

*So Fi Zine*

Edition #4

November 2018

Created and edited by  
Ashleigh Watson

Published by Frances St Press

ISSN 2209-3028

Guest Editorial by  
Raewyn Connell

[sofizine.com](http://sofizine.com)  
**#sofizine**



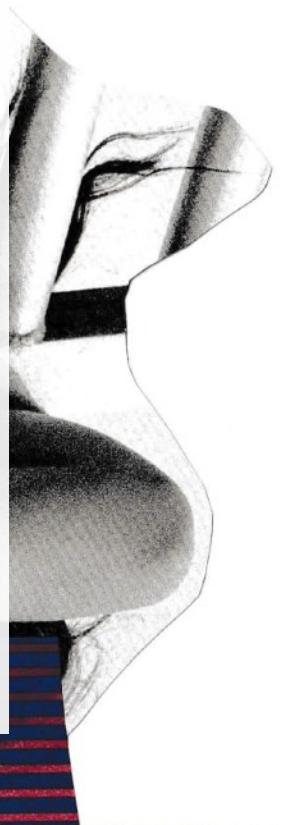
Keen to contribute?

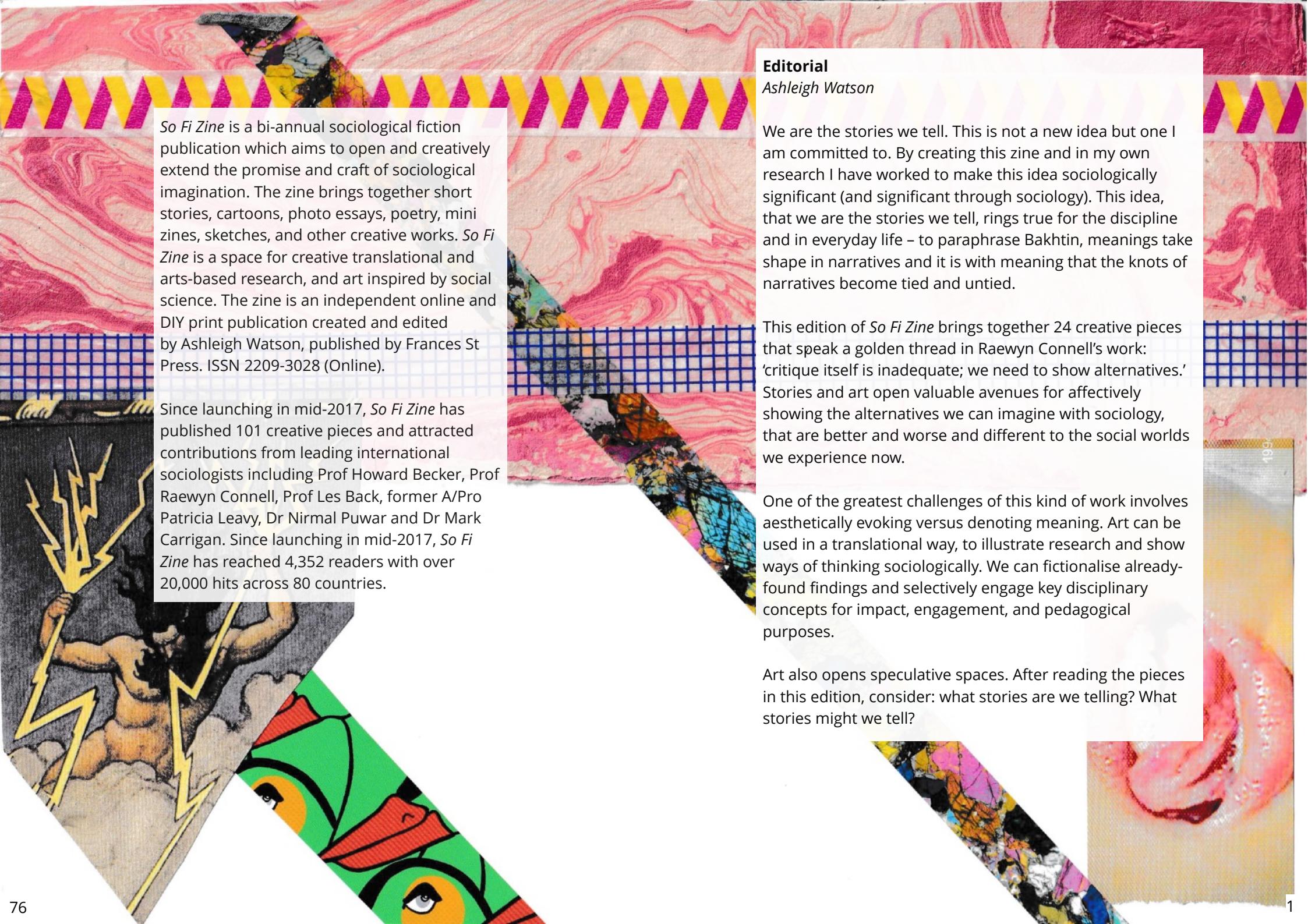
Submissions for Edition #5 of  
*So Fi Zine* will open in early  
2019

Edition #5 is inspired by  
Michael Burawoy's work on  
public sociology

Burawoy moves us to ask:  
What are the issues of today?  
What is to be done?  
Why public sociology?

For this edition, we are looking  
for work that creatively  
illustrates sociological  
imagination and considers the  
public value of the discipline  
today





*So Fi Zine* is a bi-annual sociological fiction publication which aims to open and creatively extend the promise and craft of sociological imagination. The zine brings together short stories, cartoons, photo essays, poetry, mini zines, sketches, and other creative works. *So Fi Zine* is a space for creative translational and arts-based research, and art inspired by social science. The zine is an independent online and DIY print publication created and edited by Ashleigh Watson, published by Frances St Press. ISSN 2209-3028 (Online).

Since launching in mid-2017, *So Fi Zine* has published 101 creative pieces and attracted contributions from leading international sociologists including Prof Howard Becker, Prof Raewyn Connell, Prof Les Back, former A/Pro Patricia Leavy, Dr Nirmal Puwar and Dr Mark Carrigan. Since launching in mid-2017, *So Fi Zine* has reached 4,352 readers with over 20,000 hits across 80 countries.

## Editorial

Ashleigh Watson

We are the stories we tell. This is not a new idea but one I am committed to. By creating this zine and in my own research I have worked to make this idea sociologically significant (and significant through sociology). This idea, that we are the stories we tell, rings true for the discipline and in everyday life – to paraphrase Bakhtin, meanings take shape in narratives and it is with meaning that the knots of narratives become tied and untied.

This edition of *So Fi Zine* brings together 24 creative pieces that speak a golden thread in Raewyn Connell's work: 'critique itself is inadequate; we need to show alternatives.' Stories and art open valuable avenues for affectively showing the alternatives we can imagine with sociology, that are better and worse and different to the social worlds we experience now.

One of the greatest challenges of this kind of work involves aesthetically evoking versus denoting meaning. Art can be used in a translational way, to illustrate research and show ways of thinking sociologically. We can fictionalise already-found findings and selectively engage key disciplinary concepts for impact, engagement, and pedagogical purposes.

Art also opens speculative spaces. After reading the pieces in this edition, consider: what stories are we telling? What stories might we tell?

## Contents

Editorial	1
Ashleigh Watson	
Guest Editorial	4
Raewyn Connell	
In This City	8
Raewyn Connell	
Police at the Picket	8
(Sydney University on strike, 2013)	
Raewyn Connell	
Summer Heat: going to the Sociological Congress	9
Raewyn Connell	
with art by Chloe Watfern	11
Drabbles	
The Freebie	12
Anonymous	
The Food Chain	12
Gemma Hughes	
Borrowed Home	13
Hannah Graham	
Having Such Fun	13
Gemma Hughes	
A Manmade's Tale	14
Peter Kaufman and Todd Schoepflin	
Managing a Child's Expectations of Morphological Freedom in 2356	14
John-Paul Smiley	
Enacting Otherworlds	15
Laura Rodriguez Castro	
Decolonial Speculative Fiction and Fantasy	21
Lara Choksey	

## So Fi Zine Edition 4 Contributors

A F B K N R P J R O B E R T S J  
Y I H D A O H R L T A P H S C Y  
M Z U S E D V H A Z J V H L H B  
O E G D M R E U A J H S E A O W  
F B H E G I N L W U A L N V E C  
G N E S R G L V L H V P D B P H  
C G S Y V U Z E U E I H A K F T  
H U W W G E D X Y K B T Z T L A  
O Y B U Y Z N W W V A A E P I E  
K E W P T C R R Z A A U I G N R  
S N B F X A C P W S T N F T V Y  
E A F A T S I S Z K G S G M E J  
Y K I W A T F E R N W D O I A M  
S T B A R R A C L O U G H N L N  
T Y S Y C O N N E L L K Y C P S  
G R A H A M Z X N X K H V T C K

BARRACLOUGH  
CHOKSEY  
CONNELL  
DELLEBAITE  
FATSIS  
GRAHAM  
HUGHES  
KAUFMAN  
NGUYEN

PRAJAPATI  
ROBERTS  
RODRIGUEZCASTRO  
SCHOEPFLIN  
SMILEY  
VANGILS  
WATFERN  
WATSON  
WHITE

## horoScoMopes

### Capricorn

Roll your sleeves up... just get on with it

### Aquarius

You've got to know what you're about yourself. You've got to know what you think is going to work. You've got to listen to people, you've got to do all that. But at the end of the day, you've got to know what you're about.

### Pisces

Where the bloody hell are you?

## Contents

Precipice	25
Rob White	
Please Stand Back	27
Paul Aitken	
in excess	32
Shanee Barracough	
The Mundane Tech in Service	37
Anna Nguyen	
Thirst	41
Kelly-Marie Roberts	
The Cave	42
Brent Van Gils	
Synesthesia as Explored Through the Medium of Photography	47
Ann Brody	
The Viewing	56
Narelle Delle Baite	
The Resistance Shopping List	58
Khyati Prajapati	
Walking While Black in Berlin: A Diary Entry	61
Lambros Fatsis	
Rebecca	64
Rob White	
hide and seek	67
Khyati Prajapati	
Contributor Bios	68
Horoscopes	71
Word Search	75
Zine info	76

**And in conclusion, more research is needed...**

When my colleagues and I were writing *Making the Difference*<sup>1</sup>, about our research on social inequalities in Australian schools, we had a straightforward job for most of the book. We wrote about the big pattern of inequalities in education, then we wrote fine-grained accounts of the families, kids and schools we had studied. And then we had to write a conclusion.

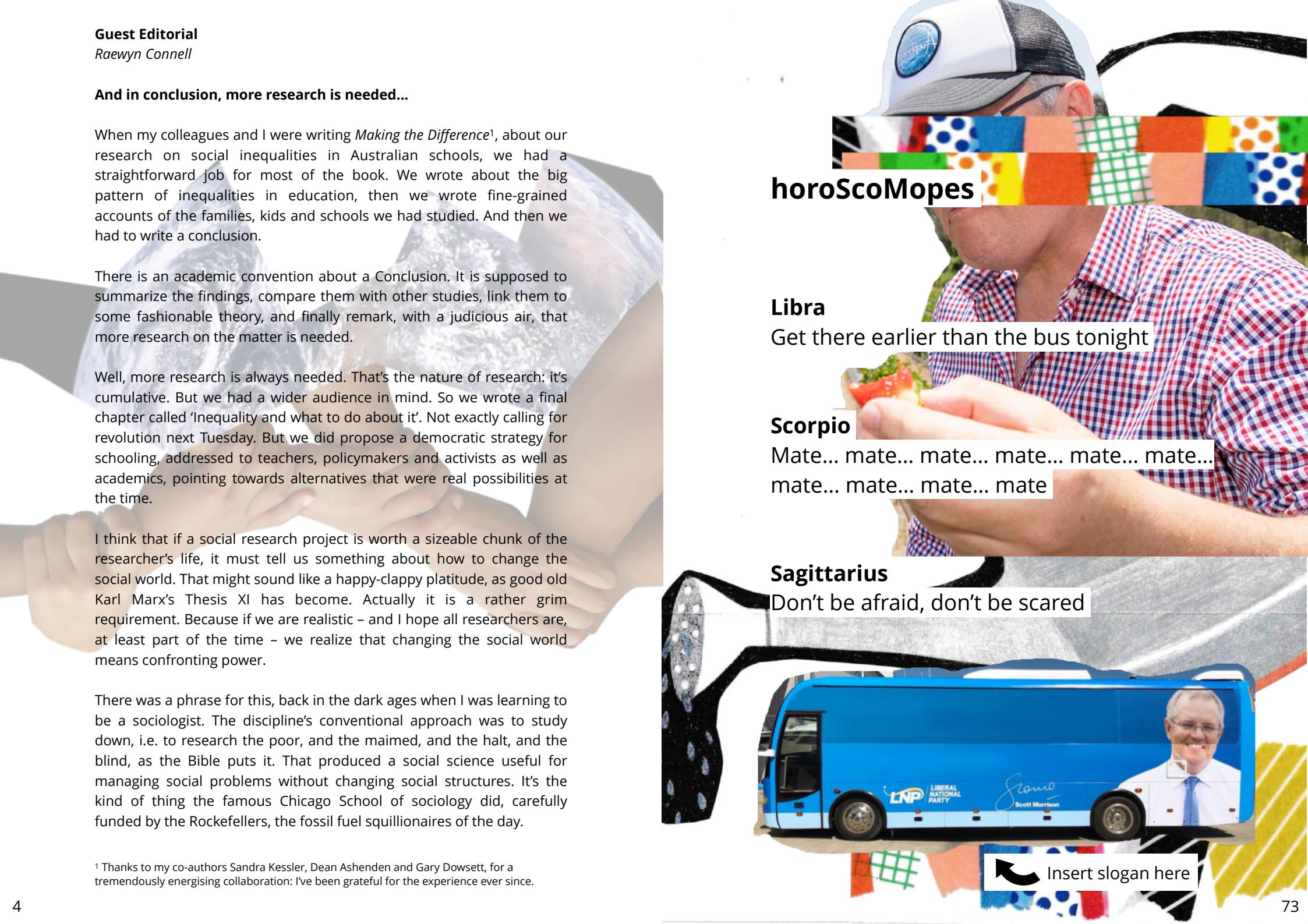
There is an academic convention about a Conclusion. It is supposed to summarize the findings, compare them with other studies, link them to some fashionable theory, and finally remark, with a judicious air, that more research on the matter is needed.

Well, more research is always needed. That's the nature of research: it's cumulative. But we had a wider audience in mind. So we wrote a final chapter called 'Inequality and what to do about it'. Not exactly calling for revolution next Tuesday. But we did propose a democratic strategy for schooling, addressed to teachers, policymakers and activists as well as academics, pointing towards alternatives that were real possibilities at the time.

I think that if a social research project is worth a sizeable chunk of the researcher's life, it must tell us something about how to change the social world. That might sound like a happy-clappy platitude, as good old Karl Marx's Thesis XI has become. Actually it is a rather grim requirement. Because if we are realistic – and I hope all researchers are, at least part of the time – we realize that changing the social world means confronting power.

There was a phrase for this, back in the dark ages when I was learning to be a sociologist. The discipline's conventional approach was to study down, i.e. to research the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind, as the Bible puts it. That produced a social science useful for managing social problems without changing social structures. It's the kind of thing the famous Chicago School of sociology did, carefully funded by the Rockefellers, the fossil fuel squillionaires of the day.

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to my co-authors Sandra Kessler, Dean Ashenden and Gary Dowsett, for a tremendously energising collaboration: I've been grateful for the experience ever since.



**horoScoMopes**

**Libra**

Get there earlier than the bus tonight

**Scorpio**

Mate... mate... mate... mate... mate... mate...  
mate... mate... mate... mate

**Sagittarius**

Don't be afraid, don't be scared

Insert slogan here



By contrast, radicals wanted to study up - to investigate groups more powerful than we were: i.e. the ruling classes, the state, the military and the corporations, including the Rockefellers. That, we hoped, would produce knowledge relevant to structural change.

It's a strategy I've tried to follow in different domains. It led me to study the ruling class in Australian capitalism, and power elites on a world scale; to study men and masculinities in order to understand power in gender relations; and to study global-North knowledge institutions, as well as Southern theory, to understand the global economy of knowledge.

This kind of work assumes that major social structures can change through social action: that there are always alternatives within reach. I think of social process as inherently creative. Social practices never simply reproduce social structures. (That's my objection to social reproduction and equilibrium theories whether from Parsons, Bourdieu, or neoclassical economics.) Social practices address historically-created situations and transform them through time.

The best account of this I know is in a forgotten book by the Czech philosopher Karel Kosík, *Dialectics of the Concrete*. Kosík wrote it when trying to get his head around the weird situation of Marxism in eastern Europe under Soviet occupation, a new kind of colonialism. He recognized that social change may be in an alienated mode, not just in a revolutionary mode. He coined the term 'ontoformativity' for the world-making character of human activity. I think that's a useful corrective both to the pessimism of reproduction theory, and to the short-term optimism of 'performativity.'



This applies to sociological research itself. When we do research, one thing we have to do is address the current state of knowledge. Hence that demand to write a 'Review of the Literature,' that so many graduate students puzzle over. The Literature defines the historical situation in knowledge that your research project is about to transform<sup>2</sup>.

Transforming the state of knowledge is the creativity of the labour that we do in research. We are producing an alternative state of knowledge. Creativity is not an optional add-on to social science. It's of the essence. Therefore anything that stirs imagination, reaching beyond the given, is good. There are no rules for this. If you can get inspiration from seeing moored yachts in the wind, watching a senior cop at work, or sighing in a freeway traffic jam, then do it! Have a look at my poems in this edition of *So Fi Zine*. You may or may not care for them as poetry – it is your sovereign right to criticize! - but I hope you can detect the structures of social relations that are at work in each one.

A researcher then has to make it good – which means, show that the inspiration works, that the seams you have sewn are straight, the bricks you have laid are firm. This is because the making of knowledge in sociology (and any other science, need I say?) is a *collective* process. The knowledge cannot be uniquely yours: it has to work for other people too.



Hence the requirement to publish what you find out. This has become terribly distorted in current academic life by predatory publishers, mad managers and lunatic 'league tables.' Think expansively. Our *Making the Difference* study, as well as journal articles and a couple of books, also produced articles in teachers' magazines, workshops at teachers' professional development events, talks to parents, talks on radio, an illustrated pamphlet, a video documentary (not too common in the 1980s), consultations with unions, and discussions with policymakers.

<sup>2</sup> Forgive the advertisement, but if anyone wants to explore this view of research and teaching, it's in my book *The Good University*, to be published in February 2019.



## Contributors

Laura Rodriguez Castro is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Queensland. Her doctoral research was a visual participatory project with rural women in Colombia embedded in feminist and decolonial epistemologies. She combines her research practice working as a freelance writer and photographer, and is involved in community activism.

Todd Schoepflin is an associate professor of sociology at Niagara University. He received his Ph.D. from Stony Brook University. He is author of the book *Sociology in Stories: A Creative Introduction to a Fascinating Perspective* (Kendall Hunt).

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

Brent Van Gils: In 2016 I completed a bachelor of behavioural science, at Flinders University in South Australia, where I majored in sociology and psychology. Additionally, I completed my honours in Sociology in 2017-18. My honours thesis focused on Cornelius Castoriadis's social theory, and specifically his theoretical account of subjectivity.

Chloe Watfern is a writer and artist, with an academic background in art history and psychology. She is currently a Scientia PhD scholar at UNSW, researching the work of supported studios for artists with complex needs.

Ashleigh Watson is the creator and editor of *So Fi Zine*. She is also the Fiction Editor of *The Sociological Review*. Ashleigh is currently a Resident Adjunct Research Fellow at the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research.

Rob White is Professor of Criminology at the University of Tasmania, Australia. Among his areas of concern are green criminology and eco-justice, and crime and social justice. He has an abiding interest in science fiction and visions of alternative worlds.

A large part of what sociologists collectively do is teaching. And despite all the textbooks, MOOCs and online course templates, teaching too is a creative process. Supervising a PhD is a particularly slow form of teaching, but it shows this point very clearly. The supervisor's basic task is not 'knowledge transfer.' It is to help the student move into the zone of proximal development (as Lev Vygotsky called it) just beyond their current know-how. This is the zone where the student's own agency can develop new capacities. The supervisor has to link that process in the student's learning with a path forward in the researchable zone just beyond current collective knowledge – to help the student identify the alternatives in knowledge that emerge from their research.

The theme of this edition is 'alternatives.' I'm arguing that alternatives don't exist only out there, in utopias or programmes. They also exist in here, in the way we conduct our day-to-day lives, relationships, learning and labour.

Radicals used to talk about 'prefigurative politics,' or 'living your politics': enacting here and now the kind of social relations you hope to create in the long run. That's not easy, in the formal, controlled environment of public higher education, where I have worked most of my life. But it has been my intention. I hope some of it has worked.



## In This City

Raewyn Connell

The yachts worship the wind from Palm Beach.  
Corporate doctors purr across the Bridge.  
A copter moves in front of the sun. The wharf is empty. Surely  
some revelation is at hand.  
Four white parrots shout in the sky: Wrath! Wrath! Wrath! Wrath!



## Police at the Picket

(Sydney University on strike, 2013)

Raewyn Connell

A vigorous officer, striding in his armoured vest,  
Silver his hair and shoulders, points where his troops should go,  
Crisp: "I want this traffic moving faster".  
Sorry, friend. We have the right. The academic dialogue goes on.

## Contributors

Hannah Graham is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology in the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR) at the University of Stirling, Scotland. Australian-born and Glasgow-based, she tweets at @DrHannahGraham.

Gemma Hughes is a health services researcher at the University of Oxford. Gemma's research interests centre on critical analysis of the relationships between health and social care policy, practice and lived experience, especially through ethnography.

Peter Kaufman is a professor of sociology at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz. He received his Ph.D. from Stony Brook University. He is co-author of the book *Teaching with Compassion: An Educator's Oath to Teach from the Heart* (Rowman & Littlefield).

Anna Nguyen is a PhD student in the Communication Studies department at Concordia University in Montreal. Her research blends STS and socioliterary theories to investigate discourses on expertise through the object of food. Most recently, she is interested in examining the role of technology in food work and in the everyday.

Khyati Prajapati is currently a Masters student and Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her thesis examines the financialization of nature and the naturalization of finance, and how this dichotomy contributes towards the literal end of the world! She believes fiction can make academia more accessible.

Kelly-Marie Roberts is a community education professional interested in arts-informed participatory research with marginalized populations. Originally from the small island of Anglesey (Wales), Kelly is now based in Tallinn as part of her International Masters in Adult Education for Social Change. This poem was written whilst living in Swaziland during the 2017 drought.



## Contributors

Paul Aitken is a journalist, writer, musician and psychologist living and working in Glasgow. The stories that Paul has published in SoFi so far form part of a novel that he is writing called "Scores", which takes place in a world being gradually enveloped by a single governing body.

Shanee Barraclough is a counsellor educator at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. She has recently completed doctoral research exploring the entanglements of matter and meaning, the material and discursive, in the performative enactments of emerging counsellor identities, drawing, in particular, on the thinking of feminist new materialisms.

Ann Brody is a graduate student at York University's Communication and Culture program. Ann's research looks at media ecology theory and its application towards understanding blockchain and cryptocurrency ecosystems. Ann holds a Canadian sshrc scholarship.

Lara Choksey is a postdoctoral research associate in the Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health at the University of Exeter. Her research draws from the history and philosophy of science, world-systems theory, critical race and decolonial studies, and modern and contemporary fiction and poetry, with a particular interest in speculative fiction. Her first monograph, *Narrative in the Age of the Genome: Genetic Worlds*, is forthcoming with Bloomsbury.

Raewyn Connell is Professor Emerita at the University of Sydney. She is an internationally renowned sociologist, best known for her work on masculinities. Raewyn's other key research themes include southern theory, neoliberalism, schools and social justice. Her forthcoming book *The Good University* will be published in February 2019.

Lambros Fatsis is Lecturer in Sociology and Criminology at the University of Southampton. Alongside his teaching and research, he blogs regularly and has contributed to the first two editions of *So Fi Zine*. In his third short story for So Fi, Lambros pays tribute to a sociologist he greatly admires, W.E.B. Du Bois. Excerpts of Du Bois' essays, memoirs, and speeches are hidden in the text, as are fragments from Franz Hessel's *Walking in Berlin*, whose uncritical description of "human zoos" provides a chilling counterpoint to Du Bois' humanism.

## Summer Heat: going to the Sociological Congress

Raewyn Connell

By bus today to  
Yokohama Tomorrow,  
quoting yesterday.

The Corporation  
has conquered the shoreline, but  
for two blades of grass.

On the highway bridge  
an old man searches for half-smoked butts in a drain.

Railway announcer  
apologizes for a train  
three long minutes late.

Small space, large city,  
I visit a vertical  
university.

Many women walk  
with umbrellas for the sun:  
not a single man.

Fried kelp for breakfast.  
Lovely! At home, why don't we  
eat the sounding sea?

O blessed shower!  
Soaping my breasts, I laugh and  
into cleanliness leap.

A hot back street turns  
away from Tokyo traffic.  
Green: a small temple.



A rich man's enclave:  
in the garage an Alfa,  
nearby a locked park.

Right below the heart  
of a ten-lane Tokyo jam,  
one fisherman's boat.

Along the old shore,  
concrete blossoms in the sky  
remembering spring.



**hide and seek**  
*Khyati Prajapati*

we are playing  
hide and seek  
in the library  
ducking and crouching  
behind bookshelves  
in between the  
history of the world  
and the disintegration  
of everyone's sanity

we cheerfully chortle  
brushing past paranoia  
and the fingers of fate  
that we only catch glimpses of  
we are sneaking past narratives  
with dashing heroes and daring heroines  
we are counting down  
to our discoveries  
while enraptured ghosts  
follow close behind

the repetition of  
romance and revolution  
the reinvention of  
equality and exploitation  
taking refuge behind  
our ancestors and  
all that is recorded of  
humanity's unexpectedness



Seeing those many pouring into our street I was suddenly apprehensive.  
Standing up I said, 'I'll protect you Becky, with all my strength and all my  
might.'

Rebecca laughed gently.

'But father,' she said, 'they do not come to do me harm.'

My puzzlement only increased at this.

'Then why do they come?' I asked.

'They come here because of who I am and who I have become.' Still holding  
my hand, my daughter looked at all before her. 'They come,' she said, 'to  
worship.'

Chloe Watfern is an artist,  
writer and Scientia PhD  
scholar at UNSW. Here, she  
has responded to Raewyn  
Connell's words with images  
that may not illustrate but  
perhaps illuminate the  
slanting thoughts that reading  
set sail.

## Drabbles

For this edition, we invited submissions of drabbles (short stories of 100 words) to be curated by Raewyn Connell that responded to key themes of her work: southern theory, masculinities, neoliberalism, schools and social justice.

## The Freebie

*Anonymous*

Her first overseas conference was 'for experience.' As an afterthought (he said) he went too. So, there he was at economy check-in, in the seats beside hers, the conversations with others she tried to have, the room down the passage. On the way back he was platinum desk, business lounge, front of plane. He entered the arrival hall alone. The waiting woman with the short grey hair welcomed him with a loving smile and held up her face for a tender kiss. Today Jennifer is head of department. Her loyalty card is bottom-tier blue but her juniors travel in packs.

## The Food Chain

*Gemma Hughes*

Plump vegetables sit in rows next to organic sour-dough bread. Lines of dark brown bottles of craft beers with witty names, brewed and drank by white men with beards. The delicatessen 'curates' this produce, the manager earnestly explains. Hand-made chocolate by the till, nuts and grains artfully packaged. Slices of cheese at prices to make you blink. Olives. Gelato in the summer, warm flatbreads in winter.

The food bank lodges in an alcove by the door. Justified by 'our ethos of sustainability.' The plastic box hoards a smattering of tins, offerings of guilt, supermarket purchases interloping in this fragrant shop.

'Wow!' I exclaimed, 'that looks like an Andro 3 over there. In fact I'm sure of it.'

Rebecca nodded, a gleam in her eye.

Andro 3's were third generation androids. Rubbery skin and rubbery faces, but extremely useful around the house.

Masses of bodies collectively heaved their way across the bitumen and footpaths straight toward us.

'What is going on!' I cried.

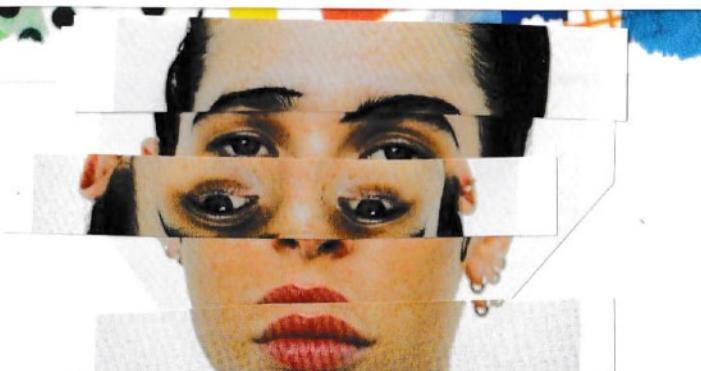
Rebecca tightened her grip on my hand. 'Just wait – you'll see,' she whispered.

Now I could make out human forms amongst the gathered throng. Their faces were high in expectation.

Then I looked again.

'Why, those are Humana proto-types! Must be fresh from the production labs!' I was getting more and more excited, yet more and more perplexed.

I remembered then my first day with my lovely Rebecca. She had been loaned to me by the plant manager. For two days she had observed me and watched my every move. She seemed to sense my moods and to anticipate my actions. She knew when to laugh and when to be silent. She was not human. She did not begin her time with me as my daughter. But she quickly grew into my Becky. She grew into my heart. She grew into my mind.



**Rebecca**  
Rob White

I was sitting on the front porch holding my daughter's hand when I suddenly realised that I wasn't married and that in fact I had no children and never had.

'What am I doing here?' I asked Becky.

She turned her face to mine and smiled. 'You are being my daddy,' she said, 'and I love you for it.'

Frowning, I got up, walked a few paces and sat down in the wicker love seat to try to make sense of things.

Rebecca my daughter leisurely ambled over to the settee to sit beside me. She flicked her golden hair and, grinning, re-took my hand in hers.

We sat in silence for a while.

Far off down the street there was movement. 'What is that?' I wondered aloud.

'Keep watching,' replied a little voice.

Small dark figures were gathering en masse at the end of the street. At first all I could recognise was the antennae. 'It looks like a gathering of Robocitizens,' I said. First generation all purpose residential robots, Robocitizens, were now classic pieces of technology.

'Keep watching,' Rebecca urged.

The black mass began to desegregate into defined individuals.

**Borrowed Home**  
Hannah Graham

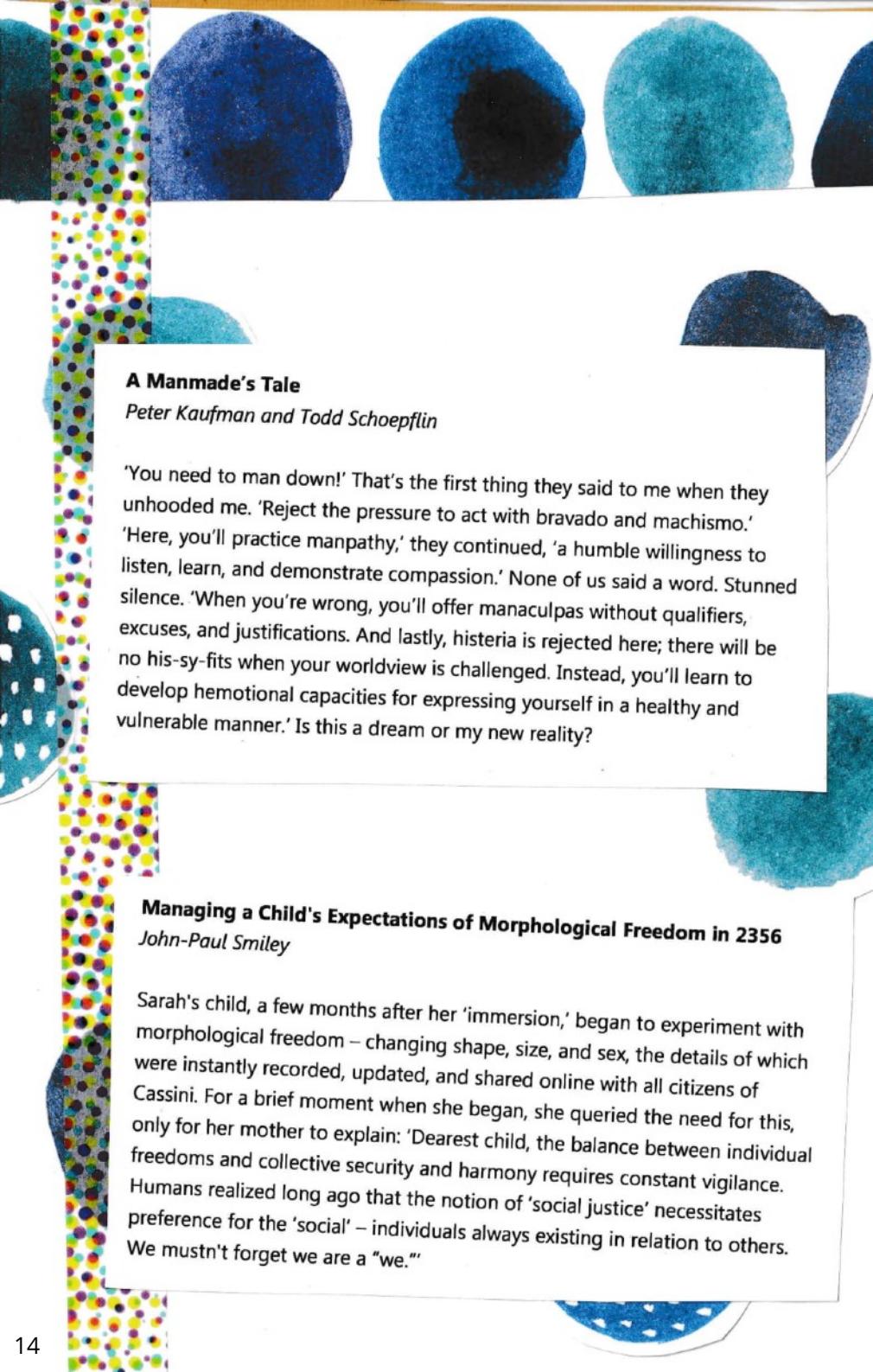
Pictures of those I've left stay with me.  
Faces on walls of places they've not been.  
Names on the door aren't replaced with my own.  
21 thresholds in 33 years. This one has the most stairs.  
Home, until further notice.

The nonagenarian above whistles and sings  
a dawn and dusk chorus as he rises and falls asleep.  
He doesn't know these daily routines are like lullabies;  
they relax and recalibrate, songs of a resting place.  
The octogenarian on the other side can't help but help,  
a hospitality of elective affinity that's welcomed.  
A place to belong, while we are here.

**Having Such Fun**  
Gemma Hughes

We are only four families away from the front now. Tense with waiting for the Awesome Adventure Attraction™. Best not to look at your watch when you join the queue, like an insomniac trying to outsmart the clock. Billy sleeps post-tantrum, head thrown back in the pushchair. Lola swings painfully on my hand, tunelessly singing the hastily-invented 'waiting song' as she kicks her brothers' feet. There is a bustle behind us, a jolly 'excuse me!' as the rope is unclipped and premium ticket-bearers step forward. Lola bursts into tears; 'Mummy it's not FAIR!' she wails, as I tighten my smile.





## A Manmade's Tale

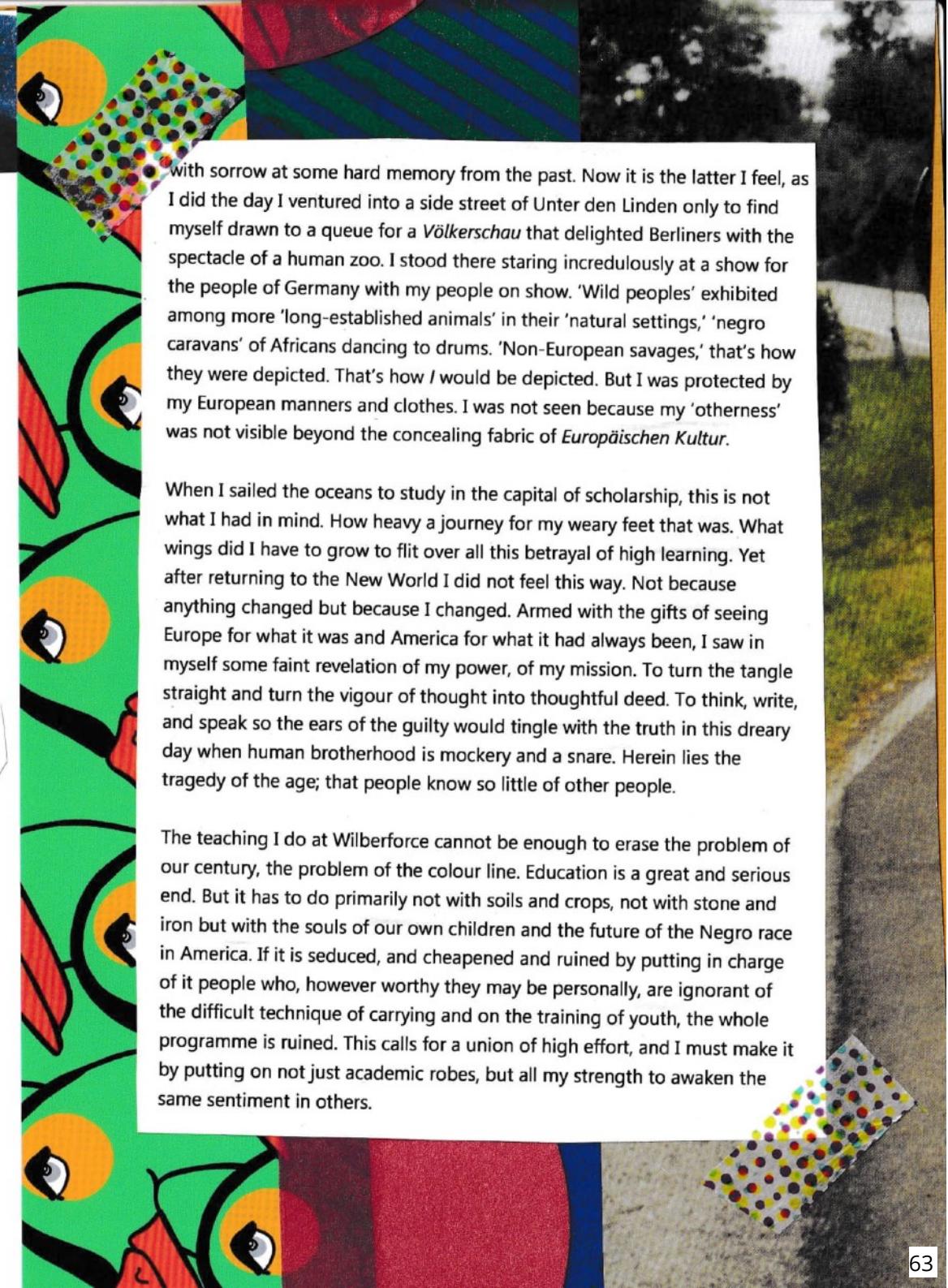
Peter Kaufman and Todd Schoepflin

'You need to man down!' That's the first thing they said to me when they unhooded me. 'Reject the pressure to act with bravado and machismo.' 'Here, you'll practice manpathy,' they continued, 'a humble willingness to listen, learn, and demonstrate compassion.' None of us said a word. Stunned silence. 'When you're wrong, you'll offer manaculpas without qualifiers, excuses, and justifications. And lastly, hysteria is rejected here; there will be no his-sy-fits when your worldview is challenged. Instead, you'll learn to develop hemotional capacities for expressing yourself in a healthy and vulnerable manner.' Is this a dream or my new reality?

## Managing a Child's Expectations of Morphological Freedom in 2356

John-Paul Smiley

Sarah's child, a few months after her 'immersion,' began to experiment with morphological freedom – changing shape, size, and sex, the details of which were instantly recorded, updated, and shared online with all citizens of Cassini. For a brief moment when she began, she queried the need for this, only for her mother to explain: 'Dearest child, the balance between individual freedoms and collective security and harmony requires constant vigilance. Humans realized long ago that the notion of 'social justice' necessitates preference for the 'social' – individuals always existing in relation to others. We mustn't forget we are a "we."'



with sorrow at some hard memory from the past. Now it is the latter I feel, as I did the day I ventured into a side street of Unter den Linden only to find myself drawn to a queue for a *Völkerschau* that delighted Berliners with the spectacle of a human zoo. I stood there staring incredulously at a show for the people of Germany with my people on show. 'Wild peoples' exhibited among more 'long-established animals' in their 'natural settings,' 'negro caravans' of Africans dancing to drums. 'Non-European savages,' that's how they were depicted. That's how *I* would be depicted. But I was protected by my European manners and clothes. I was not seen because my 'otherness' was not visible beyond the concealing fabric of *Europäischen Kultur*.

When I sailed the oceans to study in the capital of scholarship, this is not what I had in mind. How heavy a journey for my weary feet that was. What wings did I have to grow to flit over all this betrayal of high learning. Yet after returning to the New World I did not feel this way. Not because anything changed but because I changed. Armed with the gifts of seeing Europe for what it was and America for what it had always been, I saw in myself some faint revelation of my power, of my mission. To turn the tangle straight and turn the vigour of thought into thoughtful deed. To think, write, and speak so the ears of the guilty would tingle with the truth in this dreary day when human brotherhood is mockery and a snare. Herein lies the tragedy of the age; that people know so little of other people.

The teaching I do at Wilberforce cannot be enough to erase the problem of our century, the problem of the colour line. Education is a great and serious end. But it has to do primarily not with soils and crops, not with stone and iron but with the souls of our own children and the future of the Negro race in America. If it is seduced, and cheapened and ruined by putting in charge of it people who, however worthy they may be personally, are ignorant of the difficult technique of carrying and on the training of youth, the whole programme is ruined. This calls for a union of high effort, and I must make it by putting on not just academic robes, but all my strength to awaken the same sentiment in others.

that is appropriate when one grows by a year. When I wrote this silly note in anticipation of a drinking bout that never materialised, I was part of the intellectual elite that strolled aimlessly around the streets of Berlin, sipped *mokka double* in the city's most established grand cafés, and never missed a lecture or a concert. Indeed I felt that I became more human. I ceased to hate or suspect people simply because they belonged to one race or colour, and I began to understand the real meaning of scientific research.

Such was my lust for life that I didn't just fall for the city and everything it had to offer but found love there too. I will never forget that evening at a workmen's glee club where I met an attractive woman with whom I danced.

'Are you a socialist, too?' I asked.

'Oh yes!' she replied.

I danced with her again! That was before I met Amalie who taught me how bitter love can be even when it tastes so sweet. Our life of carelessness was soon to be ruined and this felt like my fault though I knew it wasn't. We grew apart, she did not dare speak the unspeakable and I did not want to hear it. Did I ruin her life by turning her into a social outcast for having a relationship with a '*Neger*'? I know she didn't feel this way but our very public presence together was tainted by the hostile glances that froze our every embrace. Awash in the hate of others, we grew apart. Didn't *they* know that I was a denizen of German letters at Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität? Would it have made a difference? When I walked alone, I was immune to such suspicion. Perhaps because of my elegant and sober attire, my easy gait, good deportment and graceful bearing. But why did all this cease to matter when I held hands with Amalie?

This double consciousness, of not being able to see myself except through the eyes of others, felt like measuring my soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt. But I was also armed with a second sight with which to meet the stony gaze of those who despised me. My memory plays tricks on me though! How can I pretend now that the days spent in this '*neue Vaterland*' were so innocent then? Perhaps this is how we feel when we recall moments of human wickedness. Sometimes with innocent pain, sometimes

## ENACTING OTHERWORLDS

## CONSTRUYENDO OTROSMUNDOS



GRACIAS A NOSOTRAS  
LAS MUJERES  
CAMPESINAS TODA  
UNA COMUNIDAD  
TIENE SU COMIDA.

THANKS TO THE  
CAMPESINA WOMEN,  
THE WHOLE  
COMMUNITY HAS ITS  
FOOD.

These photos are part of two collaborative photographic exhibitions conducted in rural Colombia in 2016 during a feminist participatory visual PhD project embedded in decolonial epistemologies and feeling-thinking research. The curated photographs and phrases were organised collaboratively during the research project, and bear witness of the enacting of otherworlds in rural Abya Yala (Latin America). I urge you to engage with this body of work as a journey towards decolonial interventions, rather than one that has reached its destination.



**SHE IS A  
HARD  
WORKER, A  
FIGHTER,**  
who has had a  
really tough life.  
She represents the  
work of the  
campesina women.



**ELLA ES UNA MUJER  
TRABAJADORA, LUCHADORA,**  
que le ha tocado muy duro. Ella representa todo lo  
que es el trabajo de la mujer campesina.

### **Walking While Black in Berlin: A Diary Entry**

Lambros Fatsis

Xenia, Ohio 23 February 1896

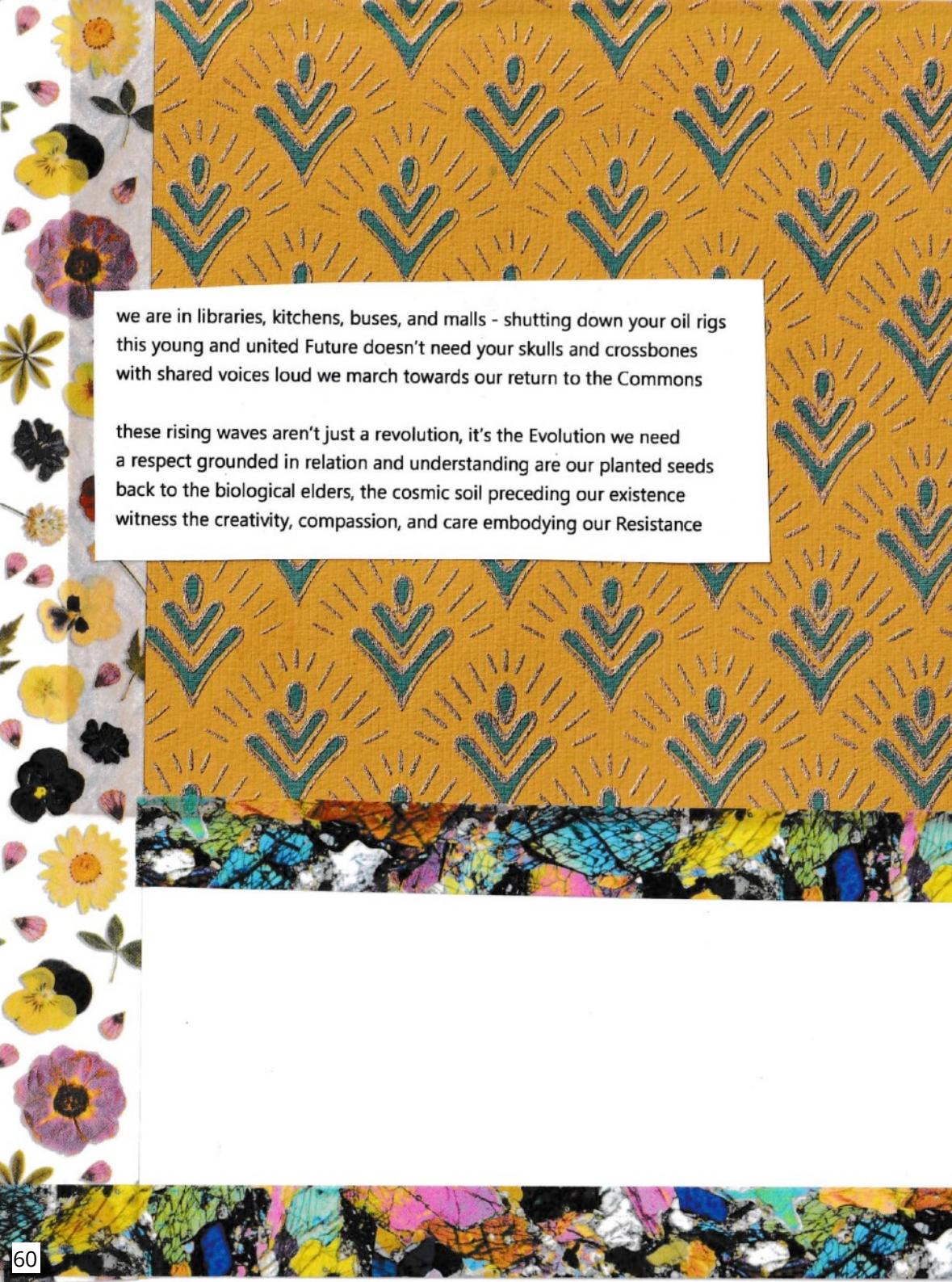
Rummaging through my library in search of Alexander Crummell's *Africa and America*, a slip of paper slid along the smooth surface of the book and fell on my feet. It read:

*I have been out drinking this evening and cannot find my way home. My address is Oranienburgerstraße 66. Please put me in a cab home. The fare is in my vest pocket, W.E.B. Du Bois.*

A devious smirk wrinkled my face, followed by a chuckle which betrayed my embarrassment and brought memories of my Berlin days to the front of my mind. Luckily, I never needed the note other than as an amusing souvenir of my studies there. But it is fixed in my mind now, as it would be if I had pinned it on my buttonhole back then. I never forgot my two years as a student in Berlin, but I already feel differently about all this now.

Remembering all this here in 'nigger'-hating America, my sojourn in Imperial Germany feels like a dip into a murky swamp of ambivalence. I travelled there in admiration of very learned philosophers who believed that Africans do not have souls, but also despised their brutal language and the ugly sentiments it echoed. If I ever fancied myself as one of them then with my impeccable German, my trimmed beard, slender cane and silk tie, I now see myself as the divided soul I always were. Two warring ideas have always clashed inside my dark body. An intellectual in dialogue with the best, and worst, that Europe had to offer but anchored to the spiritual strivings of my people. Always trying to find meaning between the seats of the mighty and our sorrow songs that stir my weary heart and holler at the injustice of slavery, the colour-line, and Jim Crow.

These are depressing thoughts to ponder over on my birthday, but finding this yellowing piece of paper brought an air of deep, reflective melancholy



we are in libraries, kitchens, buses, and malls - shutting down your oil rigs  
this young and united Future doesn't need your skulls and crossbones  
with shared voices loud we march towards our return to the Commons

these rising waves aren't just a revolution, it's the Evolution we need  
a respect grounded in relation and understanding are our planted seeds  
back to the biological elders, the cosmic soil preceding our existence  
witness the creativity, compassion, and care embodying our Resistance



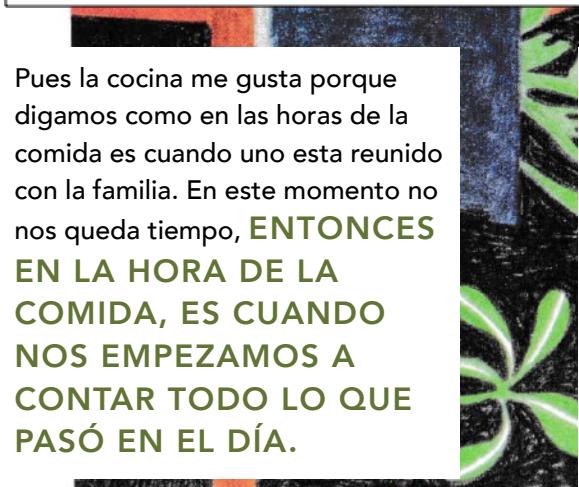
We are all together  
and I am doing what I  
like, which is being  
with them, supporting  
them, guiding them,  
telling them yes we  
can do it.

**SO, IF IT  
DOESN'T  
WORK THIS  
WAY, WE DO  
IT THE  
OTHER WAY.**

Porque estamos todas y estoy yo en lo que me  
gusta, que es estar con ellas, ahí como  
apoyándolas, guiandolas en el tema de que sí  
se puede. **Y SINO PODEMOS**  
**POR ESTE LADO, PUES**  
**VAMOS POR ESTE.**



Pues la cocina me gusta porque digamos como en las horas de la comida es cuando uno esta reunido con la familia. En este momento no nos queda tiempo, **ENTONCES EN LA HORA DE LA COMIDA, ES CUANDO NOS EMPEZAMOS A CONTAR TODO LO QUE PASÓ EN EL DÍA.**



I like the kitchen because at the dinnertime is when we get together with the family. At the moment we do not have much free time,  
**SO THE DINNERTIME IS WHEN WE TELL EACH OTHER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED DURING THE DAY.**

i skip the dairy aisle - and it still takes me a while to remember none of this is actually fairly priced and when i finally reach the end of the checkout line the Checkout Machine tells me my card has been declined

# # #

not enough hours in the day to reach the end of this shopping list this building has no windows to allow any sunlight to creep in so preoccupied with coupons that we have abandoned Politics but we carry the flames of a collective future without a flinch

they always make it so difficult to find the aisle for Empathy it's tucked away and hidden behind Freedom and Democracy Re-claiming position in the queue for Change is harder each time the wait is long but our Movement prevails whether rain or shine

for so long their poison has become a regular threat in our homes trying to isolate us from one another, trying to make us feel alone we know that all of our differences are what makes us all the same we are never just one, We Are Many, and we will not be contained

we are uprooting and replanting this shopping mall of society cancelling our subscriptions to hatred and heteronormativity we reject captivity to a civilization that consumes destruction the new age is not precarious or passive - We are Pride and passion

for all of the voices faded across the time and space of history languages lost, cultures ransacked, ancestors kept in memory sharing the education to not just live - but to thrive and survive with solidarity and diversity to keep our children and this earth alive

we are on TV and we are in the streets, stood before your barricade of pigs



## The Resistance Shopping List

Khyati Prajapati

my head is shaking - in a stumble of satire  
and i am feeling - just a little bit tired  
the days too short - and my eyes always hurt  
my shoulders straining - under all the things i bought

i bought this sadness - it was sitting next to the bread  
after buying vegetables i start stocking up on my regrets  
the Apples were rotten so i take a bite out of a peach  
the pixels made me forget to buy a bottle of bleach

making sure to hoard some instant noodles and canned beans  
i pass an auction where they're selling Mother Nature's green  
drinkable water is all sold out, though i do find my cereal  
the bees are dying - but They say it isn't really a big deal

trolley carts squeaking complaints over being underpaid  
and at the butcher's there is Feminism being weighed  
fluorescent lights illuminating the best dieting tips  
headlines announce the latest Global Financial Crisis

surveillance cameras watch me collect some sleeping pills  
the child behind me is now drowning in Debt and bills  
self-medication has been put on Sale for the weekend  
- i'm already losing count of how much i have spent

the Man announces that a side of fries comes with everything  
whilst ignoring outcries against overpriced education and housing  
every chocolate has been replaced with guns by the crate  
they do pair well with a slice of Racism and Military State



Gracias a la gente que  
trabaja en el campo,  
podemos comer, tener  
las vaquitas, la  
lechecita.

**CREO QUE  
DEBEMOS  
CUIDAR MÁS LA  
VEGETACIÓN.**

Thanks to the people  
that work in the  
countryside, we can eat,  
have cows, have milk.  
**I THINK WE  
SHOULD TAKE  
MORE CARE OF  
THE  
VEGETATION.**





De ir pues a su huerta y como que sentirse orgullosa de los frutos, las hortalizas, las verduras que ella recoge.

**SE VE QUE  
REALMENTE SE  
SIENTE  
ORGULLOSA DE  
LO QUE SOMOS Y  
DE LO QUE HACE.**

Going to the farm and feeling proud of the harvest, the garden produce, the vegetables that she grows. You can see that **SHE IS PROUD OF WHAT WE ARE AND WHAT SHE DOES.**

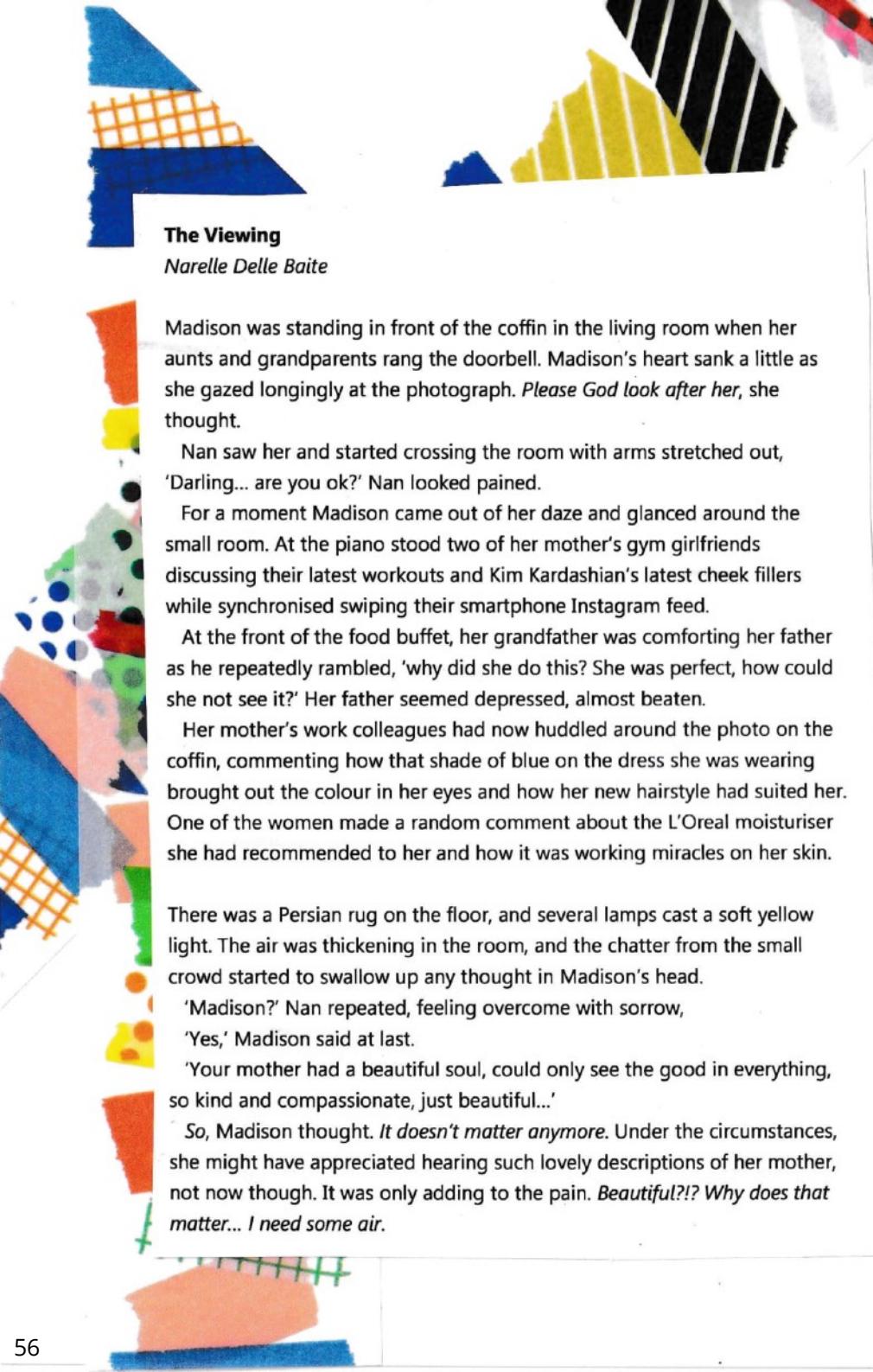


Madison pushed out of Nan's embrace and brushed past an elderly woman on her way out of the room. She was whispering to another elderly woman, something about 'so young... she was only 35... such a beautiful person... you know she would always smile and talk to me no matter where we were or who she was with. I always felt special and important with her, not some old, wrinkly, worthless, decrepit woman... I had no idea she suffered from such anxieties and shame.'

Madison sat down on one of the stairs, hidden from the views of the small crowd in the next room. She grabbed her phone from her pocket and started scrolling through her photos, pausing for a moment at every photo of her mother in her album. None of them seemed right. *This is all I have left of her.* She stopped scrolling and lingered on a photo of her mother standing under a tree. It was taken only last month when she and her parents spontaneously took a road trip out west and came across a parkland full of native trees. When a stick was tossed in the foliage of these trees, butterflies would descend from the tree canopy and swirl around (they rightly named them the butterfly trees). Her mother was looking up while dozens of butterflies swirled around her. Madison could recognise her mother's air, health and her glow, but not her face – she was too far away...

The familiar voices of her aunts interrupted her agonising trance. They were murmuring in the hallway and hadn't noticed Madison on the top of the stairs.

'Has he told her yet?' her aunt asked.  
'No, Madison thinks it was just from complications in a standard surgery.'  
'Will he tell her?' whispered her aunt.  
'I don't know, how is he going to say to her that her mother died from butt lift surgery in Turkey?'



## The Viewing

Narelle Delle Baite

Madison was standing in front of the coffin in the living room when her aunts and grandparents rang the doorbell. Madison's heart sank a little as she gazed longingly at the photograph. *Please God look after her*, she thought.

Nan saw her and started crossing the room with arms stretched out, 'Darling... are you ok?' Nan looked pained.

For a moment Madison came out of her daze and glanced around the small room. At the piano stood two of her mother's gym girlfriends discussing their latest workouts and Kim Kardashian's latest cheek fillers while synchronised swiping their smartphone Instagram feed.

At the front of the food buffet, her grandfather was comforting her father as he repeatedly rambled, 'why did she do this? She was perfect, how could she not see it?' Her father seemed depressed, almost beaten.

Her mother's work colleagues had now huddled around the photo on the coffin, commenting how that shade of blue on the dress she was wearing brought out the colour in her eyes and how her new hairstyle had suited her. One of the women made a random comment about the L'Oreal moisturiser she had recommended to her and how it was working miracles on her skin.

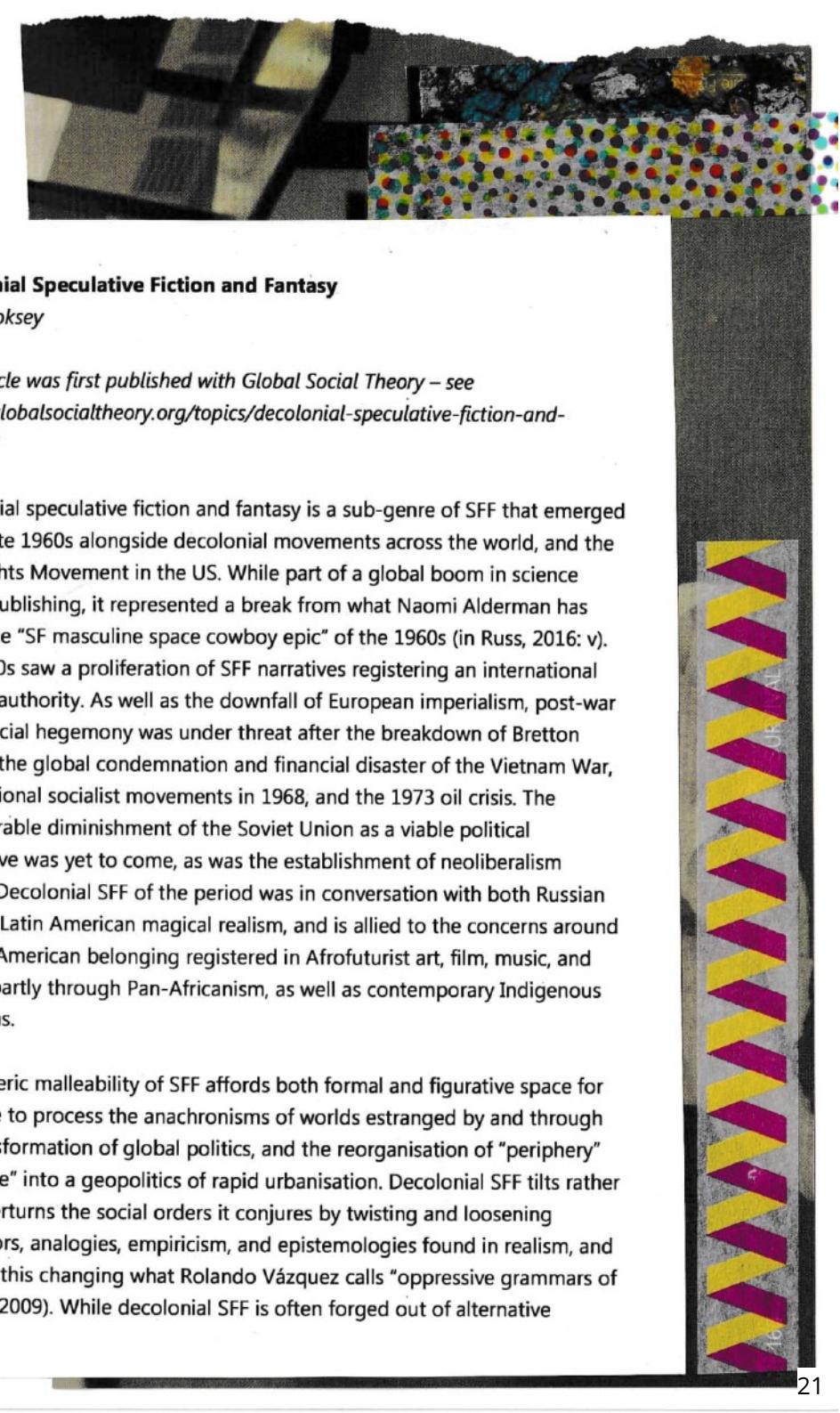
There was a Persian rug on the floor, and several lamps cast a soft yellow light. The air was thickening in the room, and the chatter from the small crowd started to swallow up any thought in Madison's head.

'Madison?' Nan repeated, feeling overcome with sorrow,

'Yes,' Madison said at last.

'Your mother had a beautiful soul, could only see the good in everything, so kind and compassionate, just beautiful...'

So, Madison thought. *It doesn't matter anymore*. Under the circumstances, she might have appreciated hearing such lovely descriptions of her mother, not now though. It was only adding to the pain. *Beautiful?!? Why does that matter... I need some air.*



## Decolonial Speculative Fiction and Fantasy

Lara Choksey

*This article was first published with Global Social Theory – see <https://globalsocialtheory.org/topics/decolonial-speculative-fiction-and-fantasy/>*

Decolonial speculative fiction and fantasy is a sub-genre of SFF that emerged in the late 1960s alongside decolonial movements across the world, and the Civil Rights Movement in the US. While part of a global boom in science fiction publishing, it represented a break from what Naomi Alderman has called the "SF masculine space cowboy epic" of the 1960s (in Russ, 2016: v). The 1970s saw a proliferation of SFF narratives registering an international crisis of authority. As well as the downfall of European imperialism, post-war US financial hegemony was under threat after the breakdown of Bretton Woods, the global condemnation and financial disaster of the Vietnam War, transnational socialist movements in 1968, and the 1973 oil crisis. The irrecoverable diminishment of the Soviet Union as a viable political alternative was yet to come, as was the establishment of neoliberalism proper. Decolonial SFF of the period was in conversation with both Russian SFF and Latin American magical realism, and is allied to the concerns around African-American belonging registered in Afrofuturist art, film, music, and fiction, partly through Pan-Africanism, as well as contemporary Indigenous Futurisms.

The generic malleability of SFF affords both formal and figurative space for narrative to process the anachronisms of worlds estranged by and through the transformation of global politics, and the reorganisation of "periphery" and "core" into a geopolitics of rapid urbanisation. Decolonial SFF tilts rather than overturns the social orders it conjures by twisting and loosening metaphors, analogies, empiricism, and epistemologies found in realism, and through this changing what Rolando Vázquez calls "oppressive grammars of power" (2009). While decolonial SFF is often forged out of alternative

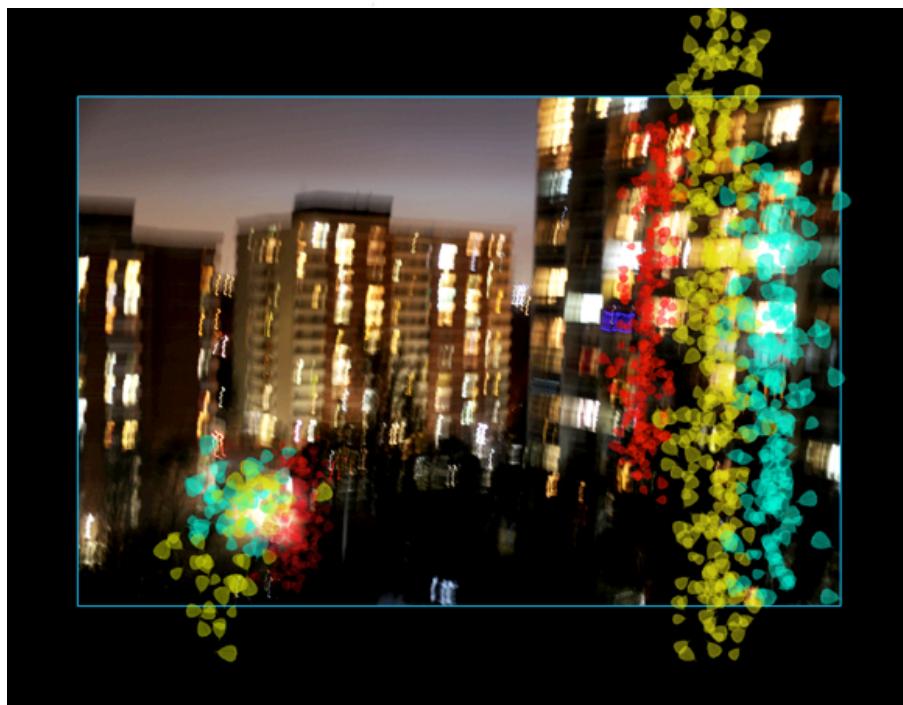
lifeworlds and technological innovations in ways comparable to other SFF sub-genres, these are used as platforms on which to stage social scenes specific to decolonial concerns. These include: explicit invocation of anti-racist and anti-colonial theory; the intersections of marginalized identifications and their attending violence; world-building in wasted imperialism; tensions between decolonial nationalism and post-war internationalism; the inheritance of colonial epistemes – and more broadly, the coloniality/modernity paradigm; anxieties around planetary death as a result of industrialisation; and the ecological alliances and alternative knowledge-systems that might make survival possible.

Decolonial SFF is part of a broader recuperation of SFF by writers from colonized territories (former or current), often reclaiming mythologies and indigenous history appropriated by colonial and imperial anthropology, and incorporating modern narratives of oppression. It is part of postcolonial science fiction; “de”colonial here refers to the way texts often foreground processes of decolonization – both imaginatively and in terms of material infrastructure. Its specific contribution to the genre is its consideration of the challenges of radical change at a transnational level, which involves confronting and dismantling the material processes, social identifications, and political ideologies that have characterized global capitalist relations of (re)production. And through this, remembering and forming other ways of living together, in other possible worlds.

#### Essential Reading

- Benjamin, Ruha 2015. ‘Black to the Future: In Memoriam’ Discover Society  
Dery, Mark. 1994. “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose.” In: *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Counter-Culture*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.  
Dillon, Grace. 2011. *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.





Hopkinson, Nalo, and Mehan, Uppinder (Eds). 2004. *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Jae, Johnnie, Lapensee, Elizabeth, Little Badger, Darcie, and Roanhorse, Rebecca. 2017. "Decolonizing Science Fiction and Imagining Futures: An Indigenous Futures Roundtable." *Strange Horizons*.

Langer, Jessica. *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction*. London: Palgrave, 2011.

Mehan, Uppinder. "Teaching Postcolonial Science Fiction." In: A. Sawyer et al (Eds.), *Teaching Science Fiction*. London: Palgrave, 2011.

**Further Reading**

Bould, Mark. 2017. "African Science Fiction." LARB, Oct 2 2017.

Mukherjee, Pablo. 2012. "Ivan Vladislavić: traversing the uneven city." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 48 (5). 472-484.

Rieder, John. *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2008.

WReC (Warwick Research Collective). 2015. *Combined and Uneven Development: Toward a New Theory of World-Literature*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

**References**

Russ, Joanna. 2016 (1976). *We Who Are About To...* London: Penguin.

Vásquez, Rolando. 2009. "Modernity, Coloniality and Visibility: The Politics of Time." *Sociological Research Online*, 14(4) 7.

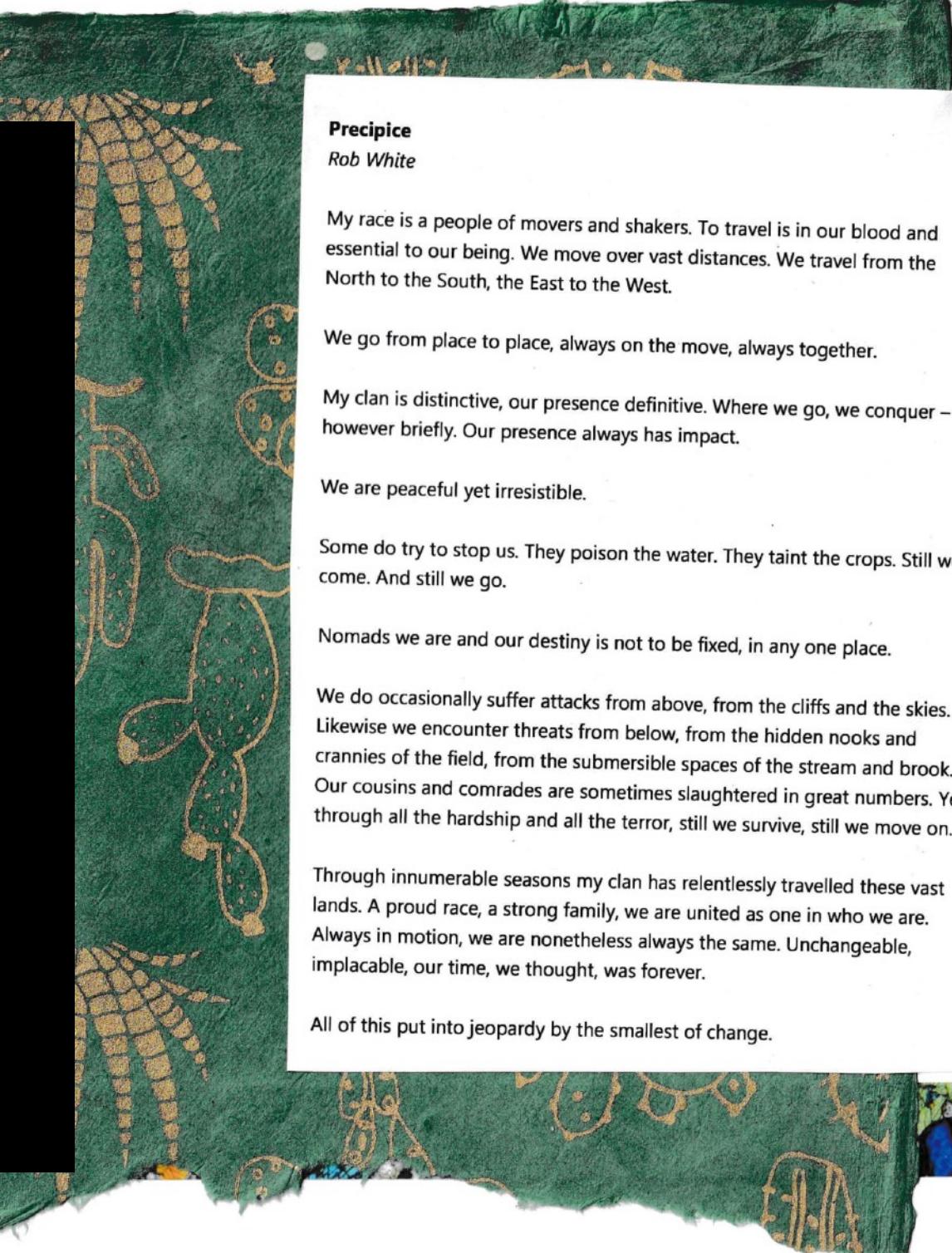
### Questions

1. What are "oppressive grammars of power" and what are some of the ways decolonial SFF breaks them down?
2. How do decolonial SFF texts trace differences between "world" and "globe"?
3. What is the difference between "decolonial" and "postcolonial", and can SFF process the gap between theory and praxis, independence and decolonization, and politics and culture in usable ways?



4. What can decolonial SFF offer contemporary social movements focused on decolonizing education, in terms of the content, characters, and chronology of modern global history?
5. Is it problematic to group distinct cultural movements – Afrofuturism, Indigenous Futurisms, de/postcolonial SFF, magical realism – into comparable sub-genres? Does talking about genre mobilise or reduce these texts' transformative visions of past, present and future?
6. What are some ways in which decolonial SFF texts *adapt* older forms of SFF (not just those classified Western), *recuperate* pre-colonial mythologies, and *incorporate* narratives of oppression? How do they work?
7. How does decolonial SFF complicate and interrogate the dominance of the Cold War as the prevailing story of post-war globalism?





### Precipice

*Rob White*

My race is a people of movers and shakers. To travel is in our blood and essential to our being. We move over vast distances. We travel from the North to the South, the East to the West.

We go from place to place, always on the move, always together.

My clan is distinctive, our presence definitive. Where we go, we conquer – however briefly. Our presence always has impact.

We are peaceful yet irresistible.

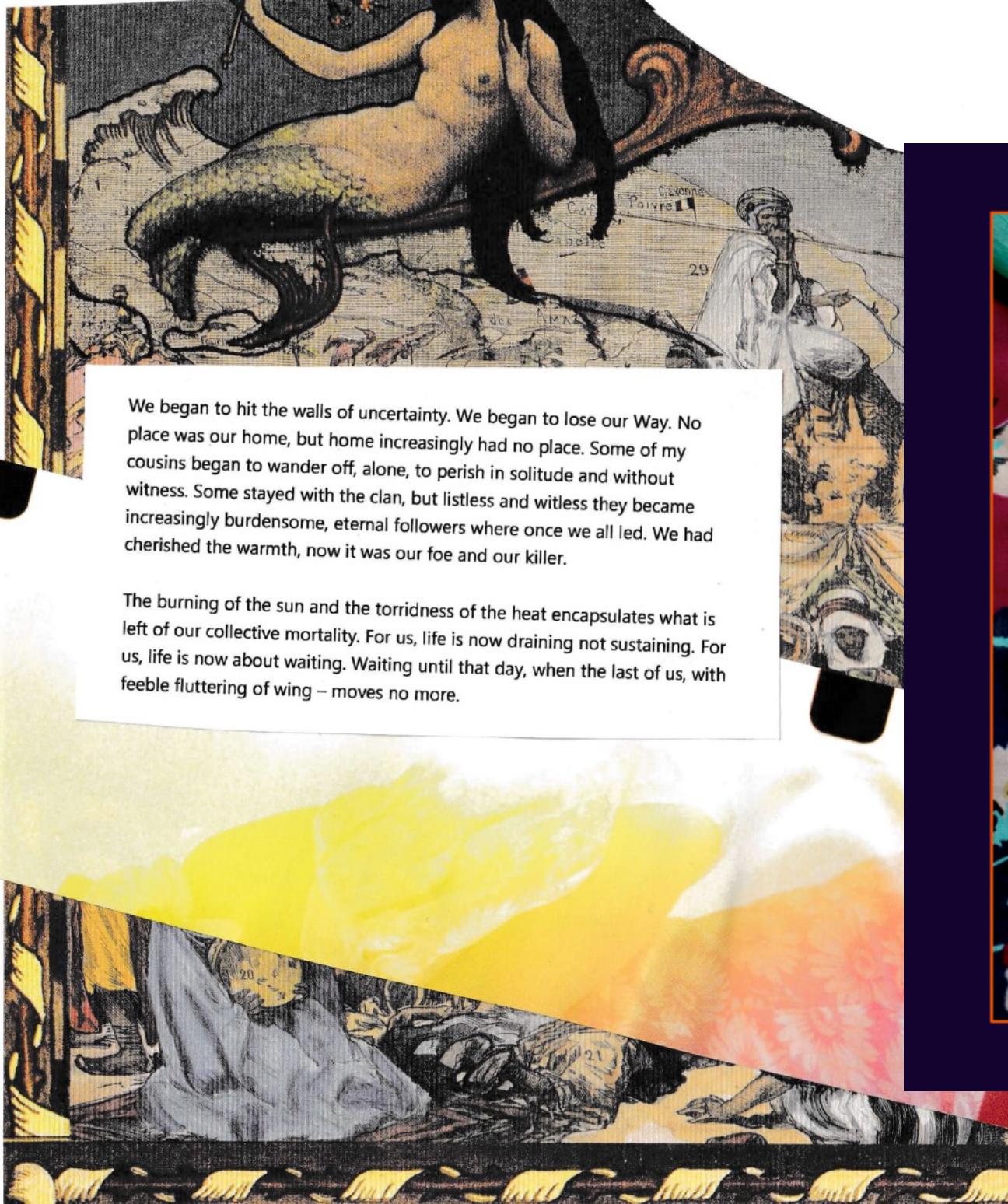
Some do try to stop us. They poison the water. They taint the crops. Still we come. And still we go.

Nomads we are and our destiny is not to be fixed, in any one place.

We do occasionally suffer attacks from above, from the cliffs and the skies. Likewise we encounter threats from below, from the hidden nooks and crannies of the field, from the submersible spaces of the stream and brook. Our cousins and comrades are sometimes slaughtered in great numbers. Yet through all the hardship and all the terror, still we survive, still we move on.

Through innumerable seasons my clan has relentlessly travelled these vast lands. A proud race, a strong family, we are united as one in who we are. Always in motion, we are nonetheless always the same. Unchangeable, implacable, our time, we thought, was forever.

All of this put into jeopardy by the smallest of change.



We began to hit the walls of uncertainty. We began to lose our Way. No place was our home, but home increasingly had no place. Some of my cousins began to wander off, alone, to perish in solitude and without witness. Some stayed with the clan, but listless and witless they became increasingly burdensome, eternal followers where once we all led. We had cherished the warmth, now it was our foe and our killer.

The burning of the sun and the torridness of the heat encapsulates what is left of our collective mortality. For us, life is now draining not sustaining. For us, life is now about waiting. Waiting until that day, when the last of us, with feeble fluttering of wing – moves no more.



allows us to realize that in many ways, as humans, we are all synesthetes to some extent – regardless of whether we have this neurophysiological condition or not – and that our sensory organs ratios are always in flux based on how we interact with our environments.

### References

- Best, S. (2003). The Chicago School of Media Theory Theorizing Media since 2003. Retrieved April 20, 2018, from <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/synaesthesia-1/>
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- McLuhan, M. (1967). *The medium is the massage: An inventory of effects*. London: Penguin.
- Suslick, K. S. (2012). Synesthesia in science and technology: More than making the unseen visible. *Current Opinion in Chemical Biology*, 16(5-6), 557-563.
- Wassily Kandinsky: Synesthesia & Abstraction. (2012, July 28). Retrieved April 20, 2018, from <https://www.synesthesia-test.org/blog/wassily-kandinsky-abstractions>



### Please Stand Back

Paul Aitken

The train pulls away with a gentle heave, as an elderly person might get out of a chair. A bird flies parallel past the window by which Walter sits as the train gathers speed, eventually bringing the bird back into his line of sight before it disappeared – out of mind.

**Due to an increased kill rate at home and in the black zone, the death threat has been raised to immediate. Report any and all divergent behaviours**

Walter hated those announcements. The death threat had been increased following the detonation of an explosive device in a children's play park last week, killing fourteen people, mostly kids. On top of this, another nerve bomb had been detonated in one of the western districts of the Black Zone – closest to Safehaven. When bombs went off in the eastern districts, people tended to ignore them, but more westerly attacks brought about greater anxiety. For Walter, the only issue with these Westerly attacks was that they would "review" – that is to say, increase – the dosage of neural modulatory drugs. The nerve toxins being detonated over western Black Zone districts tended to be carried with the wind into Safehaven. It was believed by many that attacks such as those carried out by the man in the play park were direct results of exposure to the toxins. Others believed that such attacks were in protest against The Core. Personally, Walter didn't believe that the Black Zone really existed, that there was really a war going on or that anyone was in any actual danger from the source they were told they were.

Walter was an intelligent man, and could see these things, but wasn't interested in them. All he was interested in was keeping his own life together, seeing his friends for drinks and taking as few drugs as he could get away with. That was the life that he had chosen. Asking questions leads



to questions being asked, Walter was content not to have any questions asked, and not to question things. This was how one ensured a life of peace. Walter's stomach lurched. The modulators he was prescribed didn't agree with him – they made his gut summersault and his chest tighten. He had mentioned these concerns at practice but his doctor didn't seem interested.

"Modulators are safe, you don't have to worry, take Numbs if it's that bad."

Numbs were expensive, you had to buy them yourself. Walter explained that they didn't help him. The doctor literally shrugged, explaining that pain modulators worked fine, citing statistics – as though he were reading from a script.

Walter rubbed his chest. The Sanity was one thing, but the Stays he had been taking were really upsetting his chest. Stays were supposed to help ground one's thoughts and prevent rash decision making. Walter didn't like to take more than he needed to by Obligation, but he had been taking Stays to help him deal with his marital problems. His wife didn't know this, but he suspected she was taking them too.

#### **Now approaching Seraphi Bridge; take care, stay aware**

Walter collected his belongings and alighted - Seraphi Bridge is a business district, but it is where Walter had lived for thirty years. The trains opened straight onto the street. Walter got off and began walking parallel to the train, as the bird had flown.

More birds fly by. Their wings softly raise and lower dust as they pass – imperceptibly but actually. Walter looks round. They say you know, you see them and you know. Walter knew. His eyes passed over everything but her, and he knew, then. Walter heard the horn of a nearby train, the cough of an elderly lady and the wheels of a passing suitcase. Each sound was punctuated so clearly that it seemed to follow the last in sequence – according to some cosmic grammar. It made sense that everything should

equivalent from each of the fields, creating a system of synesthesia on the level of metaphor (Best, 2003).

Visual artists also often use specific words related to sounds, textures and physical sensations to describe their work. Many have sought to explore the connection between music or sound and colour.

Wassily Kandinsky, who is known to have been a synesthete himself, attempted to capture his experiences of 'seeing' musical dimensions in his art using bold colours and abstract forms. His famous compositions evoke sound through vision and pitch through colour. Like Kandinsky's compositions, I have incorporated bold colours into the images, to suggest that each colour carries its own meaning and depth; the abstract nature of the photographs is also intended to engage the viewer's emotions while leaving space for the viewer to contemplate and fill it with their own sensory experiences.

We all utilize cross sensory metaphors such as hot jazz, sweet music, sour face, etcetera (Suslick, 2012, p. 557).

Some of the photos (the wooly pineapple, pizza slices) have been produced to promote a more visual-tactile experience, to encourage the viewer to think about how visual experiences are complex and multidimensional, going beyond the sensory response of the visual cortex and having the potential to spill over to other sensory perception modes.

Can we 'feel' or experience the texture of the objects in the photographs by simply looking at them?

If we think of seeing as more than just a visual experience, it allows us to discover the many layers of truth to reality rather than conforming to an oversimplified objective 'scientific' worldview. Moreover, if we tune ourselves to become more empathetic to the synesthete's perceptive experience, it



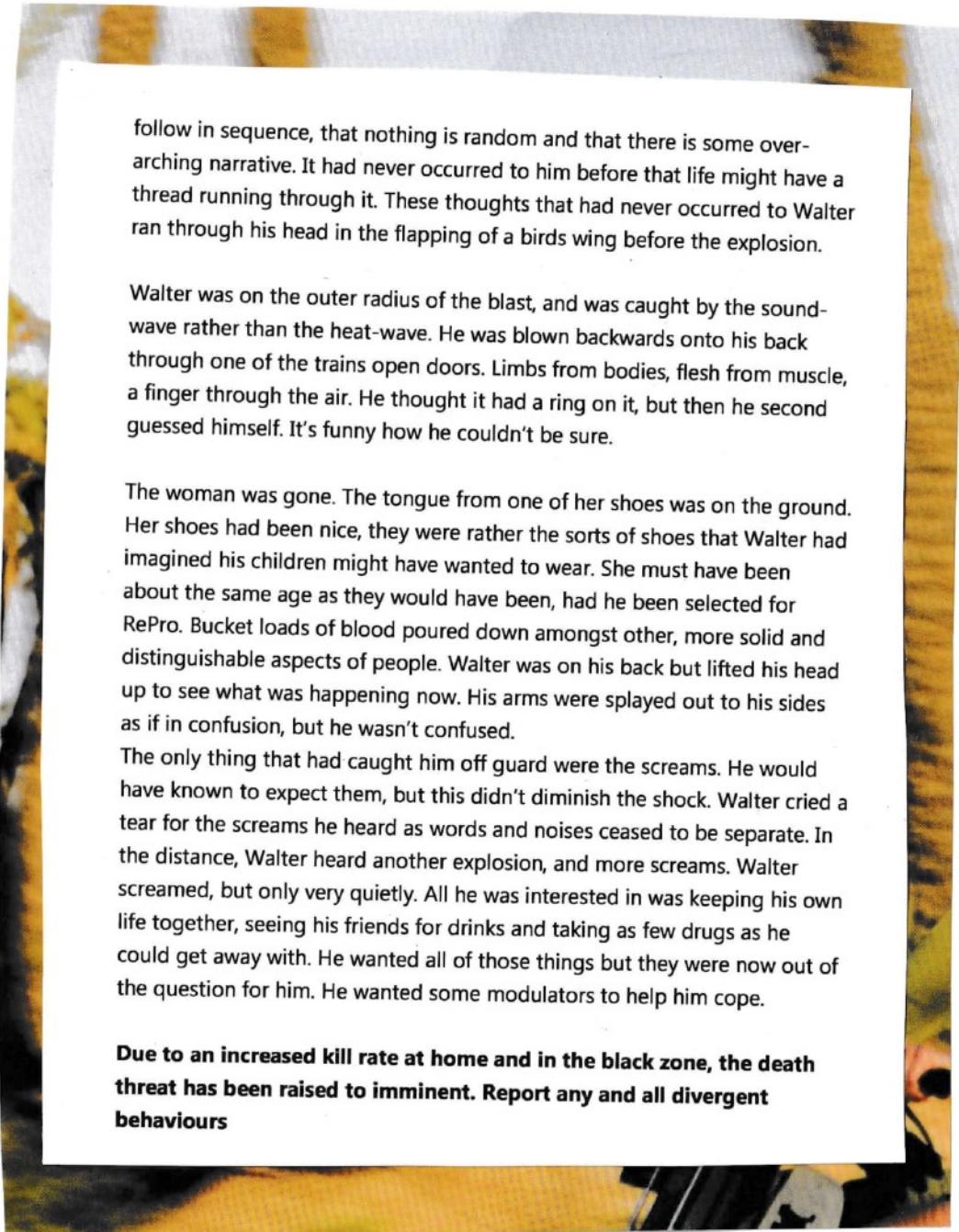
eat juicy fruits and then contemplate on how these sensory experiences can be creatively transferred into a visual production. Brainstorming ways of representing sensory experiences visually proved to be quite challenging and was probably the most difficult phase of the creative process. During this phase, it helped to immerse myself in various environments. Some of the photographic images were taken in Graffiti Alley in Downtown, Toronto; one picture was taken at the Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Mirror Exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The rest of the images were taken in the domestic sphere using everyday objects for constructing the compositions.

Visual space corresponds to literate and alphabetical media and is described as alienating individuals and influencing rational analytical thinking. McLuhan argues, 'by imposing unvisualisable relationships that are the result of instant speed, electric technology dethrones the visual sense and restores us to the dominion of synesthesia, and the close interinvolvement of the other senses' (1964, pp. 110–111).

What does it mean to perceive the world from the 'interinvolvement of the other senses'?

The power of the arts to anticipate future social and technological developments, by a generation and more, has long been recognized. In this century Ezra Pound called the artist 'the antennae of the race'. Art as radar acts as 'an early alarm system,' as it were, enabling us to discover social and psychic targets in lots of time to prepare to cope with them (McLuhan, 1964, p. 2).

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, synesthesia became a preoccupation for many poets that sought to explore the meaning of perception, testing the limits of what 'normal' perception means. Techniques of metaphor and symbolism were used in literary construction and cultivation of synesthetic-like perception. The famous poet Charles Baudelaire had a theory that posed that every colour, sound, odour and emotion was in some ways bound up with an



follow in sequence, that nothing is random and that there is some overarching narrative. It had never occurred to him before that life might have a thread running through it. These thoughts that had never occurred to Walter ran through his head in the flapping of a birds wing before the explosion.

Walter was on the outer radius of the blast, and was caught by the sound-wave rather than the heat-wave. He was blown backwards onto his back through one of the trains open doors. Limbs from bodies, flesh from muscle, a finger through the air. He thought it had a ring on it, but then he second guessed himself. It's funny how he couldn't be sure.

The woman was gone. The tongue from one of her shoes was on the ground. Her shoes had been nice, they were rather the sorts of shoes that Walter had imagined his children might have wanted to wear. She must have been about the same age as they would have been, had he been selected for RePro. Bucket loads of blood poured down amongst other, more solid and distinguishable aspects of people. Walter was on his back but lifted his head up to see what was happening now. His arms were splayed out to his sides as if in confusion, but he wasn't confused.

The only thing that had caught him off guard were the screams. He would have known to expect them, but this didn't diminish the shock. Walter cried a tear for the screams he heard as words and noises ceased to be separate. In the distance, Walter heard another explosion, and more screams. Walter screamed, but only very quietly. All he was interested in was keeping his own life together, seeing his friends for drinks and taking as few drugs as he could get away with. He wanted all of those things but they were now out of the question for him. He wanted some modulators to help him cope.

**Due to an increased kill rate at home and in the black zone, the death threat has been raised to imminent. Report any and all divergent behaviours**

Walter wanted to stand up, so he tried to. His chest tightened up. He continued trying to get up. His chest tightened up. His eyes opened further. Surprise. It had been a surprising day. He was surprised when he saw the woman destroy herself and the people around her – he was not surprised when the bomb went off. He was not surprised when his chest tightened up – he was surprised that he was dying. He brought one hand towards his chest. He let out a cough, but couldn't breath back enough air to compensate for it.

The doors of the train closed on his legs and opened again upon failing to meet.

#### **Step back from the doors**

Walter's eyes widened further.

#### **Step back from the doors**

Walter's chest hurt a lot

#### **Security personnel have been dispatched to your location**

Walter cried another tear

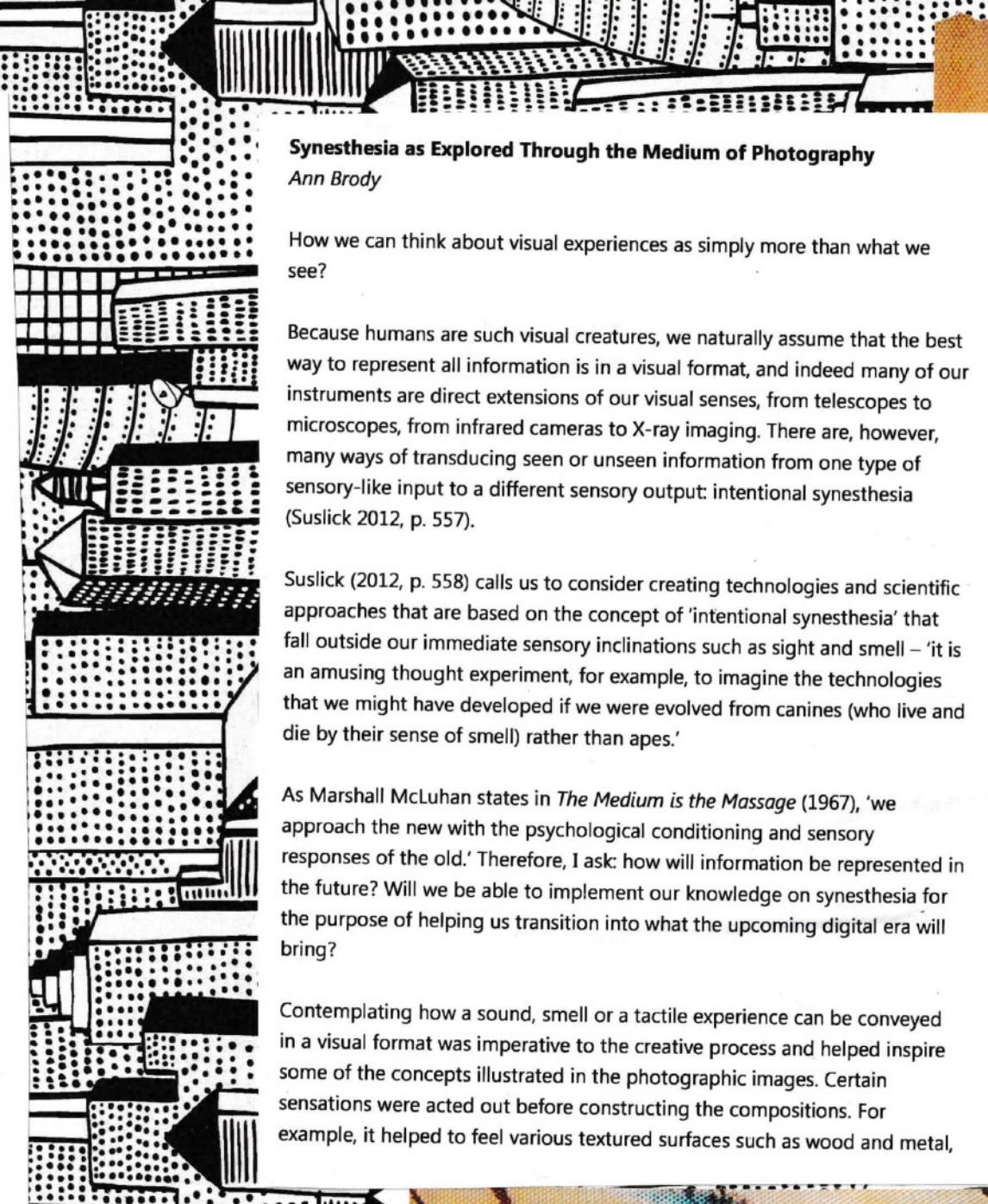
#### **Ready your travel chip and identifier for inspection**

Walter can still hear screaming

#### **Step back from the doors**

Walter wants to see his wife

#### **Security personnel have been dispatched to your location**



#### **Synesthesia as Explored Through the Medium of Photography**

*Ann Brody*

How we can think about visual experiences as simply more than what we see?

Because humans are such visual creatures, we naturally assume that the best way to represent all information is in a visual format, and indeed many of our instruments are direct extensions of our visual senses, from telescopes to microscopes, from infrared cameras to X-ray imaging. There are, however, many ways of transducing seen or unseen information from one type of sensory-like input to a different sensory output: intentional synesthesia (Suslick 2012, p. 557).

Suslick (2012, p. 558) calls us to consider creating technologies and scientific approaches that are based on the concept of 'intentional synesthesia' that fall outside our immediate sensory inclinations such as sight and smell – 'it is an amusing thought experiment, for example, to imagine the technologies that we might have developed if we were evolved from canines (who live and die by their sense of smell) rather than apes.'

As Marshall McLuhan states in *The Medium is the Message* (1967), 'we approach the new with the psychological conditioning and sensory responses of the old.' Therefore, I ask: how will information be represented in the future? Will we be able to implement our knowledge on synesthesia for the purpose of helping us transition into what the upcoming digital era will bring?

Contemplating how a sound, smell or a tactile experience can be conveyed in a visual format was imperative to the creative process and helped inspire some of the concepts illustrated in the photographic images. Certain sensations were acted out before constructing the compositions. For example, it helped to feel various textured surfaces such as wood and metal,

'When we all get to question the way things are and to then be included in deciding how they are to be. That is freedom. Freedom to self-create the cave.'

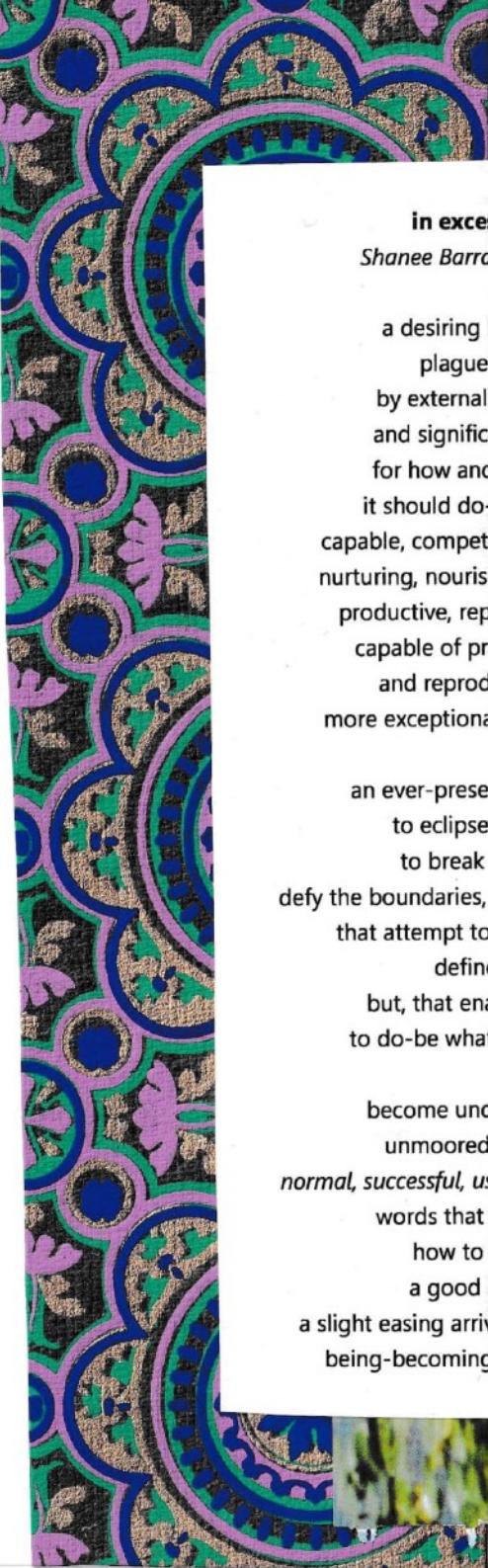
Emmet lent in and grabbed the callused hand of a man who had clearly been climbing through the cave for a long time. It dawned on Emmet that he would rather explore the cave and its multitude of forms and expressions, than seek to escape it. And he would rather be involved in its creation, than to be ruled by its inherited form. As he pulled the person through, he realised that it was the young social scientist he had seen in the cave.

Walter loves his wife

**Ready your travel chip and identifier for inspection**

Walter dies before the screaming does.





### in excess

Shanee Barraclough

a desiring body  
plagued  
by external signs  
and significations  
for how and what  
it should do-be-say  
capable, competent, unique  
nurturing, nourishing, giving  
productive, reproductive  
capable of producing  
and reproducing  
more exceptional creatures.

an ever-present desire  
to eclipse it all  
to break free  
defy the boundaries, categorisations,  
that attempt to fix, lodge,  
define  
but, that enable her  
to do-be what instead?  
  
become undefined?  
unmoored from:  
*normal, successful, useful, meaningful*  
words that tell her  
how to live  
a good life?  
a slight easing arrives in her body  
being-becoming 'undefined'



being led by the young social scientist. 'It is the wrong position. You question and investigate the individual and its relationship to society. You question the individual's ability to break free from society. But the individual is nothing other than an institution of society. Instead, you should be questioning the relationship between the psyche and society. Between that inner world of consciousness and unconsciousness. That flux of radical imagination, which actively engages with the social, taking up the meaning that it is given of itself and of the world, and uses it as its own. It is through the singular psyche's relationship with society, that it is shaped into what we believe to be the social individual", explained the old bald man. 'When we are socialised, we are pulled into the cave and a whole social world is opened before our eyes, Emmet. And everything that can be glimpsed *outside*, is glimpsed only from our position in the cave. The only reality we can know, Emmet, is a social reality.'

The old bald man shuffled closer to Emmet, whispering, 'and yet, back there they were claiming to have seen past the social, to have seen outside the cave. Tell me, where do their ideas come from, or the lens through which they see? Is it not the social which informs them how to see past the cave? Then is it not that they would be passing from one social to another? From one cave to another.'

The old bald man approached the cave wall and began pushing it into new shapes and forms. The wall seemed as though it was made of wet sand, as it manoeuvred and manipulated under his gentle force. Emmet could see that each stroke the old bald man made upon the wall was thoughtfully planned and executed.

'True freedom is autonomy, Emmet. Or, self-rule,' said the old bald man, remoulding parts of the cave into a new entrance. 'And autonomy can be obtained when we realise that as collectives, we self-create the cave, its laws, norms and customs. And then when we begin to take control over how this self-creation takes place.'

The old bald man reached back through the cave's entrance and started pulling people through. "But autonomy, Emmet," he said as he heaved a person through the light, 'is only possible when we are free amongst others.'



from the tight grip that society had upon him, his mind and his desires. Emmet wanted individual freedom.

When Emmet turned, the old bald man had begun his descent into the cave's lower levels. *Wrong way, you old fool*, Emmet thought, and for a moment he hesitated. He looked to the last of the group being guided by their Enlightened Other, and every part of his body urged him to join in. When he glanced at the old bald man in his descent however, the shadows of the cave had lit up around him, and Emmet felt compelled to follow. He ran to catch the old bald man.

'Where are you going?' Emmet asked.

'To the conservatives,' laughed the old bald man.

'We were just told to beware those who conserve the cave and the powers it grants them,' Emmet reminded him.

The old bald man stopped and looked at Emmet sternly and said, 'beware, I say, of those who speak in the name of truth. Beware those who claim to have seen the light and to have left the cave, but have not questioned how they came to have seen the light and the means by which they believe to have left the cave. Beware those who have not questioned their own background. That have not questioned that position from which the world takes shape for them. The position from which their questions emerge. From which their *truth* emerges.'

'Doesn't their truth come from outside the cave?' Emmet asked. 'From seeing the world as it is? Doesn't their truth come from freeing themselves from the power of their illusions?'

'Blah,' the old man spat. 'You don't leave the cave, I told you that. You simply pass inside another. And those who see the truth of it, simply wish to be in charge of how the cave is formed.'

*There he goes again, Emmet thought, with his riddles.* 'If we are in a cave, there must be something outside,' Emmet reasoned.

'What the individual perceives *outside*, and even the individual in their essence, are organised and shaped via the institution of the cave in which they are located,' said the old bald man. 'That classic position you take, and the position *they* take,' he continued, gesturing in the direction of the group

indefinable.

but be careful  
not to substitute one category  
for another,  
not to give up those descriptions  
only to search out  
alternate ones,  
stay here  
linger a while  
in the indeterminable  
unnamed, indefinable.  
unmarked.

in a place  
without inscription  
on the body  
marking out how one, or other  
should be, behave.

a place  
that she defines  
where she exists  
unnamed, expansive  
moving, mobile  
unmoored  
unencumbered  
unrestricted

she speaks  
from a body's desires,  
without being marked  
as different  
not fitting the taxon





not good enough  
not correct

because not fitting  
is always in relation to Other,  
an Other who is always better.  
now, there is no hierarchy  
difference is the 'norm'  
in these, always, multiple  
moving, subject positions.

good enough is nowhere  
all there is here.  
the beauty of here, and there  
that resists any kind of categorisation  
of fixed naming  
of fixed positioning  
of fixity.

Instead, there is a fluidity  
an always-in-relation  
a situated in-between-ness  
of past-present-futures.  
full of possibility and potentialities  
for redeployment  
for eclipsing  
the structures, histories, and stories  
which attempt to fix her  
in place.

fixed, stuck, frozen,  
limited, restricted, reduced,  
does a naming always limit?

noticed. People everywhere could be seen going about their daily lives, absorbed in their activities, both the good and the bad. He noticed that it was not just the actors who were acting but even the lawyers, the athletes, and the teachers. Each seemed to be playing their part in their own unique ways, whilst forming collective narratives and drawing from common scripts.

At that moment the old bald man paused by a group gathering in front of a young social scientist. The young social scientist was cautioning his fellows of other *false Enlighteners* within the cave.

'Beware, my friends,' said the young social scientist. 'Beware of the illusions of those who wish to conserve the cave as it is.' There was a murmur of agreement, and the old bald man nodded for Emmet to watch the proceedings.

The young social scientist's voice bellowed and bounced from the cave walls. 'Beware of those who would not give up the grip of their illusions and the power these grant them over others.'

The young social scientist began pointing out significant features of his research; findings from his experience of having left the cave, from having pulled the shadows from his eyes, and having looked back upon the cave to see its truth. 'They would pull you into the cave, my friends, and destroy your individual freedom. Just to benefit from the powers that the cave offers them all,' the animated social scientist continued.

People from the crowd began to offer him their support, adding their own observations to strengthen the argument. Soon the noise of the group was all consuming, as though the cave's walls could collapse under the force of their will, without any need of finding the entrance. The group began to follow the young social scientist up a carpeted staircase with finely carved wooden rails, that steered toward the cave's surface. *Towards freedom*, Emmet thought.

Emmet had desperately wanted what the young social scientists was offering. He had wanted to break from the hedonistic ways of the cave, that always sucked him back in. From its economic illusions and hegemonic masculinities that it thrust upon him. He had desperately wanted to break



## The Cave

Brent Van Gils

They had passed the cave's entrance several times, he was told, though Emmet never even glimpsed the light.

'Even if you had seen the light and you had stepped through it, no one would have noticed,' said the old bald man, as he led Emmet over a boulder that half blocked their way. 'It would have seemed like an ordinary situation to everyone else and, often, even to yourself.'

'Yes, to myself and everyone else,' Emmet agreed. 'Except for the Enlightened Others,' he added. 'Who have passed through the cave's entrance and returned to tell their tales. Oh, and you.'

Emmet knew of the Enlightened Others and their authority on the cave. On truth, and knowledge. They were the ones who had broken free from the cave and its enchanting grip on the mind of the ordinary man. It was known that they had wanted so badly for their fellow prisoners of the cave to see the world outside, that they had bravely plunged back to the cave's depths to tell their tales.

They had been the ones who had first divulged the cave's secrets to Emmet, revealing the shadows animating its walls, that tell a false vision of truth. The old bald man spoke a different story to the Enlightened Others, however. His story seemed contradictory at times, and was often harder to grasp, but Emmet felt drawn to him, nonetheless.

'It may be true,' responded the old bald man, as he slid down the other side of the boulder and motioned for Emmet to follow. 'They may have passed through the cave's entrance, but they did not leave the cave. They simply stepped right on into a new one. Even if it only revealed the old cave in a new light.'

Every word felt like a riddle, to Emmet. And the old bald man's story seemed to contradict itself at every turn. *How could a cave's entrance simply lead to another cave?* he thought.

For a moment the cave seemed to light up, for Emmet. Each of its features standing out in their own unique way. It was a busy place, he



(or, can there be power in it, too?)  
or only in resisting the power  
of the Other to name?

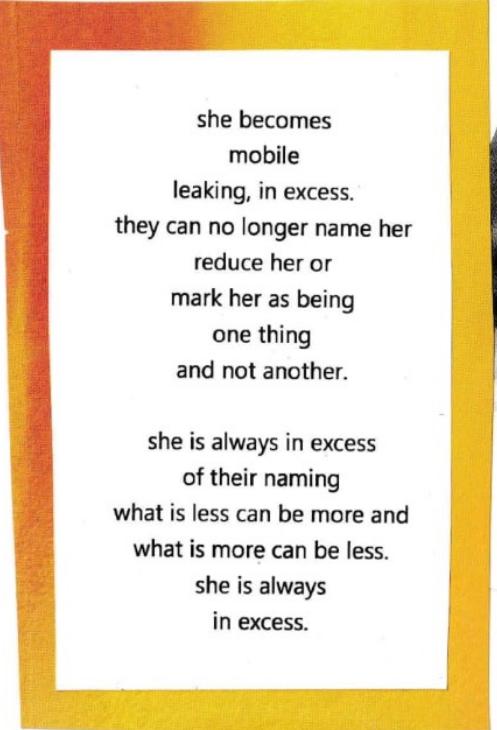
to be unnamed, outside of  
discourse, beyond -  
is that possible?  
to instead see, look  
for escape, lines of flight,  
places of eclipse?

in naming the discourse  
losing the clichés  
speaking from the body  
embodied knowing,  
instead  
a transformative escape into  
that indefinable space  
if only for a moment?

no longer fixed, fixable.  
an embodied fluidity  
a body without organs.

no longer  
stuck  
literally and figuratively.  
no longer  
defined, pathologised and fixed.  
instead, categories are loosened  
marks are erased  
ropes are untied.





she becomes  
mobile  
leaking, in excess.  
they can no longer name her  
reduce her or  
mark her as being  
one thing  
and not another.

she is always in excess  
of their naming  
what is less can be more and  
what is more can be less.  
she is always  
in excess.

**Thirst**  
*Kelly-Marie Roberts*

The men want rain

hot

soft

still

They storm

boil

scream

ache

to pour

'Yes,' Mai answered.

'That's five cents extra. Is that okay?'

'Yes, of course.'

'25.18, please.' She began placing the items in a plastic bag.

'Can I pay you twelve dollars in cash, and use my debit to pay the difference?' Mai asked quietly. Her face was heated. Behind her, another person was unloading their items.

'Yeah, sure,' the cashier replied, unfazed.

Mai handed her the cash.

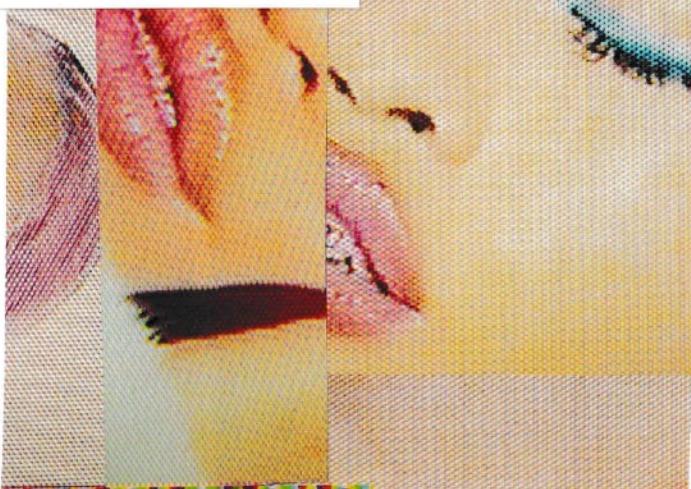
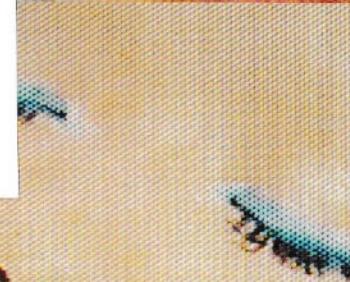
'You owe 13.18,' the cashier said.

Mai used the pin pad with slightly trembling fingers. She kept her eyes down.

'Thanks, have a good day,' the cashier said, handing Mai the receipt.

Without taking a breath, she greeted the next guest, 'Hi, how are you doing.'

Mai walked out of the store, her face still hot. She felt like she was about to burst into tears, but blinked rapidly to avoid them streaming down her face. She did not want Phil to see her upset.



## The Mundane Tech in Service

Anna Nguyen

### I. Restaurant Reviews & Labor

As she walked to work, Mai read the scathing review on Yelp:

*'the coffee and selection of breads are good but beware of the asian barista with tattoos. so pretentious for someone who works at a small coffee shop! she probably smokes american spirits and listens to indi music! why are people so unhappy when they work in A SERVICE INDUSTRY??!!'!*

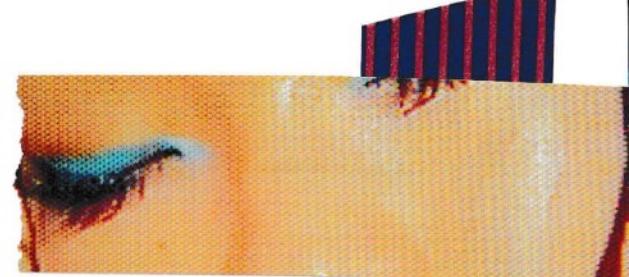
Mai reread it, almost in amusement. She had lived in Seattle for two years with her boyfriend Phil, relocating from the Midwest for his graduate studies. Without any real plans or clerical experience, Mai took any job she could get and soon realized that the only people who enjoyed – and could afford – living in the main city were tech employees. She often saw their name badges and their dismissive quip, 'that's not very Seattle of you,' an indicator of the Nordstrom 'Yes, Customer' culture.

Service industry gigs were always hiring, and she almost always got a call back. Before working at the nearby bakery, she had worked at three clothing stores and two restaurants. But the hours were simply not enough. At one retailer, most of her 'fixed' hours were on-call – the only way to know if she would have to work was if she called two hours in advance.

Mai fantasised about a conversation between herself and her boss Ty. If he was at the bakery at all, it was to pick up the deposit bags or give a reprimand disguised as a pep talk. Ty cared about his shop's online presence and would often reply to the negative reviewers by offering a gift card to make up for the bad experience. When an angry biker yelled at Mai for not offering cream for his coffee, Ty rushed over to tell the offending customer that he did not need to pay for his croissant and Americano.

Mai imagined Ty's soliloquy:

*'Even if I don't necessarily agree with the customer, I have to make sure that my Yelp rating is at 4.75. My rating used to be 5, but it started to slip when you started working... But that doesn't matter. Even if you are having a bad day,*





*remember that the customers give you tips when you provide them with a good experience.'*

Ty made similarly passive aggressive speeches to the other employees. They all listened in silence, their knowing eyes darting back and forth. Ty delusionally portrayed himself as a decent boss who paid everyone well. Bakers are paid eleven dollars plus tips from the front-of-house staff, and the baristas are paid nine dollars and fifty cents plus tips. Jo, the head baker, had told Mai that she once tried to negotiate her raise from ten fifty to twelve – the dream minimum wage in Seattle – but Ty was firm with his fifty-cent raise.

Officially, the three bakers were considered full-time employees. Among the five baristas, Mai worked the most hours, but she was not full-time. Ty would strategically schedule her cumulative week hours to be 31.5; half an hour more would qualify her for full-time status. But Ty did not want to offer her benefits. During a few shifts, Mai took longer to clean the shop on a busy night working by herself. Ty had to pay her overtime, and he scolded her for working too slowly. Mai reminded him that she worked as quickly as she could while desiring the shop to look presentable for the morning baristas.

'You don't have to mop every night,' he chided.

On a night that was less busy, Mai opted to only sweep the floor. The next day, Ty complained that the floors were not gleaming.

'I just don't know why it would take you so long to clean this' – he waved his hand around the cafe area – 'place up! The bakers clean their own kitchen. What's taking you so long?'

*I need to look for a new job*, Mai thought. This sentiment always persisted in her mind whenever she worked, at whatever job.

## II. Self-Checkout

After Mai's shift, she walked to the direction of her apartment. She needed to make a detour at the grocery store. Whenever Mai got paid, she would send ninety percent of her paycheck to Phil via Google Wallet. She kept all of her tips, saving it for groceries. At the nearby store she often used the self-

checkout to pay with cash. If there was a balance remaining, she would use her debit card to cover the rest. She opted not to interact with a human cashier. She worried that the cashiers would know that she was tight on money. It embarrassed her.

She entered the brightly-lit store and grabbed a basket. At the produce area, she edged to a corner and checked her account balance. She had about thirty dollars remaining in the checking account and twelve dollars from that night's tips. Her bi-weekly pay would be directly transferred to her account tomorrow.

Mai settled on salad and caprese sandwiches for dinner. They still had a loaf of sourdough bread sitting on their kitchen counter; one less thing to purchase. Mai made sure to get the cheapest mozzarella and grabbed a bottle of Lagunitas, one of Phil's favorite local beers. Approaching the small section of self-automated kiosks, she halted. All three machines had a crude handwritten sign that read 'out of order on their screens.

Mai panicked. She looked down at her basket. Should she put away some of the groceries? But what about dinner for Phil?

*Maybe I should just get some Kraft mac and cheese*, but she immediately banished the thought. *Maybe Phil wants something nice*. Mai took a deep breath and walked over to the register. Two people were ahead of her. She took a quick inventory of the items:

Small spring mix, \$3.99.  
Mozzarella cheese, \$4.99.  
Small tomatoes on vine, \$2.99.  
Basil, \$1.99.  
Lagunitas, \$8.99.

She could use her debit to pay for everything and would not be overdrawn. She even entertained depositing her cash into her account, but there was no ATM nearby.

'Hi, how are you doing,' the cashier said monotonously. Mai smiled and tried to remain calm. As the cashier scanned the items, she asked, 'Do you need a bag?'