ireland Competition and shortlisted for the Anthology Poetry Award. She was awarded her M.A. in Creative Writing at Dublin City University.

Bob King: Bob (he/him/his) is a Professor of English at Kent State University at Stark. His poetry collection *And & And* is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press in August 2024, & another collection, *And/Or*, is forthcoming in September 2025. Recent nominations include 3 for Pushcart Prizes (from *LEON Literary Review*, *The Hooghly Review*, & *Paddler Press*) & 2 for Best of the Net Anthology (from *Blue Flame Review* & *The Gorko Gazette*). He lives in Fairview Park, Ohio, with his wife & daughters. X/Twitter: @KingRobertJ Website: bobking.org

Sharon Ross: Sharon Ross grew up in California and raised her daughter in Maine. Her poems, essays and feature stories appear in *The Pacific Review*, *Lake Effect*, *DASH*, *Miniskirt Magazine*, and *Portland Press Herald's Raising Maine*. She earned an MFA in creative writing from the University of Southern Maine and studied photography at the Pasadena Art Center College of Design and California State University San Bernardino. When she's not teaching, she likes to ignore Google maps to see where the road will take her and fantasizes about becoming a tour guide. @sea_beams (instagram) and @seabeamsog (tiktok).

Brooksie C. Fontaine: Brooksie C. Fontaine is an obnoxious coffee addict who got into college at fifteen and annoyed everyone there. She is a teaching assistant, illustrator, and MFA student. Her work has been published by *Eunoia Review*, *Quail Bell*, *Boston Accent Lit*, *Anti-Heroin Chic*, and the *Cryptids Emerging* and *Things Improbable* anthologies.

Glen Armstrong: Glen Armstrong (he/him) holds an MFA in English from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and edits a poetry journal called *Cruel Garters*. His poems have appeared in *Conduit*, *Poetry Northwest*, and *Another Chicago Magazine*.

Eleen Raja: Eleen Raja is an emerging writer situated in Lahore, Pakistan with a Bachelor's in the field of English Literature from Government College University. During her academic tenure, she served as the editor of "*The Ravi: Special Edition*" (2023), associate editor of "*The Gazette*". She is currently an editor at "The Letters Home Collection", a writer at "Girlhood Magazine" and a social media coordinator for "Moss Puppy Magazine"

Hyun Woo Kim: Hyun Woo Kim is a writer living in Seoul. Kim was a finalist of the 2023 Los Angeles Review Short Fiction Award, and his works have been published by Bear Paw Arts Journal, Half and One, BarBar, and others. When not writing, Kim is busy telling people that his first name is Hyun Woo, not Hyun. He can be reached at paschali@fidei.email or <https://substack.com/@hyunwookimwriter>.

Chapter 2: Subtle Divisions

Erika Lynet Salvador: Erika Lynet Salvador, born and raised a Filipina, is an incoming first-year at Amherst College. Her visual art, usually using oil, watercolor, and ink, are featured or will soon be featured in the **82Review*, the *3Elements Literary Review*, the *Jet Fuel Review*, and the *Madison Literary Journal for Literary Criticism*. Additionally, she is the cover artist for select issues of the *Remington Review* and the *Haunted Words Press Journal*. She also explores film and phone photography from time to time and is an avid reader of free-verse poetry. See her art at [@bodeganierika](https://www.instagram.com/bodeganierika) or <https://linktr.ee/salvadorerika>.

Audrey T. Carroll: Audrey T. Carroll is the author of *What Blooms in the Dark* (ELJ Editions, 2024), *Parts of Speech: A Disabled Dictionary* (Alien Buddha, 2023), and *In My Next Queer Life, I Want to Be* (kith books, 2023). She can be found at <http://AudreyTCarrollWrites.weebly.com> and [@AudreyTCarroll](https://www.instagram.com/AudreyTCarroll) on Twitter/Instagram.

Christian Ward: Christian Ward is a UK-based poet with recent work in *Acumen*, *Dreich*, *Dream Catcher*, *Dodging the Rain* and *Canary*. He was longlisted for the 2023 Aurora Prize for Writing, shortlisted for the 2023 Ironbridge Poetry Competition and 2023 Aesthetica Creative Writing Award, and won the 2023 Cathalbui Poetry Competition.

Cesar Ruiz: Cesar Ruiz is a data scientist and amateur writer who lives in Washington DC with his wife and retired sled dog Hippo. His work has been previously featured in the *Washington Writer's Publishing House*, and he maintains a personal newsletter where he shares his unpublished, original work at <https://cesarfelipe.substack.com>.

Devon Neal: Devon Neal (he/him) is a Kentucky-based poet whose work has appeared in many publications, including *HAD*, *Stanchion*, *Livina Press*, *The Storms*, and *The Bombay Lit Mag*, and has been nominated for *Best of the Net*. He currently lives in Bardstown, KY with his wife and three children.

Lyn Hazleton: Lyn is a psychotherapist and facilitates *Writing for Wellbeing* workshops. She has written a memoir, numerous short stories and poetry. She is passionate about the therapeutic nature of writing and is a committed yoga practitioner, enjoys collage and mixed media painting has an open heart for nature.

Maya El Nahal: With a Neuroscience BSc (Hons) from University of Edinburgh, Maya worked in biomedical research publishing before becoming an artist. Through a multi-disciplinary practice, they connect with the liminal spaces of Spirit and Nature by exploring death as a gateway to Other. Their writing has been published in magazines and books, and their award-winning visual work shown internationally.

Patricia Russo: Patricia Russo has poems published or upcoming in Persephone's Fruit, One Art, and Acropolis Journal.

Robert Stone: Robert Stone was born in Wolverhampton. Stories have appeared in 3:AM, Stand, Panurge, Eclectica, Confindo, Punt Volat, HCE, Wraparound South, Lunate, Decadent Review, the Nightjar chapbook series and elsewhere. Micro-stories have appeared in 5x5, Third Wednesday, Star 82, Ocotillo Review. A story is included in Salt's Best British Stories 2020.

Rian Upton Mescall: Rian Upton Mescall is a 24 year old writer from Crossagalla, Limerick. He writes prose, poetry, and has had two self-written plays, "Passenger", and "Revolver", performed by the UL Drama Society. When he is not writing, he enjoys being bullied by the family dog, Mimi.

RUNA: RUNA (aka Rute Norte) was born and lives in Lisbon, Portugal. She graduated from the University of Lisbon, and later received a Master of Arts in Painting from Fine Arts Faculty of the University of Lisbon (2022). Her master's thesis focused on the theme of "Artist-Travellers". RUNA has participated in more than thirty exhibitions, individual and collective, in Portugal, UK, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria and Colombia. Website: www.rutenorte.com / Instagram: @rute_norte

Alan Murphy: Alan Murphy is the Irish writer and illustrator of four collections of poetry for children and teenagers. His poetry has been anthologised in Ireland and abroad, most recently in I Am the Wind: Irish poems for Children Everywhere. He is also an artist.

Chapter 3: Flay

Joe Nix: The artist Joe Nix lives in Loughrea east Galway on the belt buckle of the bible belt two hours from the Red Cow roundabout. His post studio practice based around one acre strip up between two Celtic tiger estate s ideas are cultivated by paint, performance, puppets, the moving image and writing.

Angela Duffy: Angela Duffy is an artist who lives and works in County Mayo, Ireland. She has been making drawings and paintings for many years. She has worked in arts facilitation for a number years and had aided other artists in their production of three dimensional work. Angela's art has been selected for multiple group shows and has featured in a number of art and literature publications. She is currently in her final year at ATU studying for a BA in Contemporary Art Practices. www.angeladuffy.com. Instagram: @angeladuffyartist

Michael Croghan: Michael Croghan is a documentary photographer who photographs in-between spaces, in a poetic realist and formalist style adaptive to the everyday vernacular. He collaborates with communities of interest to explore social tropes and hidden histories, a transcendence of the familiar to draw attention to the poetry of the common place

Jason Graff: Jason Graff's debut novel *Stray Our Pieces* concerns a woman extricating herself from motherhood. *heckler*, about lives colliding at a struggling hotel, followed. His short stories have appeared in places such as *Reckon Review*, *Willow Springs*, *Tiny Molecules* and *Exacting Clam*, *Existere* and *Door is a Jar* as well as upcoming issues of *Slab* and *Qwerty*. Twitter: @JasonGraff1.

Paul Mulgrew: Paul is a multidisciplinary artist-designer whose practice includes creative writing, digital media, film and print. His MA dissertation, 'Chronic Illness Narratives and Neoliberalism' lay the foundations for a practice which today still revolves around issues of identity, illness narratives and the societal consequences of the neoliberal agenda.

Julia Biggs: Julia Biggs is a poet, writer and freelance art historian. She lives in Cambridge, UK. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *Black Bough Poetry*, *Annie Journal*, *Sidhe Press*, *Streetcake Magazine* and elsewhere. Find her on Twitter/X @Chiaroscuro1897 or via her website: <https://juliabiggs1.wixsite.com/juliabiggs>

Simon Collinson: Simon is a writer from England. He enjoys solitude, long walks and unwinding tangled wires.

Durty Beanz: Durty Beanz (DB) are an Action Research Group based in Glasgow (UK). Established in 2019, the group produce a diverse range of outputs operating at the intersection of contemporary art practice and digital anthropology. DB aim to consider the material and symbolic practices of food, as well as the institutions and understandings related to its production, consumption, distribution and representation. Their goal is to playfully interrogate the shifting status of digital food objects, specifically in relation to global food inequalities, climate crisis and cultural identities. @Durty_Beanz / www.Durtybeanz.com.

G. Timothy Gordon: *DREAM WIND* was published 2020 (Spirit-of-the-Ram), *GROUND OF THIS BLUE EARTH* (Mellen), while *EVERYTHING SPEAKING CHINESE* received RIVERSTONE P Poetry Prize (AZ). Work appears in *AGNI*, *American Literary R*, *Cincinnati PR*, *Mississippi R*, *New York Q*, *RHINO*, *Sonora R*, and *Texas Observer*; several nominated for Pushcarts. Gordon's eighth book, *EMPTY*, was published January 2024 (Cyberwit P), *BLUE BUSINESS* in-progress. (59)

He divides lives between New Mexico/Texas borderland Chihuahuan Desert Southwest Organ Mountains and Asia.

Shane Allison: Shane Allison was bit by the writing bug at the age of fourteen. He spent a majority of his high school life shying away in the library behind desk cubicles writing bad love poems about boys he had crushes on. He has since gone on to publish four chapbooks of poetry *Black Fag*, *Ceiling of Mirrors*, *Cock and Balls*, *I Want to Fuck a Redneck*, *Remembered Men* and *Live Nude Guys*, as well as four full-length poetry collections, *I Remember* (Future Tense Books), *Slut Machine* (Rebel Satori Press), *Sweet Sweat* (Hysterical Books), and most recently *I Want to Eat Chinese Food Off Your Ass* (Dumpster Fire Press). He has edited twenty-five anthologies of gay erotica, and has written two novels, *You're the One I Want* and *Harm Done* (Simon and Schuster Publishing).

Dmitriy Galkovskiy: Dmitriy Galkovskiy is a Russian philosopher and man of letters. He matriculated from Moscow State University with a degree in Classical Philosophy.

Alexander Sharov : Alexander Sharov matriculated from Dnipro National University in Ukraine with degrees in English and Psychology. He translates contemporary fiction from Russian and Ukrainian into English.

Laurie Legrand: Laurie Legrand is a multidisciplinary artist based in Ireland. Her work offers glimpses of otherworldly realities where mesmerising things are about to happen. Lies are mixed with truth, reality with mirages and distorted memories. Each art piece is designed as a catalyst to lead the viewer to dream and wonder further. Her work and words (The Methodology of the Marvellous / The Monsters of Light) can be seen here: www.the-laboratory.org

Note from the editor: It's always worth having a second look, and a third, and a fourth. Things tend to move in the interim.



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