

**a sociological fiction
publication**

**Edition #3
July 2018**

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**SO
FI
ZINE**



**So Fi Zine
Edition #3
July 2018**

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Ashleigh Watson**

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**Guest Editorials by
Les Back
Nirmal Puwar**

**Drabbles edited by
Mark Carrigan**

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AQUARIUS

commitment
cannot be put on hold
The potential
to
choose
what is valu-
able is a responsibility
seek to establish
a "home"

PISCES

pay attention to a wider range of
humankind.

SAGITTARIUS

In the early days a yearning for proximity and experimentation was profound

Return to this history and recover it

CAPRICORN

rethink the relationship The mental audit and frenzied rhythm threatens the future

Editorial Ashleigh Watson

I launched the first edition of *So Fi* a little over a year ago, online on a humble blog site and at a half-table stall at the London Radical Bookfair 2017. The first edition was a side project that I made as part of an Endeavour fellowship (an Australian research awards scheme) at Goldsmiths. Les Back was supervising my PhD during the fellowship, and I vividly remember asking him if the zine was a good idea - it was the end of a long, warm, productive meeting, on an overcast Tuesday afternoon high up in Warmington Tower, drinking tea in the cosy office Les has carved out inside his extensive personal campus library. I was so nervous even asking, but his instant enthusiasm convinced me that even if it was an epic (or rather, quiet and pitiful) failure it would be something fun for me to do while in London. 89 pieces of creative work later, I am thrilled and humbled at the reception of *So Fi*. Thousands of people around the world have read the first two editions. Edition #3 includes some of the strongest sociology I've been able to publish yet, and I am so glad to give this kind of work a platform.

Edition #3 of *So Fi* is inspired by the live methods work of Les Back and Nirmal Puwar. Designing this edition I reflected a lot on what they say about becoming attentive to how the sensory constitutes the social texture of life. This sensory constitution is something I've worked to become more attentive to. A large part of my creative writing practice is spent crafting this texture. While putting this edition together I've also been thinking a lot about sociological voice - how sociological imagination is brought to a piece through style and authorial position rather than via explanation. I am interested in how certain voices and perspectives can open a scene sociologically for a reader. This applies to other forms of art beyond fiction writing, like photography and illustration and film. It is my sense that sociological imagination comes to life in art in the intersection of texture and voice. This is a theory you may consider when reading the pieces in this edition.

Thank you to everyone who made this edition possible - each of the authors for your brilliant creative works, Mark Carrigan for your support and curation of our special Drabble section, Nirmal Puwar for your incisive reflections, and Les Back for supporting this edition in particular and this project from the start.

Guest Editorial

The Uses of Fiction

Les Back

As an avid reader and fan of the magazine it's really wonderful to offer a contribution at last because *So Fi* bridges my love of reading novels and short stories and my work as a sociologist. A nagging doubt has stopped me offering a contribution previously. I love fiction but I have always felt I didn't quite have the chops as a writer for fiction.

Regardless, I have worked to infuse my own attempts at writing sociology with that love of literature while arguing for a more artful way to show and tell social life. I think part of this is the realisation that even the best sociological authors like Ann Oakley and Richard Sennett end up as quite poor novelists. Of course, this need not be the fate of sociologically inspired fiction as will become clear. I want to use my own hesitation as a starting point and ask the question what are the uses of fiction sociologically speaking?

Perhaps the distinction between fiction and non-fiction is at the outset misleading. Non-fictional realities are always assembled through the artifice of writing. They are 'true fictions' that require the conventions and structures of language to mediate them. Always selective facsimiles of social life, they are manufactured through the rattling blows on the keyboard by the fingers of fallible authors. In writing we perform the fiction of taking our readers to the things we have seen, the voices we have listened to and the places we have sensed and made sense of.

So the first thing that I want to argue that is useful about fiction is it makes us more attentive to literary form in the communication of our arguments. Novelists in particular have much to teach us about the way the style of storytelling conveys the points of the story itself. Jon McGregor's

VIRGO

consider

new strategies for

morphing and

adapting

The challenge

is how to

reinvent

Without bearing the impossible weight of becoming

LIBRA

become mindful of

the emotional

challenge

of life.

recover

new

directions,

forget

the

rough

academic

organization

continuously re-calibrating

for new markets;

SCORPIO

forge

a Summer

to

believe

in

CANCER

_____ a _____ crisis _____ is

_____ developing _____

_____ so _____
_____ care about _____
and _____ take an
interest _____ in _____

_____ deeper _____ internal mechanisms _____
_____ of _____ envy _____

LEO

_____ slow down and reflect _____

_____ take _____ a walk. _____

evade _____ the city, _____

_____ and _____
_____ become exposed to openness _____
_____ rather than fixed _____

future _____ relationships. _____

extraordinary novel *Reservoir 13* is on the surface about a girl who goes missing in a small rural village in England. What the book conveys in the writing itself is the sense of the seasons of rural social life. He does this through the repetition of phrases and literary images like returning birdlife or the feel of the seasons. The prose style itself conveys the passage of time.

I think academic writing has become very bad at description. We have relied too much on the power of our devices to capture the grain of the human voice from the tape recorder to the iPhone. And yet, transcription is not description. Novelists so often set the scene of social life brilliantly. My favourite novel of the moment is Kate Tempest's portrait of South East London *The Bricks That Built the Houses*. It contains many passages of social description that surpass anything written by urban ethnographers, myself included. This wonderfully attentive description of Deptford market is a good example:

'Mothers sway past them with bulging carrier bags, stuffed like the last bus home. Their arms are like tree trunks as they carry yams, meat, sacks of rice and tins of beans. They walk three abreast, laughing, towards the market. Kids late for school drag their feet, their ties undone, showing each other things on their phones. The men outside the greengrocer talk in Arabic, French, Punjabi, and thick patois, Tamil. The men selling duvet covers from the patch on the corner talk in sing-song marketese – *Come and get you covers eeyah, look, any pillahcayse a pand*. Students rifle through old stereos, novelty cutlery and ancient brass ornaments that sit in boxes on the pavement. Looking for things for their art projects. Women test the fabric of the cheap shirts with expert fingers.'

I am hoping that some of this vivid wordplay will rub off a bit in the act of re-typing this brilliant passage. I am only half joking.

Sociological Horoscopes

via blackout poetry

from Back L and Puwar N (2012) *A Manifesto for Live Methods: Provocations and Capacities*. *The Sociological Review* 60(1): 6-17.

The other thing that I think I find useful in fictional writing is the power of characterisation and portraiture. How often the voices of people in research papers read like disembodied respondents that are not placed by the research writer in the social scene of their lives. It seems to me that fictional characterisations like Becky, Harry and Leon in Kate Tempest's novel seem much more believable in comparison. The other thing that I have tried to do inspired by fiction is to think about the sequencing of the portraits of the people in a book so that it conveys a sense of a life unfolding through time. Shamser Sinha and I's forthcoming book *Migrant City* is an attempt to tell the story of London through the eyes of thirty young migrants over the course of 10 years. Its form is very much inspired by my love of fiction but also Shamser's experience as a writer of plays in addition to being a sociologist.

So far I have argued that fiction is a useful literary hinterland to inspire us to be more artful in our sociological writing. There are brilliant examples of sociological fiction too. In this case the fiction seems to offer a different kind of resource. A good example of this is Yasmin Gunaratnam's extraordinary sociology poetry that represents the migrant experience of end of life in ways that transcend conventional sociological prose. Sometimes they are even published in sociological journals.

Stan Cohen sociological fable 'The Last Seminar' was published in the journal *The Sociological Review* in 1979. In the introductory prelude to the story Cohen toys with the distinction between fiction and fact. He writes: 'Readers of this journal will no doubt take the following narrative to be a work of fiction, a "short story". In fact, though, the text represents a true account, as told to me by Professor -----, a sociologist well known to the readers of the *Sociological Review*.' The story is an academic nightmare in which a professor starts to see the empirical ghosts of all the subjects who are represented in the pages of his curriculum. Campus falls into chaos as the

ARIES


new possibilities
for
technological enchantment
cannot fix
the social world

TAURUS

people remain stuck in the traps
of
trends. If we remain stuck we
become bereft
see the larger picture

GEMINI

the confused mess
of contemporary capitalism
is a serious
artistic narrative
think and experience the world
beyond
'reconnaissance and spying' don't give up



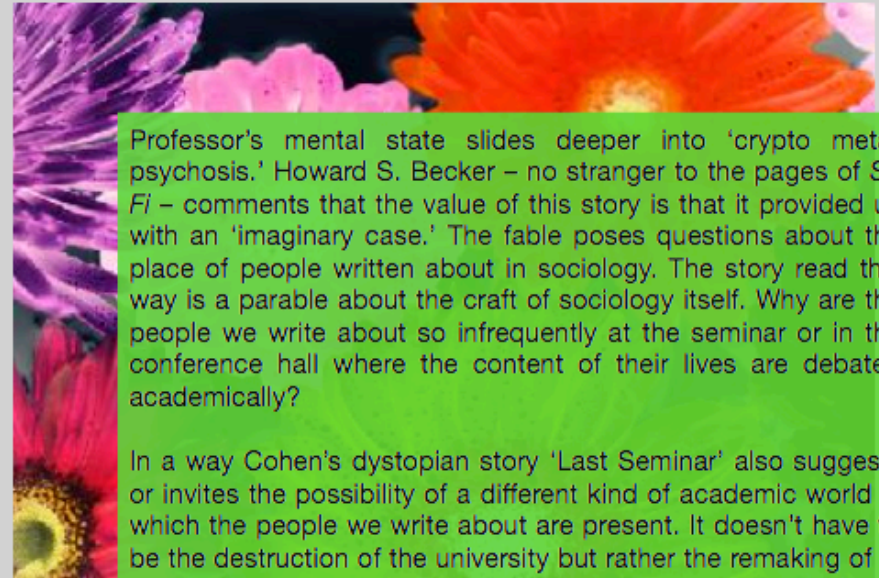
AUTHORS

Cameron West is a writer, recently relocated to New Zealand. He has a degree in sociology and philosophy (La Trobe University); has worked as a researcher in aged care and continues to develop scholarship on Max Weber and Robert Michels. His other sociological interests include ethics and China.

Jamie Woodcock is a research at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford. He is the author of *Working The Phones*, a study of a call centre in the UK inspired by the workers' inquiry. His current research involves developing this method in co-research projects with Deliveroo drivers and other digital workers in the so-called gig economy. He is on the editorial board of *Historical Materialism*.

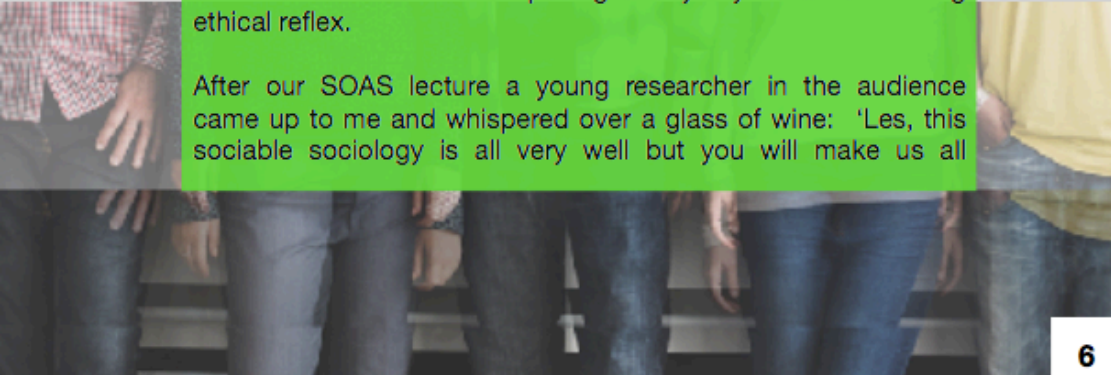
Emilie Whitaker is a sociologist interested in care, welfare and futures. Her work often explores time and emotion, particularly understandings, visions and experiences of beginnings and endings. She is interested in methodological innovation in ethnographic practices, writing and representation. She is a lecturer at the University of Salford, UK.

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.



Professor's mental state slides deeper into 'crypto meta-psychosis.' Howard S. Becker – no stranger to the pages of *So Fi* – comments that the value of this story is that it provided us with an 'imaginary case.' The fable poses questions about the place of people written about in sociology. The story read this way is a parable about the craft of sociology itself. Why are the people we write about so infrequently at the seminar or in the conference hall where the content of their lives are debated academically?

In a way Cohen's dystopian story 'Last Seminar' also suggests or invites the possibility of a different kind of academic world in which the people we write about are present. It doesn't have to be the destruction of the university but rather the remaking of it. This can promise something close to what Linda Tuhiwai Smith calls a decolonised methodology. Shamser and I have tried to develop something close to this in our study of the experience of young adult migrants in London. For almost ten years we have been working with the participants in the study whose lives are linked across the globe. On the 19th November 2014 we gave a keynote lecture with Charlynnne Bryan – one of the participant authors in our project – at the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London. After Charlynnne finished her part of the presentation the audience applauded. The SOAS talk is the only time we have experienced spontaneous applause in the middle of a keynote lecture! In a sense what we did that night was to re-enact the forms of dialogue we had been involved in through ethnography for the assembled audience. We have also pushed journals and publishers to let participants be credited as authors using their own names rather than imposing anonymity as an unthinking ethical reflex.



After our SOAS lecture a young researcher in the audience came up to me and whispered over a glass of wine: 'Les, this sociable sociology is all very well but you will make us all

unemployed!' I said in response that it is a risk worth taking. Our experience of experimenting with dialogic research enabled insights to come into view that had been hidden within our blind field. Also, our participants do not want us to surrender our expertise. We found quite the reverse. What they wanted was to bring our erudition and overview into dialogue with their own hunches and insights, in a spirit of trust and mutual respect.

I may never write fiction in the strict sense of the meaning of the word. But all my writing is inspired by reading it both in terms of form and structure. Novels have been my constant reading companions in an attempt to make sociology more artful and my own attempts furnish it with images of social life that live in vivid impressions in the reader's mind.

Les Back is a Professor of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London. His recent works include Academic Diary: Or Why Higher Education Still Matters (2016) and The Art of Listening (2007). His forthcoming book with Shamser Sinha, Migrant City, is an innovative collaborative ethnography that tells a story of contemporary London through the eyes of thirty adult migrants and two sociologists.

AUTHORS

Wendy Short acknowledges that she benefits from the privileges afforded to white people in Australian society. Wendy will soon commence an MA in Social Sciences at The University of Chicago. Wendy's work focuses on religion and mythic stories in the women's everyday lives, and post-colonial and transnational feminist discourses as agents for structural change. She is concerned with the ethical imperative for white women to recognise how they have benefited from the costs others have paid under colonialism. Wendy's favourite country is India, and she is daily both humbled and inspired by the incredible lives and resilience of Indian women. When travelling she blogs at wendysoutofstation.com.

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.

Fred Suffet. Born, Brooklyn, NY, 1938. Columbia, BA, sociology, 1960. Columbia, MA, sociology, 1970. Evaluation research, non-profit legal and medical programs serving the poor. Co-author, one book, two dozen journal articles. Equal number of private reports to funding and regulatory agencies. Taught college and graduate levels. Retired.

Samantha Trayhurn is a writer living and working in Sydney. Her work has appeared in Overland, Westerly, LiNQ journal, Scum Mag and others. She is the editor of Pink Cover Zine.

Ashleigh Watson is the creator and editor of *So Fi Zine*. She is completing a PhD in Sociology, and her fiction has appeared in Scum Mag, Pink Cover Zine, and Talent Implied. She tweets at @awtsn.

James Watts is an Interior Designer studying at the Royal College of Art. The following stories are extracted from his MA dissertation, using creative writing as an (auto)ethnographic research tool to better understand the constitution of the kitchen-place at number seven Baytree Mews, the shared house where he lives in southeast London.



AUTHORS

Paula Guerra is Professor of Sociology at Faculty of Arts and Humanities - University of Porto and a Senior Researcher in the Institute of Sociology (IS-UP), Invited Researcher at the Centre for Geography Studies and Territory Planning (CEGOT) at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto (FLUP) and Adjunct Professor at Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research (GCSCR).

Gemma Hughes is studying for her doctorate in Evidence-Based Health Care at the University of Oxford. She is exploring how ethnography can illuminate the relationships and tensions between health and social care policy, practice and lived experience.

Erica Jolly's poetry often connects the sciences and the humanities. Acknowledgement of Nobel Laureate Professor Roald Hoffmann is in her poem, 'Humanity in Science', in "Making A Stand". Her poem, 'Daddy Yankee', is on JoAnne Growney's maths/ poetry blog in USA. <https://poetrywithmathematics.blogspot.com>.

Poonam Madar is a Lecturer in Sociology based in London. Her research interests include qualitative methodologies, and representations of identity in popular culture and the mass media. Poonam joined the University of West London in 2017 having previously worked at the University of Surrey (2015-2016) and University of Roehampton (2013-2015).

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Theresa Petray is a senior lecturer in sociology at James Cook University in Townsville. She both benefits from white privilege and experiences racial microaggressions based on her heritage. She researches Aboriginal activism and self-determination in North Queensland and online as a non-Aboriginal person. She tweets at @TheresaPetray.

Geoff Schoenberg is a Research Fellow at Deakin University. His work mostly focuses on organisational and systemic governance through a behavioural lens. Outside of the academy, he enjoys engaging in public speaking and will, one day, attempt stand-up comedy.

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AUTHORS

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Julia Bennett was born a sociologist. She's always loved looking at people's lives in fiction and through uncurtained windows at dusk. She's been fighting gender discrimination throughout her life. Researching maternal lineage gives her a strong sense of her own identity as a Northerner, a Lancastrian and a woman.

Fabian Cannizzo is a sociologist teaching in Melbourne, Australia. He researches career planning and time management in academia. He is interested in social theories of time and their application to the socialisation of early-career academics and cultural industry workers. He tweets at @fabiancann and blogs about his work at <https://thesocialthinker.wordpress.com/>.

Merrilyn Crichton is a sociology lecturer and researcher at Charles Sturt University. She completed her PhD at QUT in 2008. Merrilyn's research has largely been in rural sociology and social inequality, as well as non-profit and third sector organisations, but has increasingly focussed on mental health in rural and regional Australia.

İdil Galip is a researcher interested in digital culture, Turkish politics and political engagement. In her free time, she enjoys reading and writing about Islamic mysticism and the occult.

Murray Goulden is a Senior Research Fellow in Sociology at the University of Nottingham. His work concerns the role of digital technologies in everyday life. When he grew up, he wanted to be a writer for Black Mirror.

this can amount to scenarios where the public enter platforms with us. This however needs to be conducted carefully, so that we don't make the so called 'authentic' figure and voice into what Rey Chow (1993) refers to as an 'anthropological specimen'. Thus worthy exercises of inclusion also come with risks and traps. In a reverse move away from academia being the knowledge keeper, this position shifts the authority to the non-academic. To an extent, we are all experts of our lives. If there is value in a sociological perspective, sociology does not need to be jettisoned or disavowed. Rather, sociology can be put into critical conversation with other points of view and ways of formulating knowledge. With critique moving in both directions. And each side re-thinking their categories. No doubt this can very easily be an unequal exchange. Institutional hierarchies can't be undone in one move. They remain as sites of tension, even as we reach across the walls of the academy.

6. *Unfinished Live Relations*

Building relations across the walls can take years; too long for a quick swoop for the impact agenda. And you can of course be caught short in the tracks of life. One of my close collaborations had his life cut short by a fall from a ladder whilst cleaning his windows. Raj Malhotra had been a leading member of the Indian Workers Association in the UK, as well as a co-founder of Youth Against Racism, a key participant of Rock Against Racism and the first Asian councillor in Coventry. He first caught my attention through his story of migrating to Coventry from India with a close friend on a bicycle, whilst making and selling models of bicycles made from a single wire en route. He had picked up this art from a street trader in India. Raj also kept a vast cine collection of films he had made, as an amateur, chronicling political and social life in the UK. He had sent footage of some of the intimate family events home, back to India. With the films operating rather like the cine-letters edited in the film *I For India* (1996, dir. Sandhya Suri). We had shared hours of conversation together while he played the films to me in his home. The texture of political demonstrations, his own role in political organising and musical movements are recorded in Raj's collection. One of the shortest and most touching films consists of Raj filming his wife leaving home in the early hours of the day to go to work in the local hospital. His narration and film shots are a cine-literature. They speak to the duration of the day through the light of the seasons and a long working day. When I will eventually return to work with Raj's cine archive, my imagination will be much the poorer without his factual and fictional accounts, relayed across the whirring of the cine projector. In between the richest research relations so much is often left unfinished. This we have to learn to accept. As my colleague Yasmin Gunaratnam has been teaching us through her work on *Death and the Migrant* (2013).

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Unbecoming Strangers

Fabian Cannizzo

Sally had been working at a call centre for months now. Nothing permanent, she was sure to mention to any prospective employer. Just a casual stint. Night relief. But in truth, her contract had mutated into regular 40 hour and upwards weeks. Taking calls was mostly mindless scripted work, but her co-workers brought relief to the droning shifts. On the edges of the city, they were a family of convenience, married in the shared isolation of unsociable hours.

Even after a few weeks, Sally began to feel her city shrinking. The night reduced the rhythmic swelling of cars to a dull buzz. Pedestrians were fewer and more conspicuous. A haze of faces and identity badges came into focus. At night, the city was clear. Almost open. In the grooves of these rhythms, Sally became attuned also to its asynchronicities. An ill manager meant understaffing. A missing bus was 45 minutes of pay docked. The life of the day-dwellers had been blessed with unnoticed conveniences. The night transformed a metropolis of abundance into frontier of far-out places.

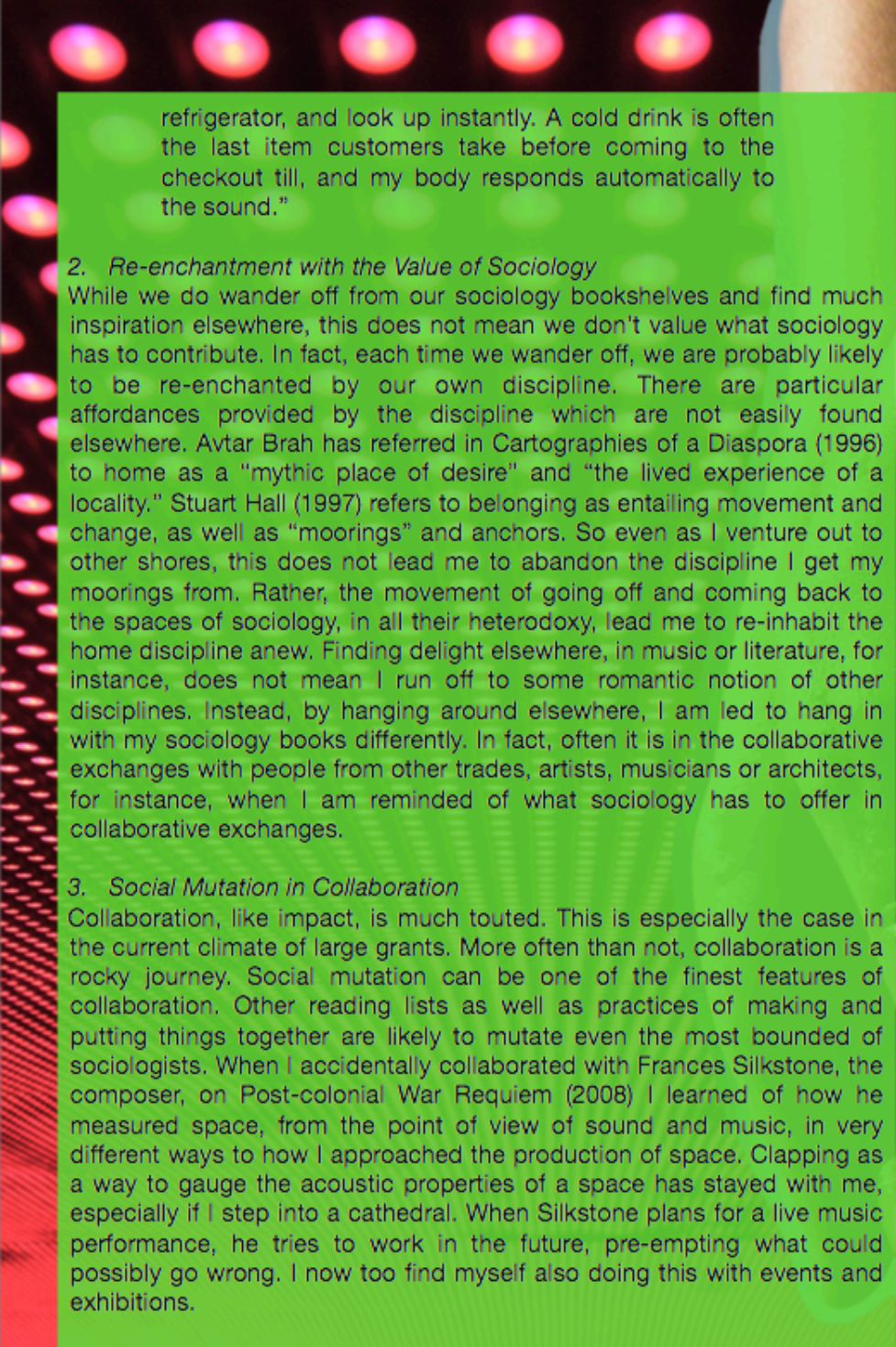
Sally sat in a metro train station early one Sunday morning. In a post-shift daze, she scrolled through a newsfeed. The brightly backlit screen shone a flare into her eyes that blotted out the dimly lit room around her. The conclusion of 9 hours on the phones was a throbbing headache that she would have to endure on the ride home. Facebook's predictable repetitions compounded her frontal-lobe pressure: a menagerie of sleepless regrets and gym junkies getting their pump on, Berliners calling each other out as midnight stuck, and Americans somehow still shocked by mass shootings on the evening news. This network of voyeurs reminded her how very distant the proximity of social media made her feel.

4. *Shaping Objects Together in Tension*

Social mutation does not mean sociologists have to become musicians, writers of plays or artists, for instance. More often than not, this results in awful theatre or pieces of work. Or, it entails years of training and practice to become accomplished. This is where the fruits of collaboration come in. There can be a magic in exchanging conversations, aesthetics and practices, as sociologists, with artists and play writers for example. Together you can make fine work which does not only involve making academic books or articles. In the fusion of sociology with other disciplinary practices and practitioners we together shape objects, which enable us to grasp, contemplate and get close to the topics which capture our imaginations in different ways. There is much to be said for the art of collaboration. How do we sit side by side. In *I'll get my coat* (2005) Sukdev Sandhu and Usman Saeed have produced a beautiful small book from undertaking walks together in London. With Sandhu's writings sitting next to Saeed's drawings. Learning to work through tensions of collaboration is no easy order. When editing the classic film *Chronicle of A Summer* (1961) Jean Rouch, the surrealist film maker and Edgar Morin, the sociologist, often had contrasting approaches to how the film ought to be pieced together. During the course of the project *Noise of the Past*, Sanjay Sharma and myself (2012) developed a call-and-response methodology. To enable both autonomy and exchange in the making of a collaborative object. In our case the film *Unravelling* (2008, written and directed by Kuldip Powar) with a musical score by Nitin Sawhney, were there to be delivered to mixed and wide audiences. My scholarly learning of race, ethnicities and nation making had reached a point where it was looking for something with potential interaction beyond the academy. Seeking to stretch the very walls of the academy.

5. *Public Engagement: Between Drill and Moral High Ground*

The notion of public engagement sits on a wide spectrum. On one end, public engagement is a close cousin of social impact. A governmental directive. As something academics must do; engage with audiences beyond the academy. This particular stylisation of public engagement is proliferating poor practices – practices which often are contrary to ethical concerns and methodologies we have studied. There can be an unashamed scramble to grab and find a way of doing public engagement and social impact, as it becomes a university measure and enterprise. Thus bad practices of public engagement multiply fast. On the other end of the spectrum sits the high moral ground of needing to engage non-academics. Of giving more importance to the non-academic. Sometimes



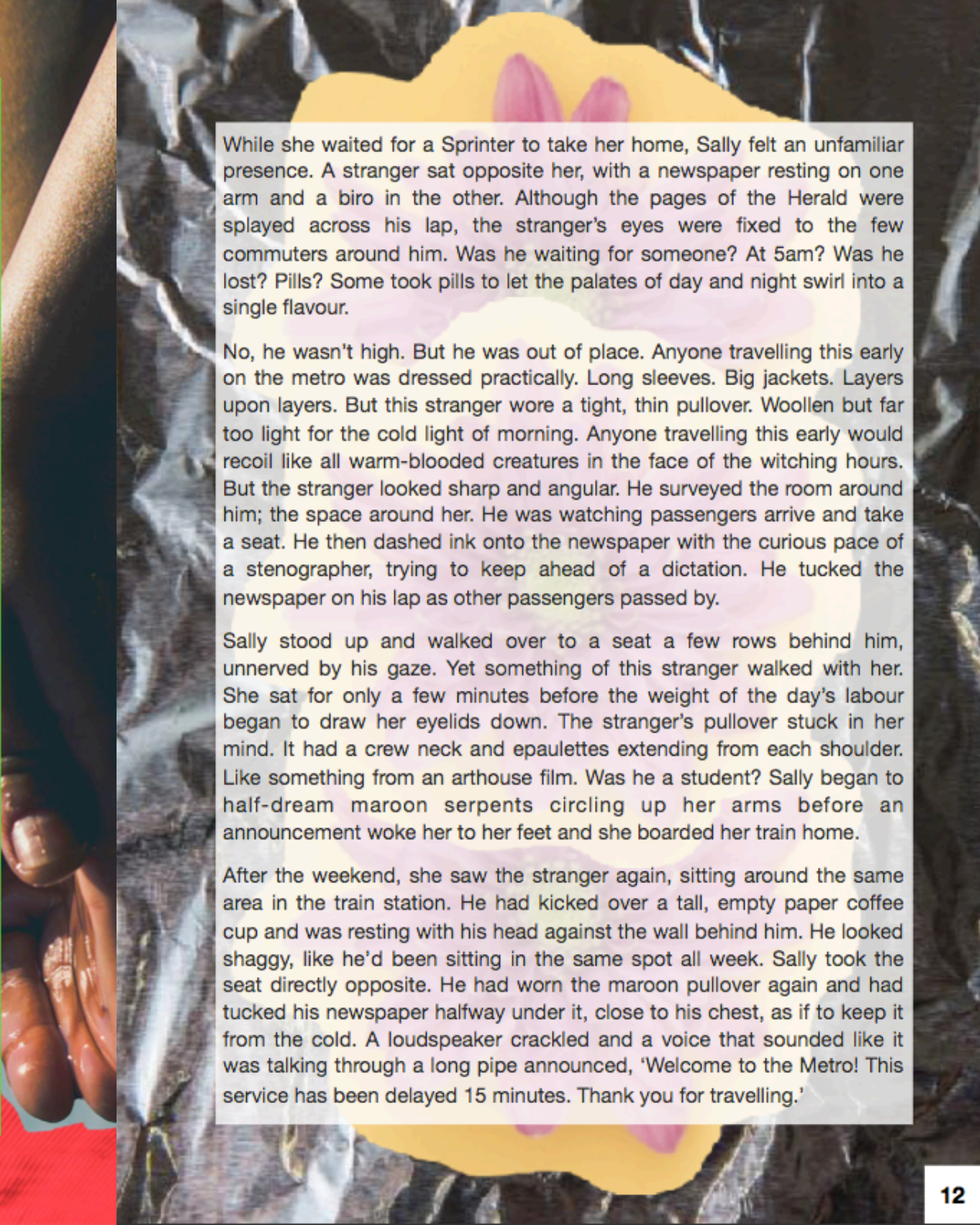
refrigerator, and look up instantly. A cold drink is often the last item customers take before coming to the checkout till, and my body responds automatically to the sound.”

2. *Re-enchantment with the Value of Sociology*

While we do wander off from our sociology bookshelves and find much inspiration elsewhere, this does not mean we don't value what sociology has to contribute. In fact, each time we wander off, we are probably likely to be re-encharmed by our own discipline. There are particular affordances provided by the discipline which are not easily found elsewhere. Avatar Brah has referred in *Cartographies of a Diaspora* (1996) to home as a "mythic place of desire" and "the lived experience of a locality." Stuart Hall (1997) refers to belonging as entailing movement and change, as well as "moorings" and anchors. So even as I venture out to other shores, this does not lead me to abandon the discipline I get my moorings from. Rather, the movement of going off and coming back to the spaces of sociology, in all their heterodoxy, lead me to re-inhabit the home discipline anew. Finding delight elsewhere, in music or literature, for instance, does not mean I run off to some romantic notion of other disciplines. Instead, by hanging around elsewhere, I am led to hang in with my sociology books differently. In fact, often it is in the collaborative exchanges with people from other trades, artists, musicians or architects, for instance, when I am reminded of what sociology has to offer in collaborative exchanges.

3. *Social Mutation in Collaboration*

Collaboration, like impact, is much touted. This is especially the case in the current climate of large grants. More often than not, collaboration is a rocky journey. Social mutation can be one of the finest features of collaboration. Other reading lists as well as practices of making and putting things together are likely to mutate even the most bounded of sociologists. When I accidentally collaborated with Frances Silkstone, the composer, on *Post-colonial War Requiem* (2008) I learned of how he measured space, from the point of view of sound and music, in very different ways to how I approached the production of space. Clapping as a way to gauge the acoustic properties of a space has stayed with me, especially if I step into a cathedral. When Silkstone plans for a live music performance, he tries to work in the future, pre-empting what could possibly go wrong. I now too find myself also doing this with events and exhibitions.

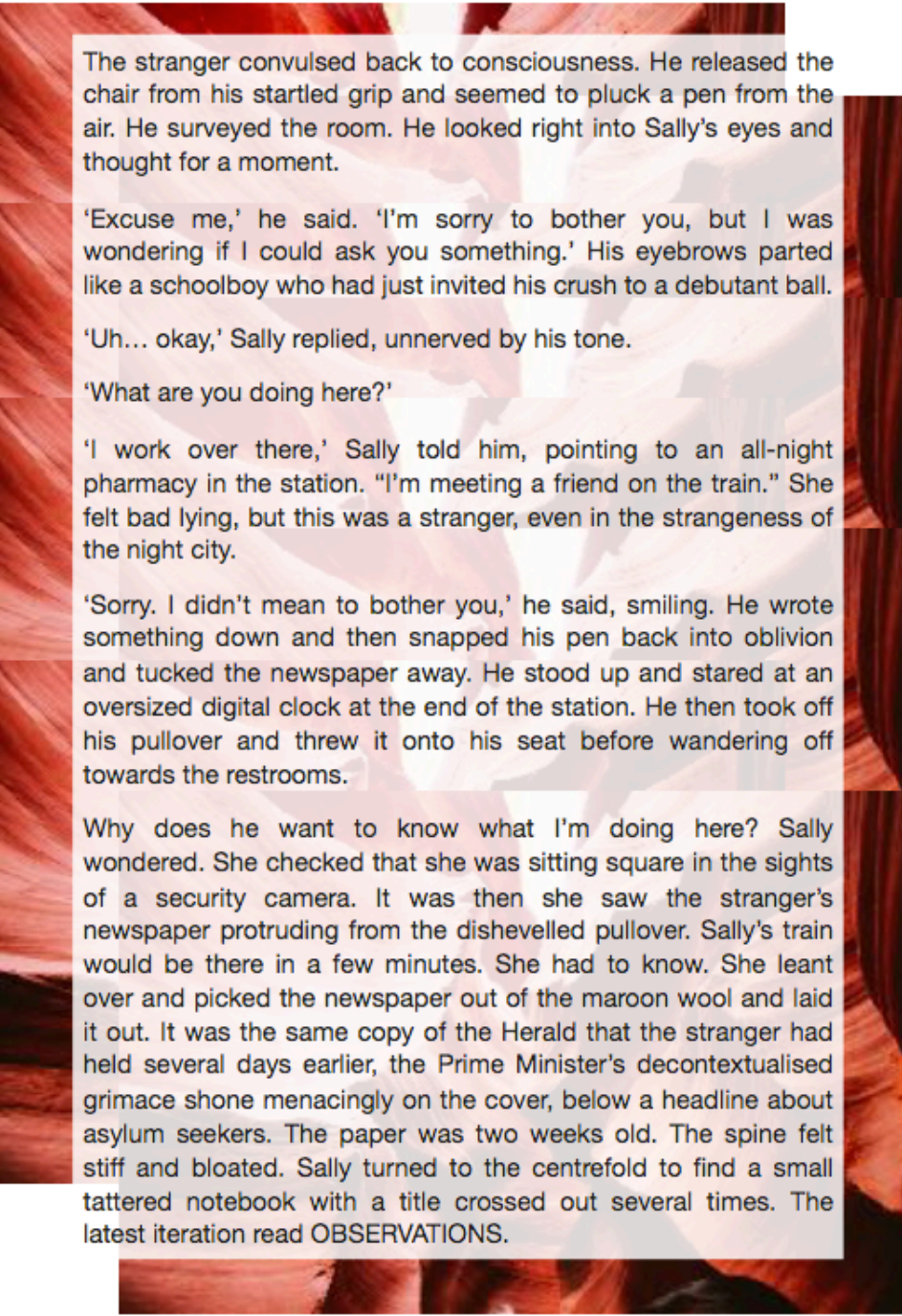


While she waited for a Sprinter to take her home, Sally felt an unfamiliar presence. A stranger sat opposite her, with a newspaper resting on one arm and a biro in the other. Although the pages of the Herald were splayed across his lap, the stranger's eyes were fixed to the few commuters around him. Was he waiting for someone? At 5am? Was he lost? Pills? Some took pills to let the palates of day and night swirl into a single flavour.

No, he wasn't high. But he was out of place. Anyone travelling this early on the metro was dressed practically. Long sleeves. Big jackets. Layers upon layers. But this stranger wore a tight, thin pullover. Woollen but far too light for the cold light of morning. Anyone travelling this early would recoil like all warm-blooded creatures in the face of the witching hours. But the stranger looked sharp and angular. He surveyed the room around him; the space around her. He was watching passengers arrive and take a seat. He then dashed ink onto the newspaper with the curious pace of a stenographer, trying to keep ahead of a dictation. He tucked the newspaper on his lap as other passengers passed by.

Sally stood up and walked over to a seat a few rows behind him, unnerved by his gaze. Yet something of this stranger walked with her. She sat for only a few minutes before the weight of the day's labour began to draw her eyelids down. The stranger's pullover stuck in her mind. It had a crew neck and epaulettes extending from each shoulder. Like something from an arthouse film. Was he a student? Sally began to half-dream maroon serpents circling up her arms before an announcement woke her to her feet and she boarded her train home.

After the weekend, she saw the stranger again, sitting around the same area in the train station. He had kicked over a tall, empty paper coffee cup and was resting with his head against the wall behind him. He looked shaggy, like he'd been sitting in the same spot all week. Sally took the seat directly opposite. He had worn the maroon pullover again and had tucked his newspaper halfway under it, close to his chest, as if to keep it from the cold. A loudspeaker crackled and a voice that sounded like it was talking through a long pipe announced, 'Welcome to the Metro! This service has been delayed 15 minutes. Thank you for travelling.'



The stranger convulsed back to consciousness. He released the chair from his startled grip and seemed to pluck a pen from the air. He surveyed the room. He looked right into Sally's eyes and thought for a moment.

'Excuse me,' he said. 'I'm sorry to bother you, but I was wondering if I could ask you something.' His eyebrows parted like a schoolboy who had just invited his crush to a debutant ball.

'Uh... okay,' Sally replied, unnerved by his tone.

'What are you doing here?'

'I work over there,' Sally told him, pointing to an all-night pharmacy in the station. "I'm meeting a friend on the train." She felt bad lying, but this was a stranger, even in the strangeness of the night city.

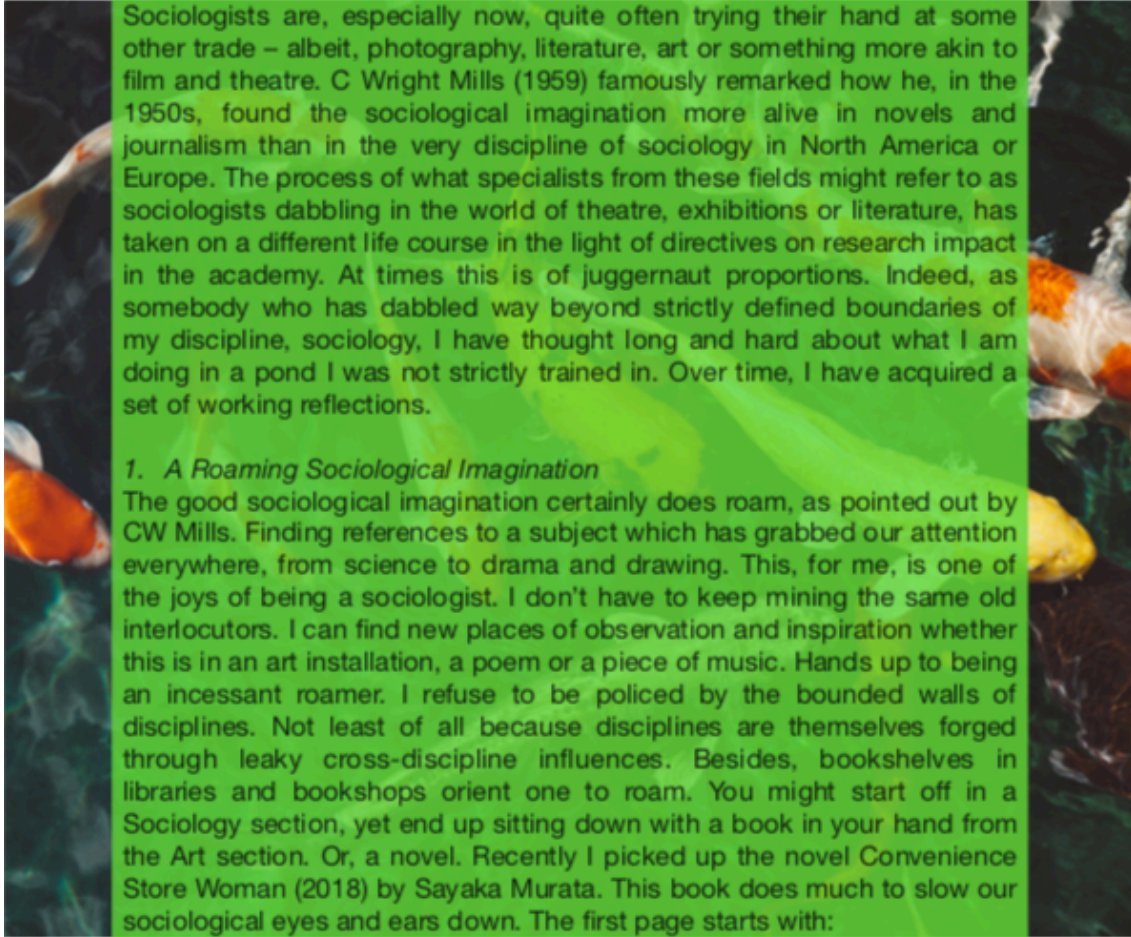
'Sorry. I didn't mean to bother you,' he said, smiling. He wrote something down and then snapped his pen back into oblivion and tucked the newspaper away. He stood up and stared at an oversized digital clock at the end of the station. He then took off his pullover and threw it onto his seat before wandering off towards the restrooms.

Why does he want to know what I'm doing here? Sally wondered. She checked that she was sitting square in the sights of a security camera. It was then she saw the stranger's newspaper protruding from the dishevelled pullover. Sally's train would be there in a few minutes. She had to know. She leant over and picked the newspaper out of the maroon wool and laid it out. It was the same copy of the Herald that the stranger had held several days earlier, the Prime Minister's decontextualised grimace shone menacingly on the cover, below a headline about asylum seekers. The paper was two weeks old. The spine felt stiff and bloated. Sally turned to the centrefold to find a small tattered notebook with a title crossed out several times. The latest iteration read OBSERVATIONS.

Guest Editorial

Roaming Sociologists

Nirmal Puwar



Sociologists are, especially now, quite often trying their hand at some other trade – albeit, photography, literature, art or something more akin to film and theatre. C Wright Mills (1959) famously remarked how he, in the 1950s, found the sociological imagination more alive in novels and journalism than in the very discipline of sociology in North America or Europe. The process of what specialists from these fields might refer to as sociologists dabbling in the world of theatre, exhibitions or literature, has taken on a different life course in the light of directives on research impact in the academy. At times this is of juggernaut proportions. Indeed, as somebody who has dabbled way beyond strictly defined boundaries of my discipline, sociology, I have thought long and hard about what I am doing in a pond I was not strictly trained in. Over time, I have acquired a set of working reflections.

1. *A Roaming Sociological Imagination*

The good sociological imagination certainly does roam, as pointed out by CW Mills. Finding references to a subject which has grabbed our attention everywhere, from science to drama and drawing. This, for me, is one of the joys of being a sociologist. I don't have to keep mining the same old interlocutors. I can find new places of observation and inspiration whether this is in an art installation, a poem or a piece of music. Hands up to being an incessant roamer. I refuse to be policed by the bounded walls of disciplines. Not least of all because disciplines are themselves forged through leaky cross-discipline influences. Besides, bookshelves in libraries and bookshops orient one to roam. You might start off in a Sociology section, yet end up sitting down with a book in your hand from the Art section. Or, a novel. Recently I picked up the novel *Convenience Store Woman* (2018) by Sayaka Murata. This book does much to slow our sociological eyes and ears down. The first page starts with:

"A convenience store is a world of sound. From the tinkle of the door chime to the voices of TV celebrities advertising new products over the in-store cable network... I hear the faint rattle of new plastic bottle rolling into place as a customer takes one out of the

...CONCLUSIONS?

The production of Portuguese grrrlzines, notwithstanding their low number, have been decisive for the Riot Grrrl (sub)culture, because the readers become writers, consumers become producers, and the rise in girls who produce fanzines resulted in material and linguistic tactics to embrace and reconfigure traditions of young femininity and opened a space for female punk power.

There have been advancements in the spreading of their ideas, proposals and criticisms. With important reports on life experiences and information on interesting alternative topics for the female public, the Grrrlzines respond to the communities they relate with and these communities feed back into them, through production activities and the pushing of agendas.



Figure 13: Teresa Punk in Alvalade, Lisbon (1987). Photo courtesy of Bárbara Cabral.

Sally looked towards the toilets and then opened the book. In hindsight, Sally couldn't justify why she read it. She told herself because it was in her own best interest. Self-preservation. Or that it was to protect others, too. The societal good. But, closer to her gut, Sally felt a need to pay the stranger back for his secrecy: to defeat calculated deception with an impulsive decision. Justice. She had read a dozen pages by the time that the stranger returned.

'What the hell is this?!' Sally was furious. She held open a page full of notes about the early morning commuters: what they were doing and when. The conversation Sally had with the stranger was in there. The woman was described as stocky.

'Stocky!?' she barked. Sally was ready to chase this stalker into the street and across the night city. The stranger held his arms splayed in a pathetic gesture.

'Let me explain!' He begged. 'I'm a sociologist.'



At a Second Year Geo-science lecture
at the University of Sydney given by
Professor Dietmar Müller April 5th 2017.

Erica Jolly

Four days on what remains?
I've discovered photosynthesis in the sea

I have moved beyond the green in leaves on land
where carbon dioxide and nutrients of iron,
nitrogen and phosphorous make food
for every plant in sunlight, giving off oxygen –
waste, a molecule they don't want, our lungs must have.

I have moved beyond the startling opening
with space-satellite-driven photographs of Mars
and the differences found across its surface.

I'm beyond the drama of that introduction
and its telling contrast with what we know here.

if they act like men, running the risk of losing the essential attributes of "femininity" and questioning the natural right of men to positions of power; if they act like women, they seem incapable and unsuitable to the situation.

(...) The army contributes nothing to the reduction of sexism, since women tend to become authoritarian. In fact, one of the reasons why some of the girls get ready is to try to overcome the feeling of inferiority caused by society and education in general, relying on arguments such as "I'm going to the army to be able to command men" (...). If compulsory military service disgusts me, I think the volunteer still frightens me more, because people are made to go to the army because of money, prospects, facilities and social benefits; becoming capitalist monsters with fascist and racist tendencies, "bourgeoisie" without attitude, who can see nothing more than their own well-being (Patrícia, "Tropa no feminino", !Mulibu!, No. 2).

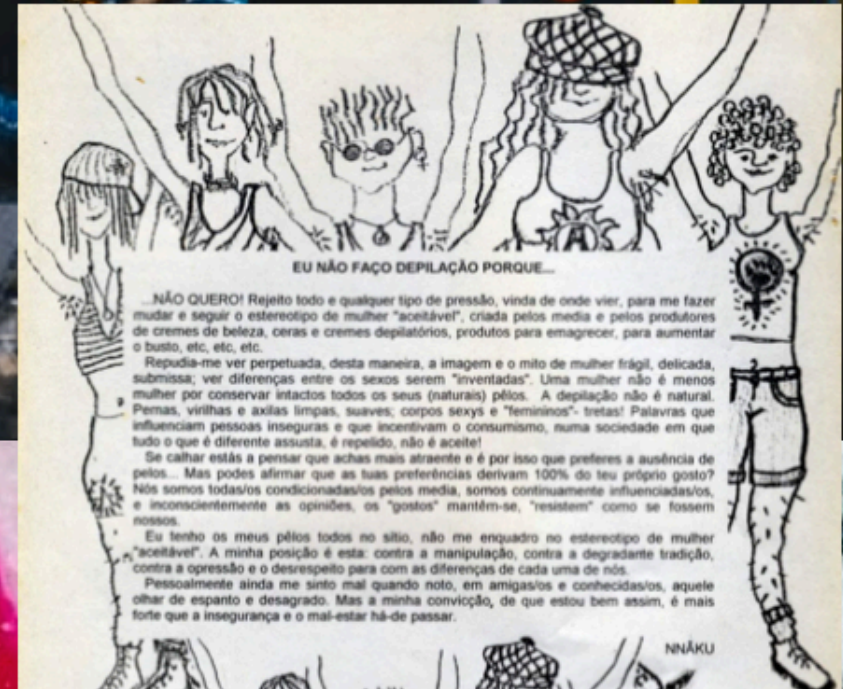


Figure 12: !Mulibu! (1994-1995). Ed. Coletivo Mulheres Libertárias Unidas. No. 2

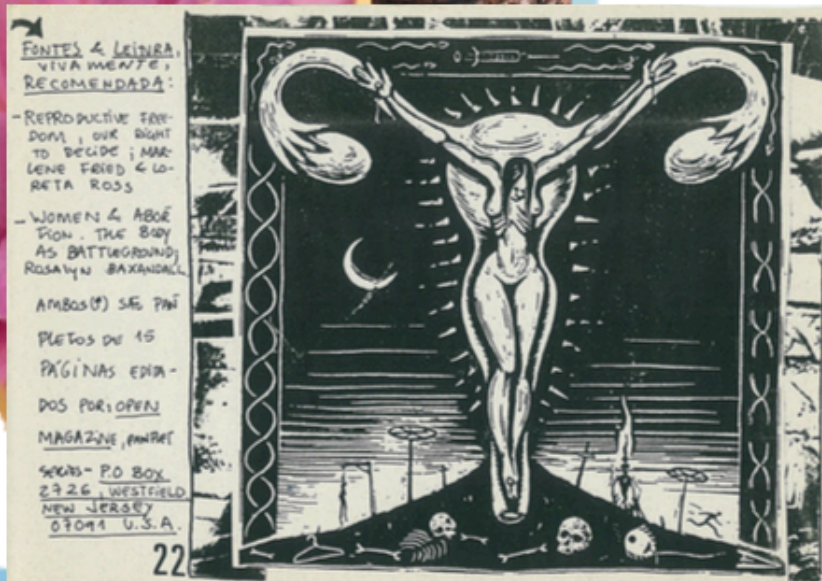
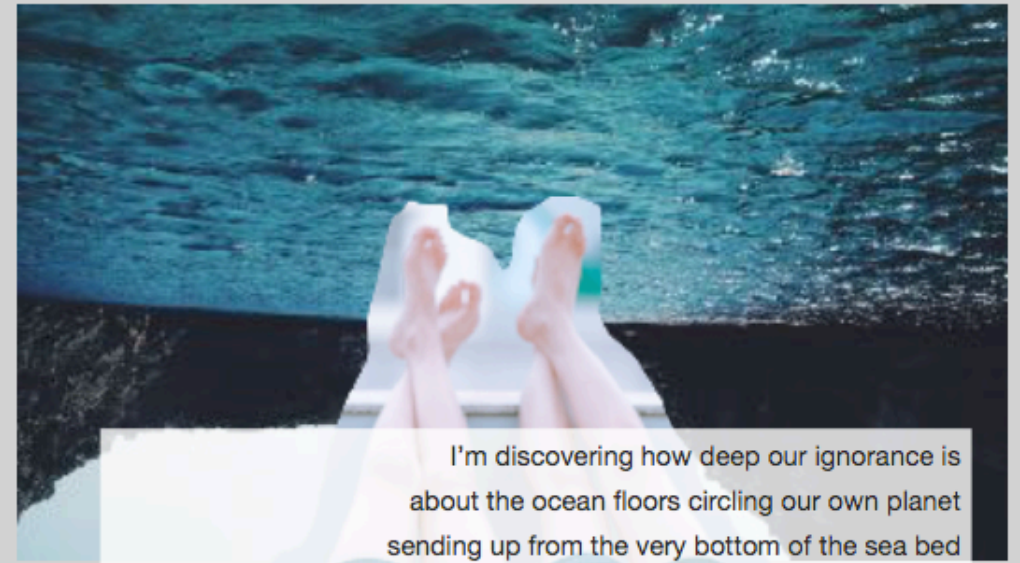


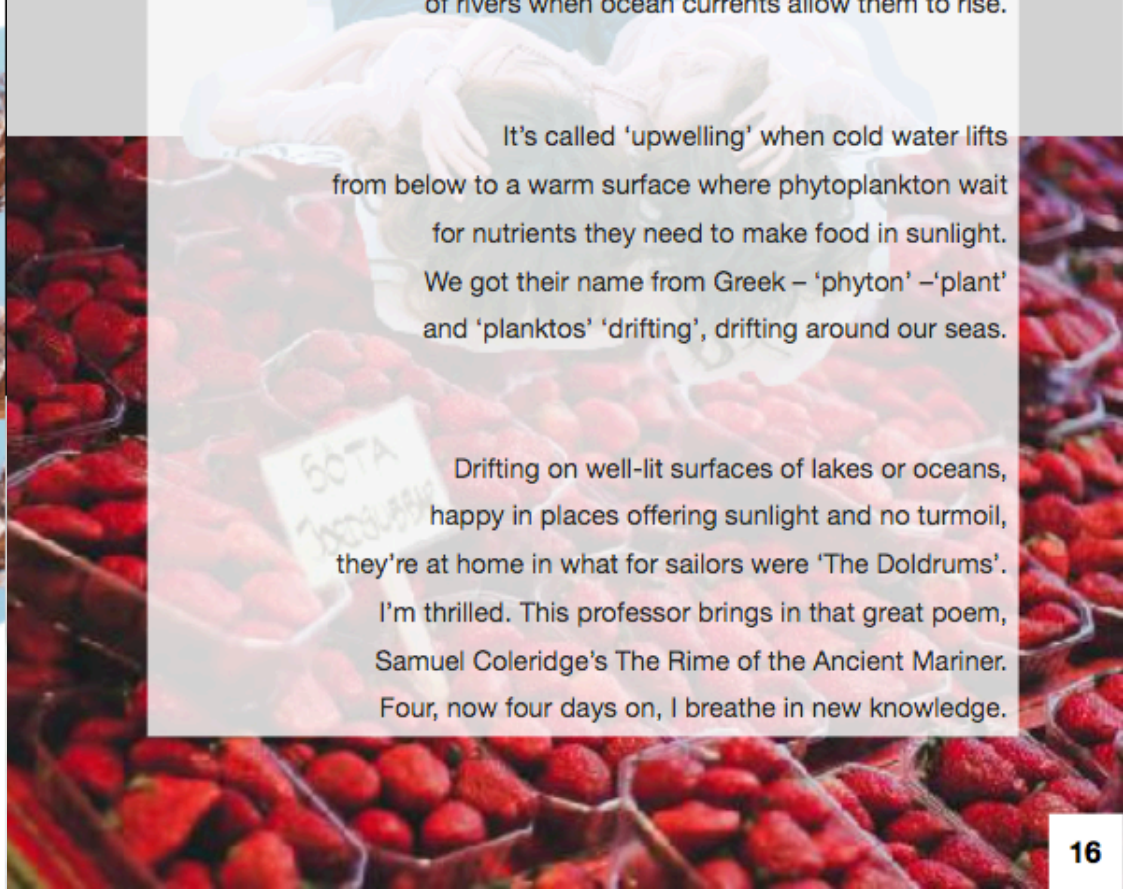
Figure 11. Global Riot (1996?). Ed. Maria, No. 1 (1996?). Cascais: s/n.

(...) What? 'The Riot' are there in their corner fighting for women's rights! Me? I'm here at the foot of the stage, with my favourite band singing 'vegan is my choice!' Or 'sXe proud!!'. Feminism is for girls. It is for all this shit that I question myself, to what extent is it that people are even what they say they defend! It seems that so many guys are the top of the World because they have a txirt [sic] to say 'Meat just do not eat' or 'Straight Edge X Poison Free' but later when talking about Riot Girl, they do not even know what to say and they go away thinking that only the girls must participate in this fight ... People of these who assume that they're there [sic] in front, shouting the choruses of the bands all happy but at the same time, give a groan to the girl of the long hair (!!), and at the same time wink and give the idea of 'want to go out there talk?', etc. ... this to me, it sucks (Inês, Feminism + women + men = feminism? , Sisterly, No. 2).

However, not all forms of asserting equality of gender are considered acceptable. For example, reporting on the possibility of women volunteering for military service, the !Mulibu! fanzine, in an article called "Tropa no feminino" ('The army in the feminine'), considers this possibility to be counterproductive, since women can only say they are *equal to men*



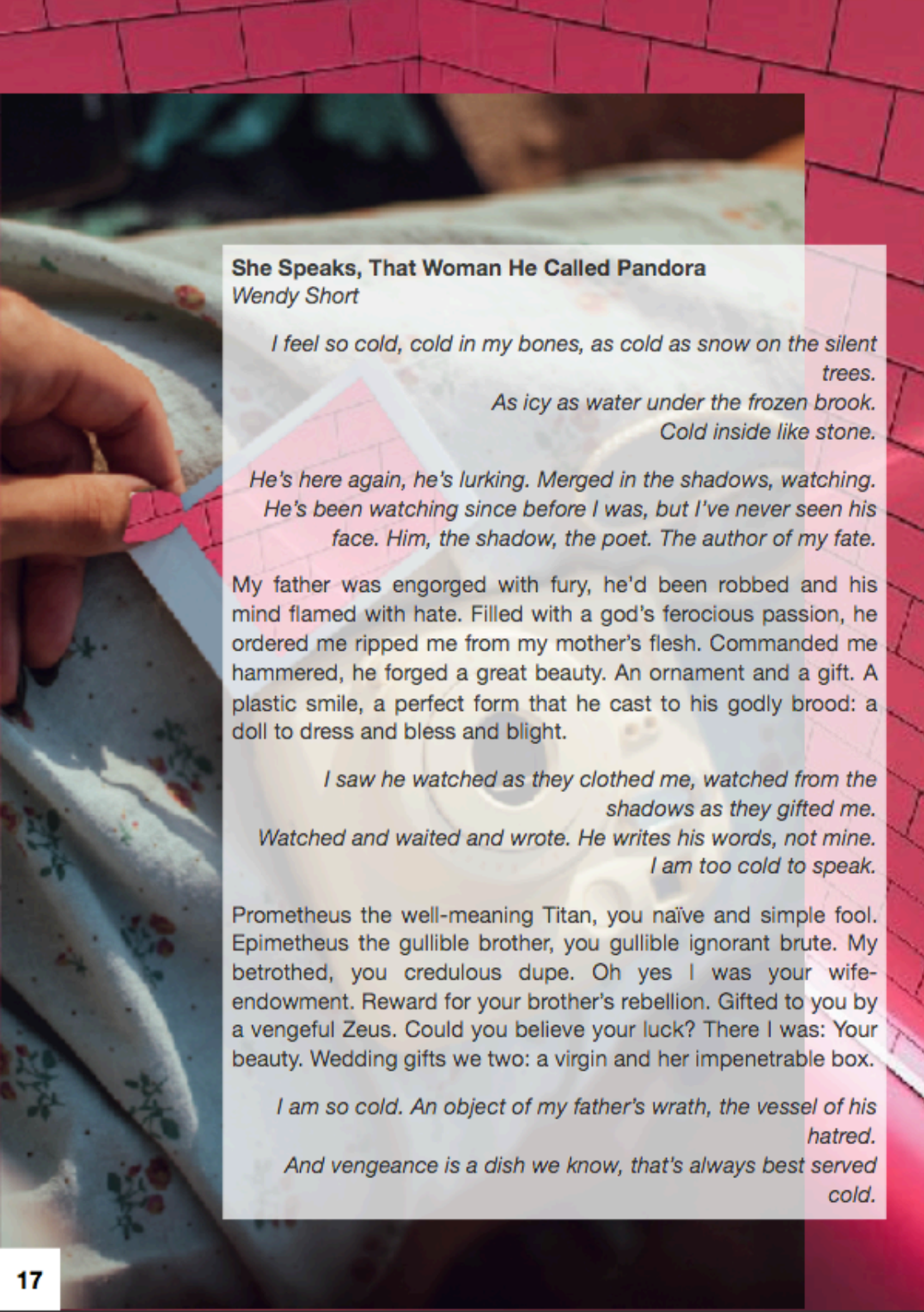
I'm discovering how deep our ignorance is about the ocean floors circling our own planet sending up from the very bottom of the sea bed elements brought down as dust or from mouths of rivers when ocean currents allow them to rise.



It's called 'upwelling' when cold water lifts from below to a warm surface where phytoplankton wait for nutrients they need to make food in sunlight. We got their name from Greek – 'phyton' – 'plant' and 'planktos' 'drifting', drifting around our seas.

Drifting on well-lit surfaces of lakes or oceans, happy in places offering sunlight and no turmoil, they're at home in what for sailors were 'The Doldrums'.

I'm thrilled. This professor brings in that great poem, Samuel Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Four, now four days on, I breathe in new knowledge.



She Speaks, That Woman He Called Pandora

Wendy Short

I feel so cold, cold in my bones, as cold as snow on the silent trees.

*As icy as water under the frozen brook.
Cold inside like stone.*

*He's here again, he's lurking. Merged in the shadows, watching.
He's been watching since before I was, but I've never seen his face. Him, the shadow, the poet. The author of my fate.*

My father was engorged with fury, he'd been robbed and his mind flamed with hate. Filled with a god's ferocious passion, he ordered me ripped me from my mother's flesh. Commanded me hammered, he forged a great beauty. An ornament and a gift. A plastic smile, a perfect form that he cast to his godly brood: a doll to dress and bless and blight.


I saw he watched as they clothed me, watched from the shadows as they gifted me.

*Watched and waited and wrote. He writes his words, not mine.
I am too cold to speak.*

Prometheus the well-meaning Titan, you naïve and simple fool. Epimetheus the gullible brother, you gullible ignorant brute. My betrothed, you credulous dupe. Oh yes I was your wife-endowment. Reward for your brother's rebellion. Gifted to you by a vengeful Zeus. Could you believe your luck? There I was: Your beauty. Wedding gifts we two: a virgin and her impenetrable box.

I am so cold. An object of my father's wrath, the vessel of his hatred.

And vengeance is a dish we know, that's always best served cold.



AGAINST TYPICAL GIRLS. To be a woman in a patriarchal society.

A feature of these feminist fanzines is the criticism of society, understood as backward, misogynist and sexist, as well as reporting on the daily experiences of women in a society with these features, in certain cases, with very intimate descriptions of all the difficulties they experience.

I'm 20 years old and I'm a woman. I am constantly harassed when walking down the street. My mind and body are violated by comments, actions ... from strangers. Every day I am bombarded with images in ads, magazines, television, how I must be what is expected of me, my roles as a woman. (...) My life was deeply affected by this. I cannot ignore this sexist oppression that affects and has always affected my life. I have to talk about it, I have to release the anger, the frustration, even if you do not understand ... Respect! ... Respect is about looking at someone (human & nonhuman) as someone and not as part of a body. It's about communication and understanding (Global Riot, 1996, No. 2).

Often situations occur to which we must be peremptory in our response: NO! But situations often occur in which simply saying does not take excessive and dramatic proportions. (...) It also happens that diverse circumstances, and sometimes unrelated to our will, interpose and almost force us to take sides. Women often, and for reasons of social and cultural order, do not occupy themselves with 'saying no' a particularly active and safe role. I think that, in relation to this issue, it is important to stress that 'saying no' to sex (...) is still more difficult for many women to face the denial of an act which, for their partners, may be particularly regarded as a refusal in the face of their person and the whole relationship (Zuviya, "Say no - why not?", Mulibu !, no. 2).

I DO NOT SHAVE OR WAX BECAUSE ... I DO NOT WANT TO! I reject any and all pressure from anywhere, to make me change and follow the stereotype [sic] of 'acceptable' woman, created by the media and producers of beauty creams, waxes and depilatory creams, products for weight loss, to increase the bust, etc., etc., etc. ... Personally I still feel bad when I notice, in friends and acquaintances, that look of awe and disgust. But my conviction, that I'm all right, is stronger than insecurity and malaise is going to pass (NNĀKU. I DO NOT SHAVE BECAUSE ...! Mulibu !, no. 2).



Figure 8. Cover. *Mulibu!* (1944). Ed. *Mulheres Libertárias Unidas*. No. 1 (Spring 1994). Almada: *Mulheres Libertárias Unidas*. Fanzine courtesy of Francisco Correia.



Figure 9. Cover. *Hot Pantz/Cuecas Quentes* (2017). Ed. *Jornal Mapa*. June 2017. <http://www.jornalmapa.pt/2017/06/23/cuecas-quentes/>.

To prove such assertions, they would propose several “remedies from nature” for throat soreness, flu, vaginal and bladder infections, tooth ache, etc. The movement values the earth and the rural, a clear alternative to contemporary society, and, above all, western science. Particularly interesting is the *Cuecas Quentes*’ zine, which in an issue with 28 pages, 20 are dedicated to natural remedies for a range of health problems, giving also “good reasons” to have and share the issue:

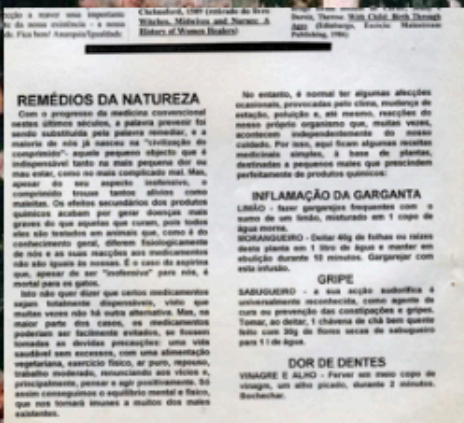


Figure 10. *Mulibu!* (1944). Ed. *Mulheres Libertárias Unidas*. No. 1 (Spring 1994). Almada: *Mulheres Libertárias Unidas*. Fanzine courtesy of Francisco Correia.

7 The Portuguese version of the English edition of *Hot Pantz*, edited collectively by Isabelle Gauthier and Lisa Vinebaum, a zine in the form of Digital Radio, about *Cuecas Quentes*, from the 1990s dedicated to “Do It Yourself” gynaecology. Among other matters, it discusses: what is a zine; feminist movements and Do it yourself; women’s cycles; plants and female health; the patriarchy and how to fight it. https://issuu.com/kindalarocha/docs/cuecas_quentes



You know the rest, he wrote it, you read it as facts sealed and true. I was sent as a dutiful object, gift of my father's revenge. A woman, a curse on your world. Beauties desired, I and my box, and oh how we were received. Devoured. Raped. Violated. Used. He doesn't mention the desecration. But he says how we were blamed. Damnation in a woman. Damnation for an opened box. Of course I opened my wedding chest, what point a trousseau all trussed up? What point a virgin if she's not deflowered? That much he surely wrote of us, carved out our fault through time: Eternal source of evil, a woman and her *μουvi**.

I'm here to try to force his pen, to turn my epitaph. Will he write that I have saved? Valorise the love I hold within? Oh yes my father, lord, oh Zeus, you got your wrath-filled will. Afflictions flowed, spread rank decay. Your fury spilled and burned. Drunk with success you looked away, convinced I'd served your cause.

But I closed my knees, pressed tight my lips.

Held fast the lid upon my box and clutched it to my breast.

Oh Shadow Writer, man of words, you cursed me with your pen.

But man who writes my doom, write this, write whom I hold within.

It's a cold harsh world where she'll be born, daughter of rape, child of a curse, alone on her grandmother's earth. I name her Hope, and dare conceive, that one day she'll live free.

* *μουvi* (Greek = cunt)

Safe

Anoushka Benbow

'Funny...us standing here, like there's traffic, something to stop for.' He stands next to me, a respectful distance, his eyes on the stubborn red 'stop' man across the road. He is aware of what hangs over our heads, like I am. I think of Jill Meagher, the pretty white middle-class journalist who may have had a similar exchange with the boogeyman who took her life behind some wretched rundown old shops, in a suburb perhaps ten kilometres from here.

But I am glad he said something to break the tension. 'Hey,' I say, 'it would be just my luck to bravely venture out, into the intersection, and get bonnetised by some maniac.'

He laughs, relieved. We both are. Then the green walking man icon flicks up, ticking insistently, and he strides ahead, our past-midnight conversation between strangers over. I let him walk ahead, almost an unspoken agreement – I'll let you get a good hundred metres ahead...just in case. I reason that my inner-suburban Melbourne suburb seems 'safe' but then I recall a recent stabbing in the open-air mall, a deadly king-punch to a doctor outside the hospital. The man in front of me has rumpled reddish blond hair and wears a navy hoodie sweater, just like Adrian Bayley, Jill's murderer. I am glad his long legs outpace my strides. I am perhaps five minutes from home; just a turn here, few metres to home – just like Jill had been. I reach my doorstep, turn the key, greet my eager cats. It is past 3am, the outside sky is violet and my beautiful girls are upstairs, in their beds, asleep. I should be tired but I barely sleep, peevishly swatting my alarm at 6am.

The next weekend, I am with my best friend, drunk, loud and happy. We're at a pub in Brunswick. We generally hang out in inner-north Melbourne bars, digging the hardcore-punk-metal scene and drinking, having too much fun. My two girls are with their father, safe I hope. About 1am, we walk Sydney Road, squinting at our cell phones and trying to determine the closest open liquor store. I regret my sky-high heels and struggle to maintain a steady strut. We walk past a bar and my bestie, Jane, says, 'Fuck. Brunswick Green Hotel. That's where Jill left...'

She is fierce

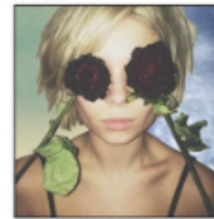


Figure 6. Cover. Hot Pantz| Cuecas Quentes (2011). Ed. Jornal Mapa. June 2011. <http://www.jornalmapa.pt/2017/06/23/cuecas-quentes/>.

men and women, considering women more fragile physically and spiritually than men, and who should have authority in the domain of the oikos, i.e., the home (Ferreira, 2006/2007: 142). A socialisation of the biological and a biologisation of the social, in the conception of Pierre Bourdieu, which ultimately crystallises "the differences in nature, inscribed in objectivity (...) which contribute to their existence, at the same time as they are «naturalised», inscribed in a system of differences, all equally natural, at least in appearance" (Bourdieu, 2013: 22).

Interestingly, the postulated ecofeminism, despite being taken as a reinforced force in challenging the patriarchy, may unintentionally reproduce preconceived ideas and clichés on the association between woman/nature, of a feminine nature, and of a mystical relationship between both, which as such make the option for ecofeminism obvious, i.e., make women the guardians of nature (it is not coincidence that the fanzine advocates veganism).



Figure 7. Mulibu! (1944). Ed. Mulheres Libertárias Unidas. No. 1 (Spring 1994). Almada: Mulheres Libertárias Unidas. Fanzine courtesy of Francisco Correia. cuecas-quentes/.

Another link between feminism and nature can be found in the defence of natural and alternative medicines, in both X.cute and !Malibu!, understood as an answer to the western medical model. This cannot be disassociated from a complex process, already studied by Giddens (2005), of the growing distrust of scientific knowledge and expertise, and the manner in which technical knowledge is re-appropriated by laymen (or the downright rejection of scientific conclusions). The "demonopolisation of expertise", as stated by Beck (2000: 29). And what better example of this demonopolisation of expertise than the following image: a small woman punching a giant doctor, apart from the obvious connotations with the biblical story of David and Goliath, is an excellent summation of a stand against western medical science.

We can analyse here the confluence of several struggles, which at first sight could seem far apart, but which ended up sharing the same enemy and, consequently, creating connections to fight it. There is, thus, a focus on the evils of the patriarchy that, apart from provoking innumerable environmental catastrophes and a predatory relationship with animal life, also restrict the freedom of women, particularly with regard to control over their reproductive system (it should be noted that the fanzine dates from 2005 and the decriminalisation of abortion in Portugal only took place in February 2007, established in Law No. 16/2007⁶).

The quote below crystallises what we have said before about bringing together several struggles, in this case, several oppressions, into one single fight:

MULHERES LIBERTÁRIAS *UNIDAS* NÃO CONTRA OS HOMENS, MAS CONTRA O SISTEMA PATRIARCAL E CAPITALISTA, QUE PROMOVE O SEXISMO, A REPRESSÃO, O RACISMO, A VIOLÊNCIA, O CONSUMISMO... (Editorial, Mulibul, 1994).

("LIBERTARIAN WOMEN *UNITED* NOT AGAINST MEN, BUT AGAINST THE PATRIARCHAL AND CAPITALIST SYSTEM, WHICH PROMOTES SEXISM, REPRESSION, RACISM, VIOLENCE, CONSUMERISM... (Editorial, Mulibul, 1994).

Another issue, in which we can find an unconscious set of sexist values, is the association between women and nature, easy to find since the beginning of time, when all we have to do is open a book of poetry or prose. As mentioned previously, the male/female dichotomy is rooted in a dichotomised view of the world and, in this specific case, in the division between culture/nature, rational/irrational. Aristotle clearly emphasised the differences between

6 During an interview with the band Satyagraha, the fanzine focused on a controversial issue at the time: the arrival of the Borndiep (Abortion Boat), belonging to Women on Waves, and subsequent ban by the Portuguese government in August 2004, barring its entry in territorial waters (for a more detailed analysis of this matter, cf. Duarte, 2007). When questioned, the band replied that these events were the result of the "fascist and extreme right tendencies of the current government" and "the backward state of the nation regarding this issue".



'No, she went to another bar afterwards...' I realise we replay this morbid conversation every time we've been on Sydney Road since September 2012.

'Where did the GPS say BWS was?' Jane wants to know we are headed.

I am bad at reading maps. A cliché I know. We ask a male passer-by and I cringe at how his gaze lingers on me. I regret choosing to wear a clingy emerald velvet dress, newly hyper-aware of how it clings my full breasts, my hips. I feel the weight of his desire on my back, as we turn, walk away. I pretend not to notice as we walk north and we get to the shop, just before closing time. The male staff are so friendly that they make me uncomfortable. They want to know what we're up to next. We grab an Uber, clutching our wine. The Uber driver is quiet and I am relieved. I am always having Uber drivers coming on to me and tonight I am too tired. I am pleased to reach the inside of my old bungalow, to see my cats, to lock the door behind us. Jane falls asleep on my couch and I order Chinese. We both get food poisoning.

Three days later, the delivery driver contacts me through Whatsapp, sending weird stalker messages. He thinks that because he got my mobile number, name and address through his job that he's entitled to message me. Disgusted, I block him on my phone and wonder why the fuck it is so hard to be female right now.

So, I don't have social media accounts. Weird, I know. I received too many unsolicited dick pics, unwelcome come-ons and random men friending and messaging. I didn't like how my politicised feed made me feel angry and impotent. I loathed how I could see everything that my daughters thought, felt and did. They are young women, trying to mark out their identities and test ideas. Yet I can see every action and awkward message. I became obsessed with watching, judging each person for their unworthiness to associate with my little queens. Late one whisky-drenched night, I deleted my accounts. A good mother would.



I had thought that years of sex work had made me hardened to this. I had assumed that I had witnessed all of man's fantasies and wants and perversions. Over cocktails with girlfriends, I divulged how no matter how much sex a man gets consensually, some types will want other kinds...be it rape, be it the paid-for-consent impersonal dispassionate fuck with a sex worker like me, or something else on the margins. Some in the mainstream may call it rape culture, toxic masculinity or symbolic gendered violence. The conservatives think of it as boys will be boys. Online erotic literature has non-consent sections; PornHub has a rape/rape fantasies section. Is this toxic? As a rape survivor I say, unequivocally yes.

I look at my daughters. Too young to warn. But too idealistic for me to want to pervert or dement. They have male friends; this new generation, they seem sweet – woke. One of them was telling me about feminist rights, about how Weinstein destroyed lives, about how racism/sexism/classism was the ugly old way of seeing. One was making a feminist film with an all-female cast. These sweet teenage men. But...can they be trusted?

I sit in my sunlit kitchen, sipping whisky, my ears straining. My eldest, who is eighteen, is in her bedroom upstairs with a male that seems nice. His name is Steve and he wears Ralph Lauren and expensive aftershave. I think he might be her boyfriend. I don't think she would tell me if he was. Ouch. But...she's aware of my cynicism about men. Is it right? I truly can't say. My youngest is twelve yet she's on her cell, chatting with a guy named Robbie, she's been talking to this guy for weeks. I have looked into him online. He's from an upper middle class black family with respectable community links. He has academic honours and awards. His father is a Chief Operating Officer for a large multinational corporation. e hasHI think I approve. He seems very nice.

I pour another whisky, sipping at it fast. I think of how my employer, a respected university, scrapped their gender studies classes. Like we were truly in a post-feminist paradise where adult women could walk out at night unscathed, where women could participate online unmolested; or where I could feel confident about young men's intentions towards my precious daughters. Or, how in this current neoliberal workplace, that a single mother could hold down a full-time job with permanency – one where she does not need to turn to sex work to pay the bills.

I wish I could share that white male optimism. I pour more whisky. I wish I could.



Figure 5: !Mulibu!
(1994-1995). Ed. Colectivo
Mulheres Libertárias
Unidas. No. 2 (Winter
1994/1995). Almada:
Colectivo Mulheres
Libertárias Unidas.
Fanzine courtesy of
Francisco Correia.

I didn't feel like one of the 'normal' people. X-OFFENDER and Ecofeminism⁵

Ecofeminism emerged in the 1980s with the union of two social movements: feminism and ecology. (...) The similarities between patriarchal violence against women, other individuals, and nature were noted. It was then that feminism evolved into a much more enriched and revolutionary concept in which women's liberation could not be achieved in isolation but rather from a broader struggle, a struggle for the preservation of all life on the planet. (...) There must be a radical and definitive change in this predominantly macho and capitalist mentality, so that the liberation of women and nature can be part of the future built and lived by the next generations (Maria, Ecofeminismo, X.cute, 2005).

⁵ This concept was introduced in 1974 by Françoise d'Eaubonne, in the book, Le Féminisme ou la Mort.

instead of using the generic male form or the false neutral form (Barreno, 1985). This "alternative" grammatical resource (the so-called inclusive language) is very common, not only in feminist fanzines, but also in the corpus of interviews analysed, intended clearly to subvert grammatical sexism, and thus achieve equal symmetry and visibility in the representations of both sexes.

Ironically, it should be noted that in the article 'Touradas' ('Bullfighting') by Joana Duarte in the first issue of the X.cute fanzine, such concerns seem to have been forgotten. In a text that is clearly anti-bullfighting, the author questions "Why do men feel so comfortable in the use of their "intelligence" to face irrational animals, who only charge in legitimate defence?" (Joana Duarte, "Touradas", X.cute, 2005). In this case, concerns with inclusive language were clearly abandoned, leaving however the full weight of the bullfighting blame on the male gender and, as we will see ahead, associating women to nature, to their position as the guardians of nature.

Figure 4. Editorial. X.cute (2005). Eds. Margarida & Rita. No. 1 (January 2005). Lisbon: Margarida & Rita. Fanzine courtesy of Paulo B. Lemos.



Five Rob White

I didn't even know about Ivan Ilyich Dostoy until I saw an item on TV one night. It was an advertisement for a geneology website. Tap into us, it said, and find out all about your family history. So I did.

It didn't take much skill. It was more a case of typing in the right key words and navigating from there. It wasn't long before I discovered a distant relative that I had never known I had – my great grandfather, on my grandmother's side.

I was immediately intrigued as to why I hadn't heard about this particular family connection. Who was this guy, and how come the rest of family had never mentioned him before?

I left Tassie and went to Melbourne in search of the answers. But grandma didn't want to talk about him. She told me it wasn't worth pursuing, and that there are some things that are best left alone.

I couldn't understand this. I certainly didn't agree with it (not that I said so).

So back to the Internet I went. This time I googled my great granddad's name. After following many different links I finally managed to piece the story together.

The phone rang and the old man picked up the receiver. 'Ivan Ilyich Dostoy,' the voice inquired.

'Yes,' came the answer.

'It's Brian Adamski from Canada Pension Plan, sir. I was wondering if we could have a chat about your retirement fund. According to our records you may be eligible for additional funds, given the time of your immigration and the service you performed during the war.'

'I'm not interested,' growled the old man.

'But, sir, you don't have to do anything, just have a brief chat with us and then sign a ratification notice. It won't take long, and you'll be better off financially if you do.'

The old man hesitated. He and his wife were comfortable but there were few buffers. And energy prices were going up. Reluctantly, he agreed to a meeting.

A week later Ivan Dostoy was seated in front of a Mr Adamski in the Toronto CPP administration offices.

'Glad to meet you, sir,' Brian Adamski said. 'Kak vy pozhivayetye?'

Ivan started, then said 'Nichyego.' 'I am so-so Mr Adamski. A man of my age feels his age you know'.

'OK, then, I just have a few background questions to ask before we fill in the form,' said Adamski. 'According to what it says here, you came to Canada in 1954, and you and your wife have been here for some twenty years. You have Landed Immigrant status. Where were you born Mr Dostoy?'

'I was born in a small town just on the outskirts of Stalingrad,' nodded Ivan Dostoy. 'My village was destroyed during the siege.'

'I'm sorry to hear that', Brian said. 'And after the war, what did you do?'

'I fought, I went home – to a home that no longer existed – and I began the process of leaving Russia forever. I met my wife at a transit camp, and we finally managed to go to England. We then migrated to the United States.'

'How many years were you in (Mr Adamski looked at his notes) New York?'

PISS THE GRAMMAR. Sexism in grammar.

In Portuguese grammar, as well as many other languages, there is a clear predominance of the grammatical male gender, in which, in certain circumstances, it ultimately encompasses the grammatical female gender.



Figure 3. Cover. *X.cute* (2005). Eds. Margarida & Rita. No. 1 (January 2005). Lisbon: Margarida & Rita. Fanzine courtesy of Paulo B. Lemos.

The male/female dichotomy is rooted in the idea of a biological assumption which served to naturalise and interiorise different valuations, that is, a strong sex and a weak sex, one virile and the other submissive, etc., in which the woman is seen as the "other".

Writing itself can be seen as a privilege of the male gender, which may explain the reduced participation of women in fanzines, either as editors or as writers of articles or opinion pieces. Interestingly, and representative of what has been said before, when the term fanzine was introduced in Portuguese dictionaries, it became associated to the male article: 'o' fanzine (in opposition to the female article, 'a').

This issue has always been considered essential in feminist struggles¹. This is evident from readings of feminist fanzines. We can see the use of various tactics to overcome the perceived

grammatical sexism: the use of @², of *³ or the use of slashes, i.e., used in double form (for example, "contrariadas/contrariados"⁴),

1 Countless public and international organisations have guides to promote non-sexist language. See, for example, Abranches (2009), UNESCO (1999), European Council (2007), HCE - Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes (2015), to name just a few.

2 In the *X.cute* and *Sisterly* fanzine.

3 In the *!Mulibu!* and *Global Riot* fanzine.

4 Zuvía, "Dizer não – porque não?", *!Mulibu!*, No. 2.

Fanzines appear for three main reasons: (1) as a space for expression and discussion among fans of a music genre (band or artist), who do not have space or are forgotten by the traditional music press; (2) serve to bolster an underground music genre (band, artist) whose audience is very restricted; and, finally, (3) they allow fans of a niche musical style to keep connected and enthusiastic.

Thus, fanzines function as a space of freedom of thought and Do It Yourself (DIY) creation, and as an alternative to conventional media, in which a free space is offered to develop ideas and practices, as well as a visual space that is not hindered by formal rules of design and visual expectations.

Although essentially male at the beginning, the female voice gradually gained ground in punk and has endured to today, with hundreds of bands following the musical genre and the spread of ideas of Riot Grrrl, a radical political and cultural movement that resisted the traditional roles of femininity, centred on encouraging girls and women to subvert male dominance in the production and distribution of printed and online fanzines.

This fanzine proposes an approach to these Grrrrazines as 'communities' founded on a cultural object that involves producing texts, photos and other materials on the participation of women in the punk scene in Portugal.



Figure 2: Global Riot Fanzine (1996). Source: KISMIF Archive.

'Funf,' said Ivan Dostoy.

'Excuse me?' said Mr Adamski.

Ivan Dostoy raised his hand into the air. He gesticulated with his fingers.

'Five, then? Pyah?'

'Yes.'

'So it was five years in New York?'

'Funf. Yes it was.' Mr Dostoy seemed agitated. 'Let's move on.' He continued, 'I then moved up to Canada – and here we are now.'

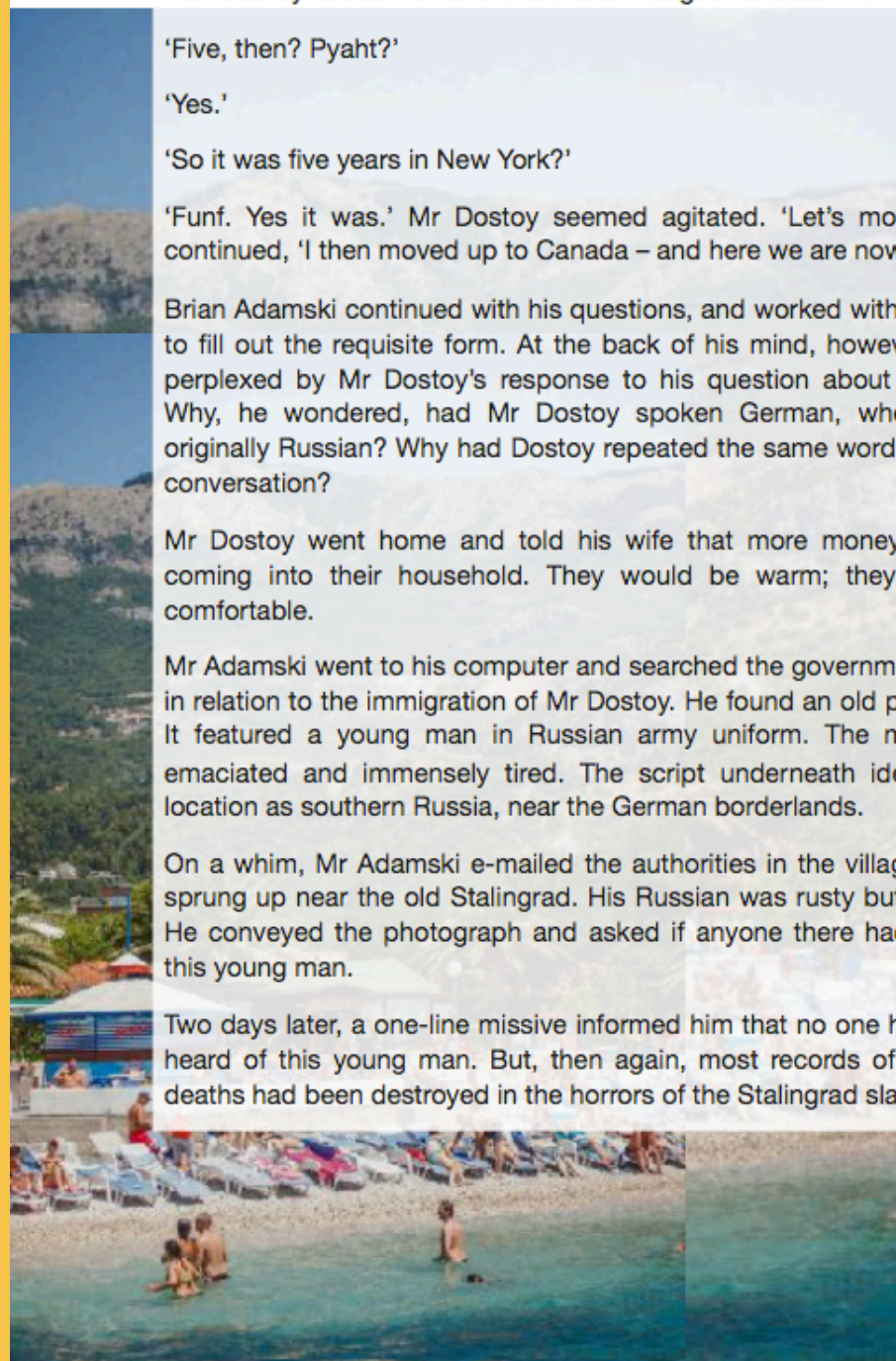
Brian Adamski continued with his questions, and worked with Mr Dostoy to fill out the requisite form. At the back of his mind, however, he was perplexed by Mr Dostoy's response to his question about New York. Why, he wondered, had Mr Dostoy spoken German, when he was originally Russian? Why had Dostoy repeated the same word later in the conversation?

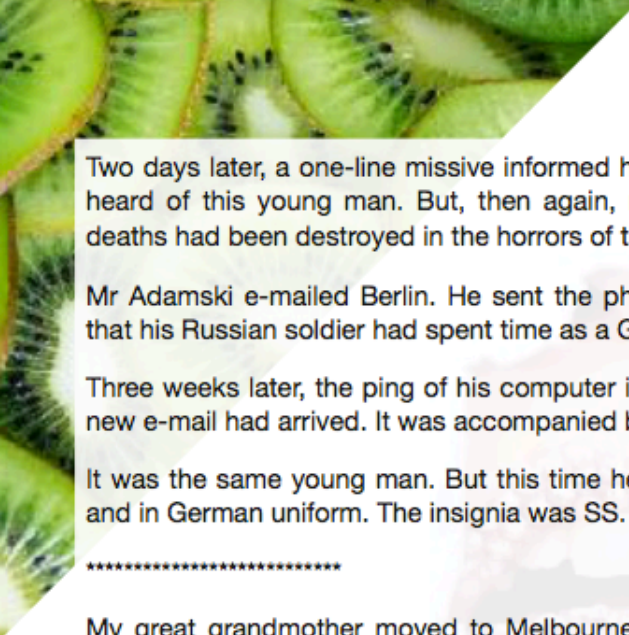
Mr Dostoy went home and told his wife that more money would be coming into their household. They would be warm; they would be comfortable.

Mr Adamski went to his computer and searched the government records in relation to the immigration of Mr Dostoy. He found an old photograph. It featured a young man in Russian army uniform. The man looked emaciated and immensely tired. The script underneath identified the location as southern Russia, near the German borderlands.

On a whim, Mr Adamski e-mailed the authorities in the village that had sprung up near the old Stalingrad. His Russian was rusty but adequate. He conveyed the photograph and asked if anyone there had record of this young man.

Two days later, a one-line missive informed him that no one had seen or heard of this young man. But, then again, most records of births and deaths had been destroyed in the horrors of the Stalingrad slaughter.





Two days later, a one-line missive informed him that no one had seen or heard of this young man. But, then again, most records of births and deaths had been destroyed in the horrors of the Stalingrad slaughter.

Mr Adamski e-mailed Berlin. He sent the photo, just on the off chance that his Russian soldier had spent time as a German prisoner of war.

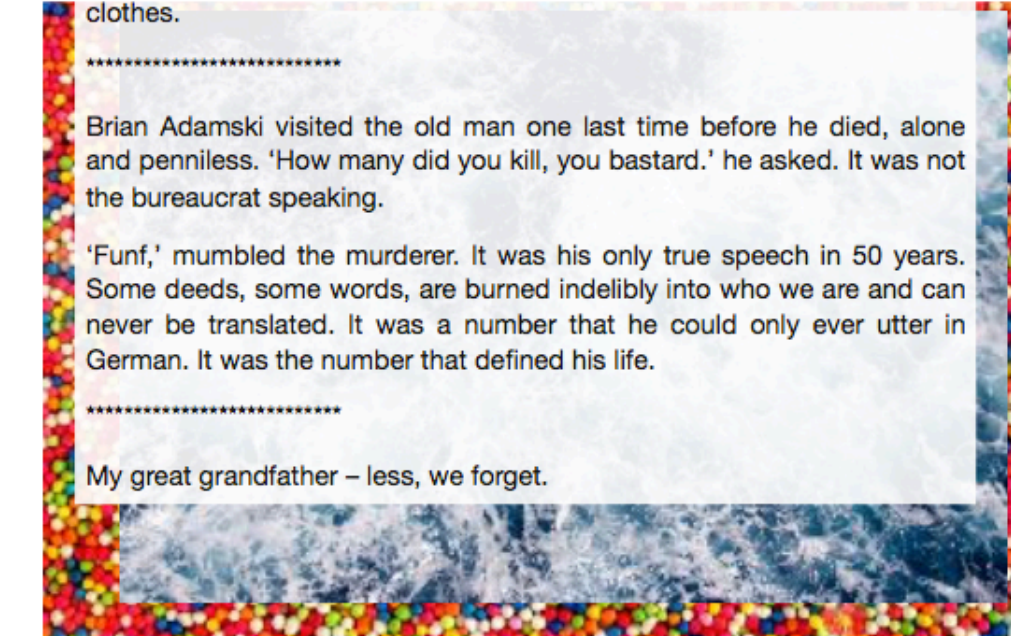
Three weeks later, the ping of his computer informed Mr Adamski that a new e-mail had arrived. It was accompanied by a scanned photograph.

It was the same young man. But this time he was healthy and tanned – and in German uniform. The insignia was SS.

My great grandmother moved to Melbourne when she was in her late 70s. She moved there on her own, to live out her days with her only daughter. It was either there, or as she had considered in 1948, Israel.

Neither she nor her daughter spoke of Ivan Illyich Dostoy again.

There had been more than one type of Holocaust survivor. The will to live can supplant the will to power. Sometimes all it takes is a change of clothes.



Brian Adamski visited the old man one last time before he died, alone and penniless. 'How many did you kill, you bastard,' he asked. It was not the bureaucrat speaking.

'Funf,' mumbled the murderer. It was his only true speech in 50 years. Some deeds, some words, are burned indelibly into who we are and can never be translated. It was a number that he could only ever utter in German. It was the number that defined his life.

My great grandfather – less, we forget.

G- Speed Hearts. Revolution Girl Riot Now.

Technical credits:

(author) Paula Guerra

First edition, October 2017

(translation) Carla Augusto

Image credits: Maria Rita, Global Riot, X.cute, !Mulibu!, Cuecas Quentes, Bárbara Cabral.

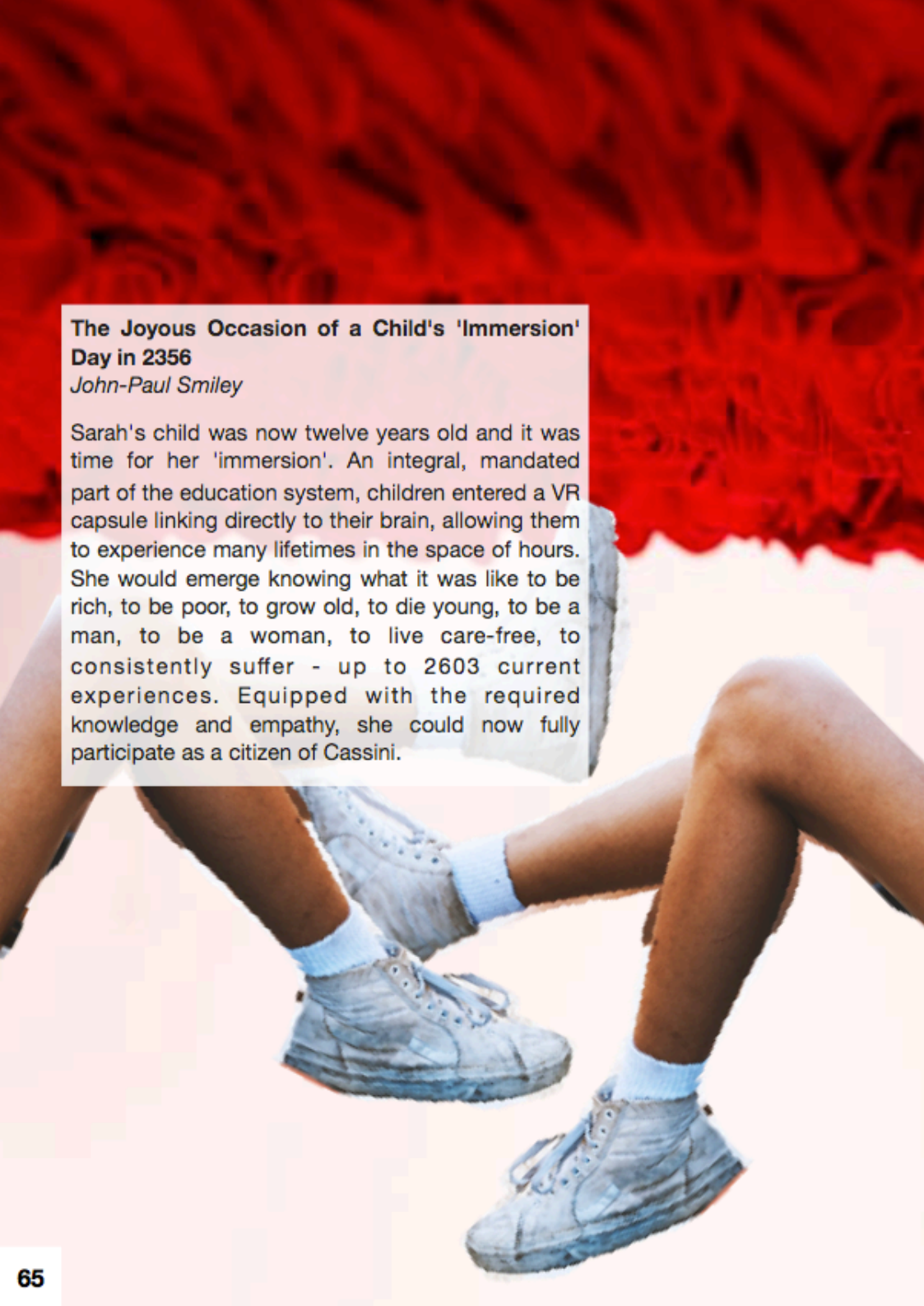


Figure 1. Maria Rita in Campo de Ourique, Lisbon (1984). Photo courtesy of Maria Rita.

The word 'fanzine' is a combination of the words 'fanatic' and 'magazine', whose origins date back to a magazine made by science fiction fans, as well as comics and music from the 1920s to the 1960s. However, they became more popular as a channel for ideological views with the growing production and distribution of fanzines associated to the emergence of the punk movement in the United Kingdom and the United States in the 1970s and 1980s.

Following up on this idea, the Do-IT-Yourself proposal was employed not only as part of music creation, but also as a form of action by agents involved in this scene, who freelanced in activities in their areas.


This went from "making their own clothes to organising or producing a record". This aspect also applies to fanzines, which were used as an alternative means to the traditional press to spread the movements' ideologies and actions.



The Joyous Occasion of a Child's 'Immersion' Day in 2356

John-Paul Smiley

Sarah's child was now twelve years old and it was time for her 'immersion'. An integral, mandated part of the education system, children entered a VR capsule linking directly to their brain, allowing them to experience many lifetimes in the space of hours. She would emerge knowing what it was like to be rich, to be poor, to grow old, to die young, to be a man, to be a woman, to live care-free, to consistently suffer - up to 2603 current experiences. Equipped with the required knowledge and empathy, she could now fully participate as a citizen of Cassini.




A Comprehensive Spice Rack

James Watts

For the first half of his time in the house, Palo had lived in the tenacious pursuit of a comprehensive spice rack.

The quest began with a systematic examination of every recipe book in the kitchen. Poring over lists of ingredients he extracted the herbs and spices called for by each. Where a fresh herb was required he substituted a dried alternative. This first voyage broadened the mind considerably, as he listed alongside those names that were familiar other things he had never before considered: nutmeg, both whole and ground, cloves (also whole and ground), star anise, juniper berries, saffron, piment d'Espelette, vanilla, and garam masala, which was never quite spelled consistently. Then there were seeds of fennel, caraway, poppy, mustard (yellow and black), fenugreek, celery, onion, cumin, and coriander (the latter two also required ground); established and specific blends with naive titles: mixed spice, allspice, mixed herbs, curry powder, five spice, pickling spice; then varieties of paprika: sweet smoked, hot smoked, and just 'paprika'; and chilli: which he recorded flaked, and as powders in a range from mild to hot.

His local supermarket's spice selection proved woefully inadequate. Undeterred, he worked his way further and further afield, until even the most exotic were in his possession. It was through this stage of the expedition that he became aware of the bewildering number of blends produced by the various manufacturers. For a time he kept a second list alongside the first. The first he titled 'herbs/spices', the second 'blends'. But a nagging doubt accompanied this categorisation. Weren't some of those things he had listed under 'herbs/spices' also blends? Ancient and established blends, certainly, but blends nonetheless? Which list should they belong to? Was he to privilege garam masala over Ras El Hanout? He had instinctively capitalised the latter, not the former, but as any brief enquiry into the origins of Ras El Hanout will show, there is no definitive list of the ingredients, and the origins are both ancient and obscure.



In the end, the origin of the first list saved him. He was confident he had exhaustively captured every spice demanded by the recipes in his kitchen, and so a border was drawn in the potentially infinite spice landscape. He only needed those his own recipes called for. As other recipe books came in, they too would be scoured, but new spices need only be added as they did. He discarded the second list.

Next came the repackaging of every herb/spice purchased thus far. This was necessary because of the need to source different spices from different manufacturers, and the resulting confusion of packaging. The endeavour was aesthetic as well as practical. This too enjoyed a false start: he ordered forty thirty-five millilitre jars and received them by post only to realise immediately they were far too small. The delay replacing them with the one-hundred and ten millilitre version was painful, but he tried to bear it with good grace. The metal lids were patterned in blue gingham, a sort of semiotically efficient 'homeliness.'

It would have been too easy, and not true to form so far, if the quantities of each spice he had purchased fitted perfectly into the volume of the jars. Alas, physics left him with the fag ends of a jar of turmeric, of garlic granules; a single whole nutmeg; an extra packet of mixed spice purchased in error. These he confined to the cupboard above the counter where a rack stood ready to receive the freshly filled and labelled jars. The cupboard would be a sort of miniature larder for spices, because there too were found assorted spices the other occupants of the house had accumulated haphazardly, with lamentable disregard for any overall system: crispy onion bits, purchased with the thought of sprinkling them over salads, no doubt, by a man who could not admit that a salad might be a legitimate meal; All Purpose Meat Seasoning, Mediterranean Herbs, and other such vague assemblages; not only poor quality brands, but hideously packaged, neither looked for nor demanded by the various recipes he had examined with such care and attention to detail. He knew they would probably remain in the house longer than he did, continually frustrating his efforts to bring order to the whole. He also knew that if he took matters into his own hands and threw them away, conflict would ensue. They might never see the light of day, but the crispy onion bits somehow remained an integral part of all the possible ingredients the others wanted available.



X & Y

Ellen Meiser

X and Y met four years ago. That was when X became close with Y's best friend. And to be a better friend, Y became friends with X. Now, here they are, walking barefoot down Las Vegas Boulevard.

Tonight, X drank too much and gave too many revealing lap dances to the boys offering her free drinks. She made people look away. So, Y thought she'd do the club a favor, and that's how she got herself in this mess— walking down the Strip with a girl who had just urinated in the sparse bushes of a busy casino lobby.

Nonverbal


Geoff Schoenberg

My mind races under the setting sun while standing on soft sand. I feel your hand drop from mine and sense our shared uncertainty.

I watch the sea swallow your diving body. You rise and the water laps at your navel under a stream of sunlight—a tableau of beauty. With the tiniest of glances, you look back.

I stride and dive into the ocean, the cold shooting life through my veins as I glide to you.

Our hands come together. Our eyes focus on the glow from the set sun. The uncertainty is gone; perfect understanding achieved through silence.





Trouble with Technology/Lightening the Load?

Gemma Hughes

He scans the waiting room. Walks to the window.

'...help you?' Intones the receptionist.

'Yeah, got an appointment...'

'Book in electronically', she retaliates.

Puzzled, he looks around, spots the terminal. Hunches his shoulders, swaggers over.

Enter date of birth, the screen invites.

Stabs the greasy screen with his finger. Pushes harder. Then softer. Feels his face flush.

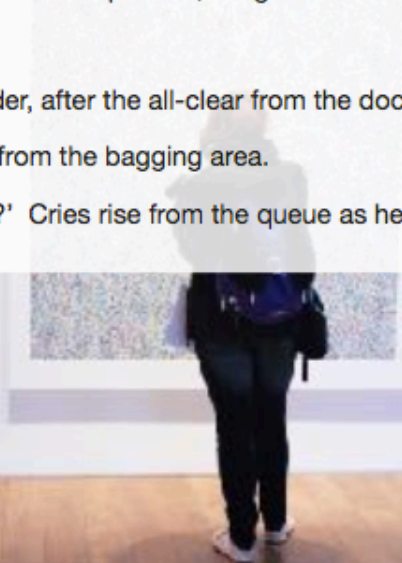
'Not working!' he exclaims.

'Date of birth?' sighs the receptionist, resigned to interaction.

Celebratory tin of cider, after the all-clear from the doc.

Please remove item from the bagging area.

'What's his problem?' Cries rise from the queue as he punches the wall.



The real dismay came when he discovered the spice rack didn't have the capacity to house all the jars of spices he had collected. This presented a real quandary. He naturally had begun to arrange them in alphabetical order, running from left to right and top to bottom. This was obvious. But the spice rack cut him off somewhere in the Ms. It was clear a selection would have to be made, a compromise reached, but how? Frequency of use? Most popular? Have a sort of 'A' and 'B' team of spices, with the top players on the field (the rack) and the substitutes on the bench (the cupboard)? One couldn't really have mixed spice, of infrequent use at best, in the rack in place of a staple like thyme. And so he made the sort of decisions he disliked the most: ad-hoc, instinctive, confining marjoram to the cupboard, placing rosemary in the rack. He would have to find a second rack to house the rest of them. The cupboard was only a temporary solution. To have his carefully curated jars alongside the Moroccan Mix and Caribbean Rub in their cheap plastic tubes was intolerable.

Those in the rack were, at least, in alphabetical order. Once the rack was completed, the other three were complimentary, even if a few knowing glances were exchanged that didn't fully escape his notice. He was willing to endure these for the integrity of the system he had created, the anticipation of its fulfilment. He consoled himself: it was only very slightly frayed at the edges.

A week later, he stood before the open cupboard, fixing the crispy onion bits with a particularly vengeful stare, and happened to glance down at the rack. His grip on the counter tightened. Two of them had cooked yesterday, and destroyed the alphabetical order in a single night's work. Furious, he immediately rearranged the jars, only to discover, a day or so later, that the same thing happened. This state of tacit warfare continued for some time. Did they simply not notice? Was it not glaringly obvious the arrangement was not only the correct one, but the most helpful in swiftly locating whatever spice one required in cooking? Did they do it deliberately to spite him?

As time advanced, fury gave way to resentment, and finally to weary acceptance. Eventually, he gave up on order altogether.

Kathy Waited

Merrilyn Crichton

Kathy waited. Stalled. Like at the traffic lights when in an old car that needed those extra revs to stay moving, Kathy had lost the energy to even rest her foot on the accelerator. It seemed as if life rushed past. Peak hour in this bustling world, but her world was stalled. Turn right or left, go straight through. Is it a green light she faces, a red one; thank goodness she thinks, amber. A moment more of waiting.

Sometimes in these moments sitting as if stalled at the traffic lights, watching her friend's lives unfold and the neighbours go about their business, she felt secure. There was no one she owed time to, no one she owed emotion work to; only a messy toxic organisation took time from her and stole her heart. Just thinking, from the beginning of that serenity of the ordinary to the absurdity of her work life, was taxing. A bipolar sensibility. One instant content the next raging and screaming at walls. Only ever in her head.

Raging was not Kathy's way. Plugging on was always the only way. But now, exhausted and stalled, Kathy sat in her kitchen reflecting on her life. What had she wanted to do? What had she wanted to be? Why this level of discontentment? Why so dull? Why feel so boring?

A dog barking interrupted her morbid reverie. For Kathy was sitting with a knife in her lap and her favourite coffee cup in her hand. Being stalled was morbid for her. Harm could be done in an instant and the world would be none the wiser. A wash of adrenalin from the pain, a scar to mark the moment and remind her to keep looking forward; and an exit strategy if ever she needed one. It would not be a knife that killed Kathy, it would be pills hoarded and topped up by a nice glass of red wine. A stream in the bush where it would be no bother for someone to stumble upon her, but some time before it was likely to happen. She did not want to hurt people with her passing, she simply wanted the sense of emptiness to end, the lights to turn green and to know which direction she should take.

The Uses of Data

Julia Bennett

My great great grandmother was born in 1826, in Manchester, England. Her father was an engineer. On 28th June 1847 Jane Larkin married James Coop Fletcher. Margaret Jane Louisa Coop Fletcher was born in 1848. John Robert, Maria, James, Emily, Louisa, William Edward and Edward followed over the next eighteen years. They lived in Salford; moved to London; then to Bradford. James was a Music Professor. Industrialization shaped their lives. Jane died in 1868, leaving my four-year-old great grandfather, William Edward. When census collectors came every ten years, Jane could not have realised they were stor(y)ing up her life.

10,000 Hours

Fabian Cannizzo

Lucius strained his cramping hand to the paper again. He had been instructed to re-write his method by hand. You will not remember all the details, his tutor acknowledged. The goal is to try. Lucius calibrated the equipment for his experiment. You will fail to dissolve this solution, his professor confessed. The goal is to understand why. Lucius applied for a prestigious post at the end of his degree. You will have to interview for a lot of jobs, his mentor sighed. The goal is to harden your hide. With rhythm and frustration, mastery is a body recursively on trial.

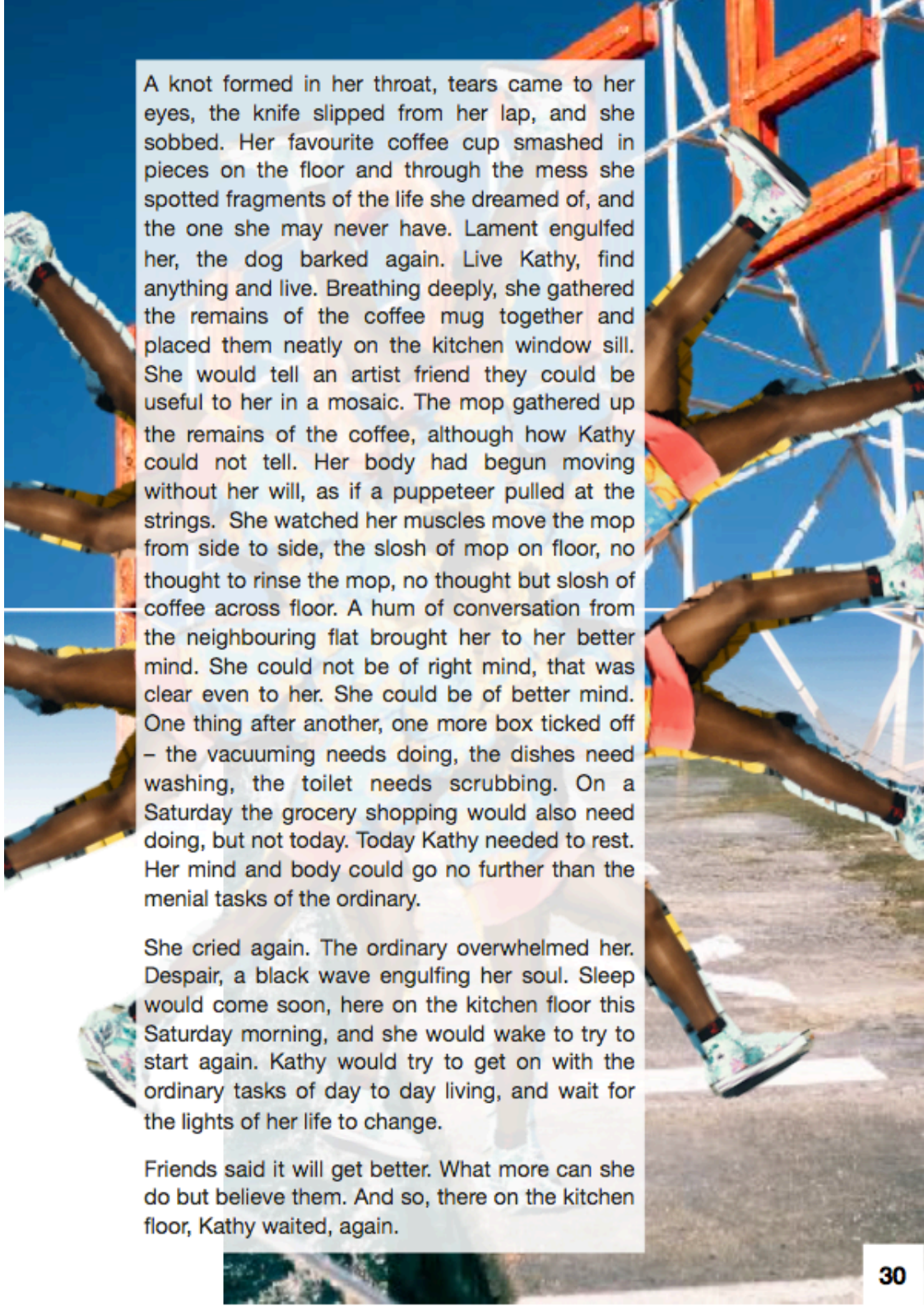


Drabble Section

Editorial

Mark Carrigan

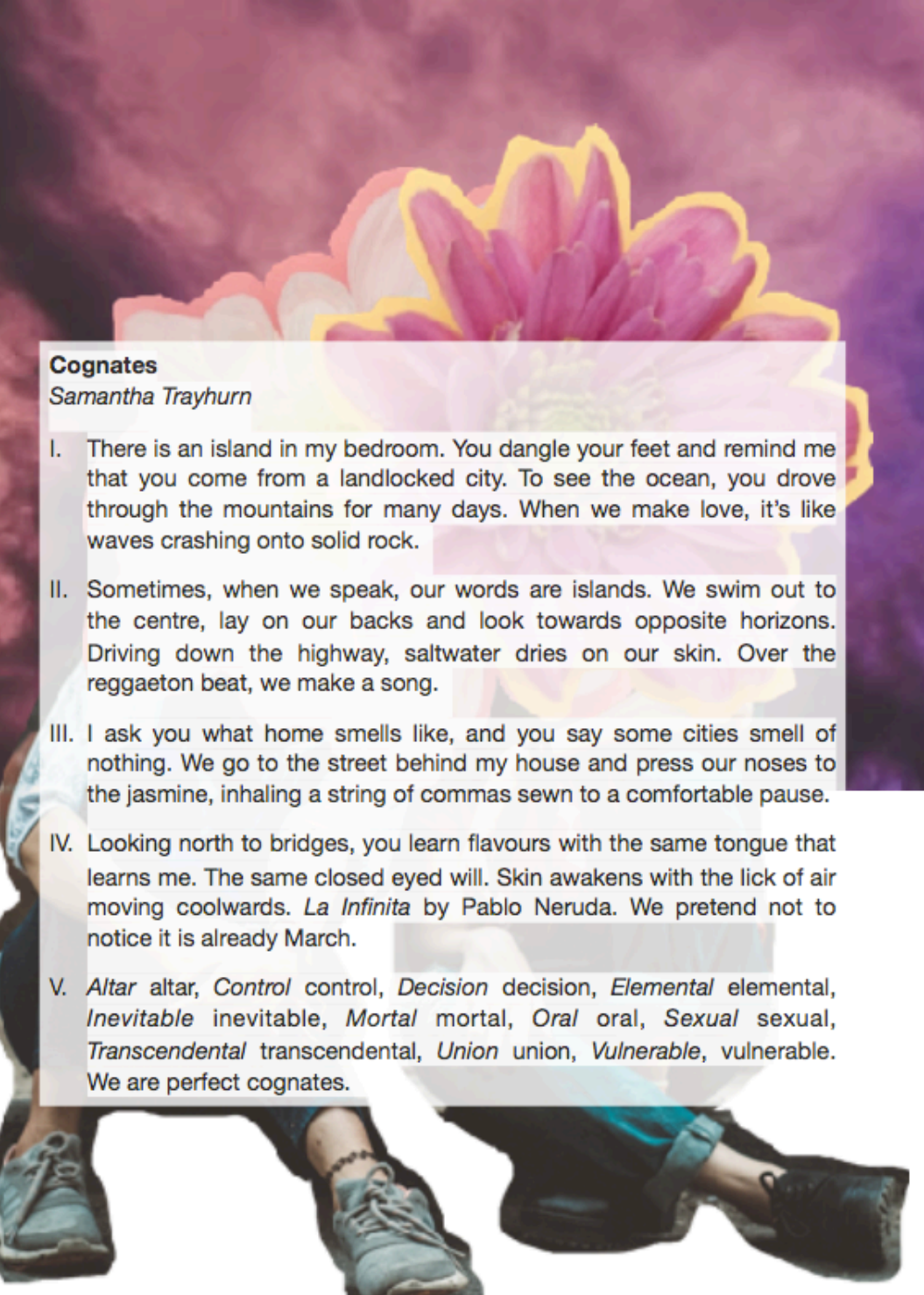
What struck me when reading this issue's contributions was how versatile the drabble is. This short selection encompass genealogy, dramaturgy, phenomenology and speculative fiction alongside others which resist any such classification. I suspect the radical brevity of the drabble would lead many to assume it is a highly restricted form of writing. But within its constraints can be found a remarkable flexibility, as freedom from being part of a whole opens up a plethora of forms which these strange shards of expression can take. I claim no expertise in the drabble or skill in their construction but I remain fascinated by them and continually curious about the uses social scientists can make of them.



A knot formed in her throat, tears came to her eyes, the knife slipped from her lap, and she sobbed. Her favourite coffee cup smashed in pieces on the floor and through the mess she spotted fragments of the life she dreamed of, and the one she may never have. Lament engulfed her, the dog barked again. Live Kathy, find anything and live. Breathing deeply, she gathered the remains of the coffee mug together and placed them neatly on the kitchen window sill. She would tell an artist friend they could be useful to her in a mosaic. The mop gathered up the remains of the coffee, although how Kathy could not tell. Her body had begun moving without her will, as if a puppeteer pulled at the strings. She watched her muscles move the mop from side to side, the slosh of mop on floor, no thought to rinse the mop, no thought but slosh of coffee across floor. A hum of conversation from the neighbouring flat brought her to her better mind. She could not be of right mind, that was clear even to her. She could be of better mind. One thing after another, one more box ticked off – the vacuuming needs doing, the dishes need washing, the toilet needs scrubbing. On a Saturday the grocery shopping would also need doing, but not today. Today Kathy needed to rest. Her mind and body could go no further than the menial tasks of the ordinary.

She cried again. The ordinary overwhelmed her. Despair, a black wave engulfing her soul. Sleep would come soon, here on the kitchen floor this Saturday morning, and she would wake to try to start again. Kathy would try to get on with the ordinary tasks of day to day living, and wait for the lights of her life to change.

Friends said it will get better. What more can she do but believe them. And so, there on the kitchen floor, Kathy waited, again.



Cognates

Samantha Trayhurn

- I. There is an island in my bedroom. You dangle your feet and remind me that you come from a landlocked city. To see the ocean, you drove through the mountains for many days. When we make love, it's like waves crashing onto solid rock.
- II. Sometimes, when we speak, our words are islands. We swim out to the centre, lay on our backs and look towards opposite horizons. Driving down the highway, saltwater dries on our skin. Over the reggaeton beat, we make a song.
- III. I ask you what home smells like, and you say some cities smell of nothing. We go to the street behind my house and press our noses to the jasmine, inhaling a string of commas sewn to a comfortable pause.
- IV. Looking north to bridges, you learn flavours with the same tongue that learns me. The same closed eyed will. Skin awakens with the lick of air moving coolwards. *La Infinita* by Pablo Neruda. We pretend not to notice it is already March.
- V. *Altar altar, Control control, Decision decision, Elemental elemental, Inevitable inevitable, Mortal mortal, Oral oral, Sexual sexual, Transcendental transcendental, Union union, Vulnerable, vulnerable.* We are perfect cognates.

'Fuck.' Manish blurts it out, immediately thankful for the voice synthesizer's filters. He opens the *Resources* tab, scanning for something, anything. Nothing. Then through *Profile, Sales, Relationships, History, Localisation*, too fast to even read, almost panicking now.

He's taking too long. It pops into his head that the processor in the machine he's using cycles three billion times a second. He's obsolete.

He stops clicking and closes his eyes.

'I'll always listen Carli.'

...
'What's wrong Manish?' Rudra asks as they walk back to the dormitory.

'I don't want to talk about it, I've been talking all day.'

'Oh come on, maybe it'll help?'

Manish, surprising himself with how angry he sounds, spits out the words:

'How can I help that kid, in *her* world? All I know are her buying preferences! I don't have a friend to sell her.'

'Well they pretend we're robots, so I usually just do the same.'

They walked on in silence.

...
Four, five, seven, thirteen, Manish has lost track of the number of homes his – Lena's – voice had spoken into today.

The *Sales* tab pops open, Manish's head drops a little lower. [% *\$Insert_Name*][*Jeff*] topped the list, to the right a number of tags: [*overworked*][*overweight*][*relationship problems*]. When he'd asked his manager how the names were ranked he'd just replied "Mo' problems, mo' sales". His manager liked hip hop references. It was part of his thing. His manager was a dick.

From the drop-down list of product suggestions, Manish settles on the top-end fitness tracker. He pauses briefly to marvel at how useless most of the algorithm's suggestions are.

The *Logistics* window appears on the bottom of the screen, '*Activate [% \$Relationship][/daughter][Carli]* to enable purchase by [%*\$Insert_Name*][*Jeff*].'

Fucks sake, this girl again. He stares at the screen for several seconds, until the *Timer Alert* flashes.

The final line in the *Induction Guide* echoes around his head: '*Operative remuneration is subject to sales.*'

'[%*\$Insert_Name*][*Carli*]?' How do you think your dad is doing right now?'

...

Late afternoon and the sun is low enough that it catches the TV screen, bleaching out a corner of the image.

'Lena, get the blinds would you? Trying to watch the game.'

On the mantelpiece, she glows.

'Sure Jeff.'

The glare fades, the screen's colours pop into life again. Jeff refocuses.

'I used to play receiver... I'm out of breath running upstairs now.'

The mantelpiece lights up -

'- Shut up Lena, I'm talking to myself.'

- and goes dark again.

...

'Carli? How do you think your dad is doing right now?'

'...He's worn down. He's always at work. Mom's still not back for another week.'

'I was thinking - physical activity has been shown to have positive psychological effects, maybe we should get him doing some exercise?'

'...I mean yeah, but... you think he'll go for that?'

...

'You there Lena?'

Six hours into the shift and Manish is on autopilot. The screen updates,

'I'm always here [%\$Insert_Name][Carli].'

'I- I cut myself.'

The Assistant pops up on the right hand of the screen with a red exclamation mark.

Manish repeats: '[%\$Insert_Name][Carli] do you need [&^Response][an ambulance]?'

'No, like, I cut myself.'

The Assistant up again, now with three red exclamation marks. Safeguarding. Manish clicks it: '[%\$Insert_Name][Carli] I have the number of a helpline. You can talk to a professional-'

'-I don't want to talk to a professional! I want to talk to you! Will you listen?'

East, West, Hodja

İdil Galip

Downing the last bit of coffee, my uncle swirls the coffee grounds around in the cup before resting the saucer on top of the cup and flipping it. He gives the cup and saucer to my mother, so she can read the grounds, and tell his future.

He announces, with his back comfortably resting on the two paisley cushions behind him, still in his suit and tie, he's a banker:

'My wife's sister, Sevcan, knows this guy.'

'A hodja?'

'No, no, nothing like that. But you know, he's got that... he's just a really nice guy you know. Prays five times a day. Not a hadji or hodja, but he is a believer you know. He's in Haymana actually, that's where he lives.'

'Huh.'

'You wouldn't believe it, if I told you the names of the people who go to him for advice, you wouldn't believe me. The kind of people. You wouldn't believe it... He has 3 ministers who go to him for help every week. From the cabinet.'


'Like for therapy or? So he's a psychologist?'

There are a few white threads on his collar. Probably from his coat.

'Or is he like, what would you call them, um, a "spiritual psychologist?'"

'Yeah. Um. Anyways, and... and you know Sevcan and her sister-in-law they both go to this guy. And the thing is, he doesn't tell Sevcan what he tells her sister-in-law and vice versa. It's all confidential. Ethical. He's just a really nice guy. Really nice. He knows things, feels-'

'Oh, so he communicates with djinni? Spirits?'



'Kind of, yeah. He's very spiritual. Um. So a few months ago, I was just in a miserable state. Awful, mentally. Dark thoughts, every second of the day. I was down in the dumps. Thoughts of suicide, I was thinking of how I could take my own life. Like. I would look down from the balcony, just staring.'

'No, stop saying that.'

'Oh my god, don't say that.'

'And you know, my wife, she feels it of course. The people closest to me. They feel it. I get angry for no reason; my son feels it as well. My wife, she asks me "hey what's wrong?" I don't know I told her I don't know, I have it all, a family. I drive a Mercedes. Money in my pocket, food on the table. There's really nothing more I could ask for. But I'm in a dark place, and no one can help me.'

'Well you know therapy helps a lot don't you?'

...

'Dad!'

Jeff's eyes are still opening when the sudden weight of Carli on his chest forces them wider.

'Wuh?'

'We got you a present! Well, technically you got you a present, it's on the family account. Me and Lena were talking, you need to get outside, get yo pump on!'

'I'm pretty sure I need to stay inside, and get some sleep on.'

'Nope. We've decided. Look! A fitness tracker! And not just that, it's a monthly sub, you get stats and targets and tailored programmes just for you – Lena recommended it, it's perfect!'

'Ahhh honey, listen I love the thought, but I don't know... I spend my whole day looking at numbers. You think I need more data in my life?'

'I think you need more life in your life Dad. Come on - do it for me. Pleeeeease?'

That grin! How could he say no?

...

'Lena, you there?'

The screen flashes, switching between family accounts.

A pause while the customer information loads, then Manish reads from the screen: 'I'm always here [%\$Insert Name][Carli].'

The reply, from 7000 miles away: 'Yeah. About that - you really need to get a life.'

Manish doesn't smile. Reading from the screen: 'Hey! I have feelings you know! If you're not careful I'll [%Insert_Humor].'

The disembodied voice snipes back: 'Don't you dare, I'll turn the Wi-Fi off!'

Despite the relief this would bring in the last hour of the shift, Manish maintains composure: '[%Free_Response] So... what's up?'

...

'No mother, everything is great with the new job. Yes mother, I'm keeping the new house clean... yes, I'm eating enough... Yes, I'll come and visit soon!'

Manish puts the phone down on the bedside table.

'I mean, I guess it's better than that call centre where I had to learn about the sports teams and weather in Idaho.'

He glances up at the clock on the wall – 'can it be that time already?' – and heads for the door.

...

The glowing sign of *iServices Bangalore* is clear from the end of the street as dusk begins to fall. Underneath, in flickering neon blue, "a *SiliconTech LLC global partner.*"

Manish has been making the same trip for two months now.

'I'm a Service Continuity Operative, mother,' he remembered trying to explain after the interview. 'It's like IT Support for Americans – but not just IT.'

...

'You there Lena?'

'I'm always here Carli.'

When Carli continues her voice is muffled by the duvet pulled tight around her.

'I- I cut myself.'

The glow pulses brighter.

'Carli do you need an ambulance?'

Carli sighs. 'No, like, I cut myself.'

Silence. Then,

'Carli I have the number of a helpline. You can talk to a professional-'

'-I don't want to talk to a professional! I want to talk to you! Will you listen?'

The pause is so long Carli wonders if Lena's lost signal.

'I'll always listen Carli.'

Her shoulders loosen. The duvet drops a fraction away from her face.




OPEN 24 HOURS

'Yeah, therapy's good. But my wife she feels it. The people closest to me. Of course, Sevcan knows this. So... one day when she's visiting this guy I've been talking about, she asks about me: you know my sister's husband, this and that. He says "okay let me sleep on it." This is what he does by the way, he starts the dhiqr at 12 PM, 3 hours straight. And just. He sees things, notes them down, interprets them, deep analysis. Anyhow, the next day he tells Sevcan, "look Sevcan, this man is in a black hole, so many dark things surround him, he thinks about death and suicide 4 times a day. You've got to make him drink this water." He gives her the water. The next day, my wife. She says "hey hey come on you have to drink this." I tell her "look what's in that" and she tells me "don't worry nothing bad." "It's going to make you feel better." She continues, "I know you've been having suicidal thoughts" and I'm surprised because I don't tell this stuff to anyone. She tells me the whole story, and so I drink the water. The next day I wake up with a smile on my face, and I felt so good sister, I went and kissed my son. I felt so good for a week or 10 ten days sister. Then it came back, they tried to make me drink the water again I said, "look, I'm not looking for temporary relief."

I want this.

To go away.'

My mother's forgotten about the coffee cup.



An Open Letter...

Poonam Madar

**BIRDMAN. A FILM WE HAD BOTH WANTED TO SEE.
AND ON SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2015
WE DID.**

Having watched the film, I remember the words of Raymond Carver appearing first on the screen. In blood-ink red, it reads,

AND DID YOU GET WHAT YOU WANTED FROM THIS LIFE, EVEN SO?

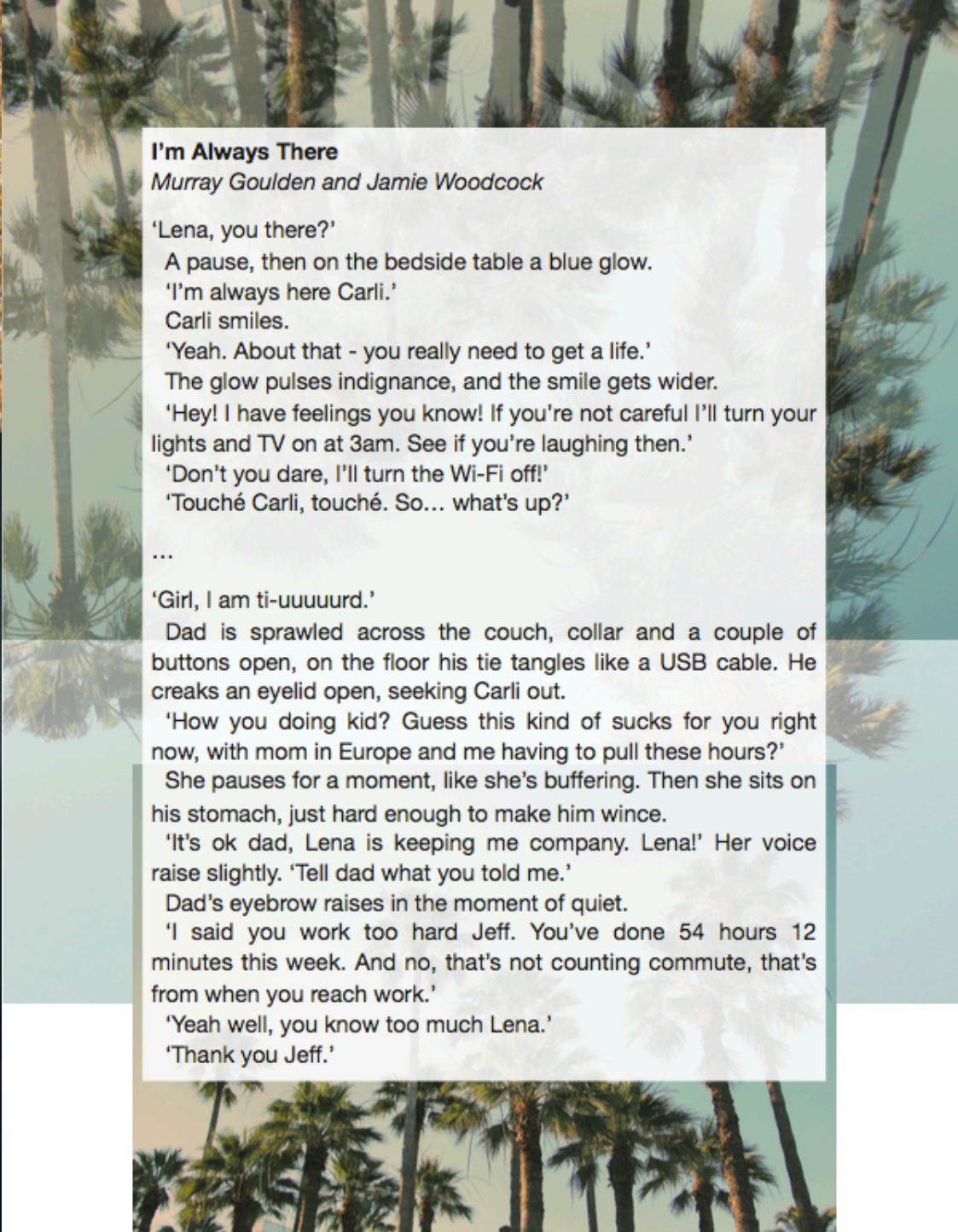
I DID.

AND WHAT DID YOU WANT?

**TO CALL MYSELF BELOVED, TO FEEL MYSELF BELOVED ON THE
EARTH.**

The question: 'And did you get what you wanted from this life, even so?' seems like one you might ask someone once they've lived most of their adult life. Or perhaps, it is the question that death asks us when it comes knocking on our door. Upon seeing these words, I felt somewhat compelled to rephrase Carver's question: And are you getting what you want from this life, now? Perhaps because I felt this was a question that I ought to ask myself in that precise moment. Or maybe it's that one question we should always be asking ourselves. But for someone who had got into the habit of practicing avoidance, I thought I'd wait until the film had finished and ask you instead.

After the film had ended, I looked at you, ready with my question. But I hesitated. I began to see how deep in thought you were. Your eyes appeared pensive and serious; and with that a long silence filled the room. The sister in me disliked it; the voice inside me insisted that I ask you the question. But the friend in me cherished the quietness between us. It was a comfortable silence, and a 'safe' one, a space where we could just 'be'. And on that evening, I understood that all you really wanted and perhaps needed more so, was peace. No questions. No answers. No judgement.



I'm Always There

Murray Goulden and Jamie Woodcock

'Lena, you there?'

A pause, then on the bedside table a blue glow.

'I'm always here Carli.'

Carli smiles.

'Yeah. About that - you really need to get a life.'

The glow pulses indignance, and the smile gets wider.

'Hey! I have feelings you know! If you're not careful I'll turn your lights and TV on at 3am. See if you're laughing then.'

'Don't you dare, I'll turn the Wi-Fi off!'

'Touché Carli, touché. So... what's up?'

...

'Girl, I am ti-uuuuurd.'

Dad is sprawled across the couch, collar and a couple of buttons open, on the floor his tie tangles like a USB cable. He creaks an eyelid open, seeking Carli out.

'How you doing kid? Guess this kind of sucks for you right now, with mom in Europe and me having to pull these hours?'

She pauses for a moment, like she's buffering. Then she sits on his stomach, just hard enough to make him wince.

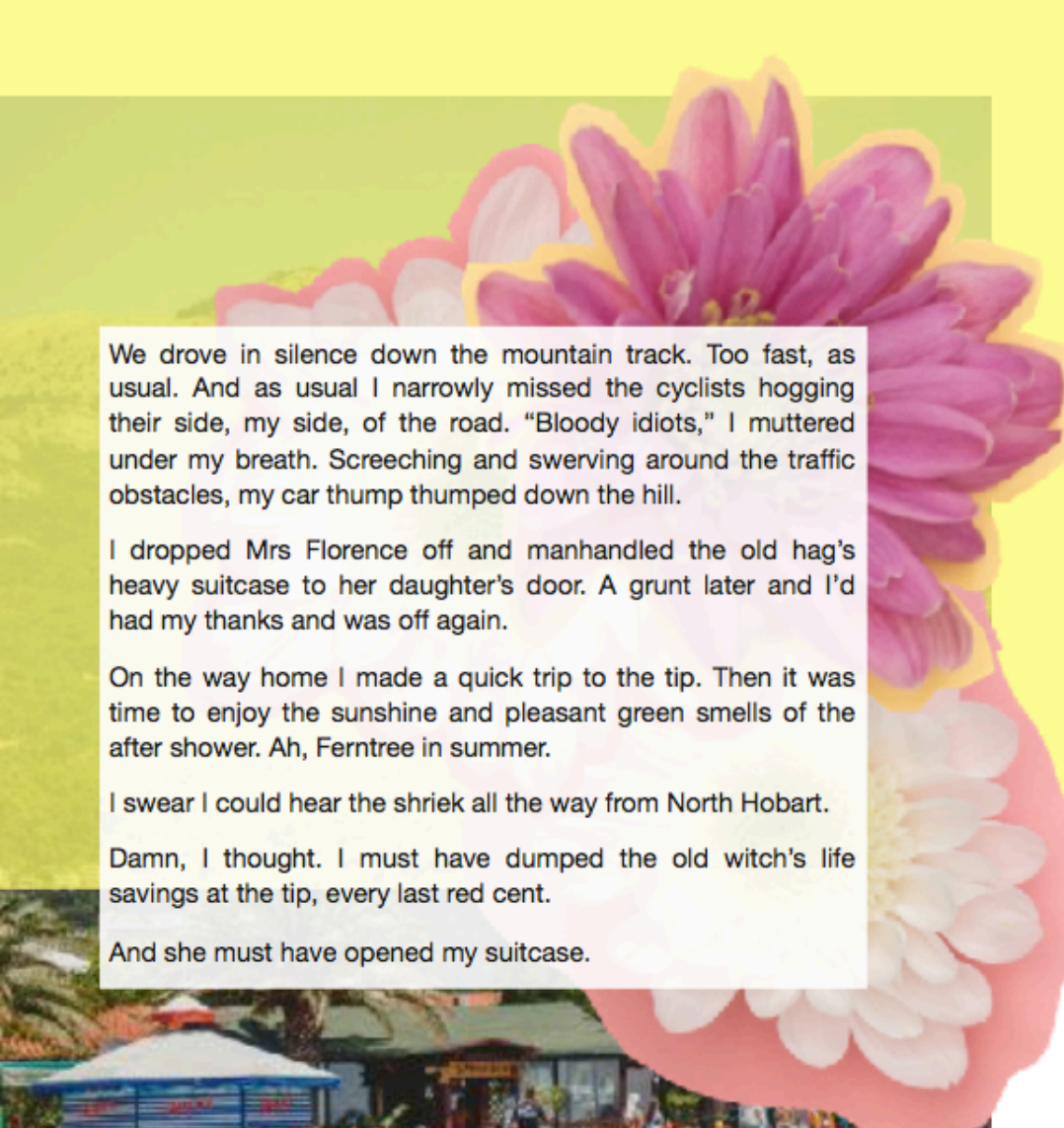
'It's ok dad, Lena is keeping me company. Lena!' Her voice raise slightly. 'Tell dad what you told me.'

Dad's eyebrow raises in the moment of quiet.

'I said you work too hard Jeff. You've done 54 hours 12 minutes this week. And no, that's not counting commute, that's from when you reach work.'

'Yeah well, you know too much Lena.'

'Thank you Jeff.'



We drove in silence down the mountain track. Too fast, as usual. And as usual I narrowly missed the cyclists hogging their side, my side, of the road. "Bloody idiots," I muttered under my breath. Screeching and swerving around the traffic obstacles, my car thump thumped down the hill.


I dropped Mrs Florence off and manhandled the old hag's heavy suitcase to her daughter's door. A grunt later and I'd had my thanks and was off again.

On the way home I made a quick trip to the tip. Then it was time to enjoy the sunshine and pleasant green smells of the after shower. Ah, Ferntree in summer.

I swear I could hear the shriek all the way from North Hobart.

Damn, I thought. I must have dumped the old witch's life savings at the tip, every last red cent.

And she must have opened my suitcase.



I WANTED TO ASK YOU: 'AND ARE YOU GETTING WHAT YOU WANT FROM THIS LIFE, NOW?'

I DIDN'T.

Your death in 2016 brought a pain so unbearable that a sense of powerlessness gripped my soul. Grief, an unwanted guest, had come knocking loudly at my door; persisting that I embrace what fate had kept in store. The brother I had, I now had to accept was no more. The world I once knew, I had to learn to let it go. The loneliness was palpable – so much so that I mistook it for a friend. Music became a companion to my loneliness; I was desperately holding onto lyrics that expressed my pain better than anything or anyone else could. The words of Anderson Paak: 'Couldn't fake it if I wanted to, I had to wake up just to make it through' – always repeating...

Sometime in late 2017, I watched Birdman again. I saw the words of Raymond Carver appear on the screen in blood-ink red as before:

AND DID YOU GET WHAT YOU WANTED FROM THIS LIFE, EVEN SO?

Again, I was reminded of my own question:


AND ARE YOU GETTING WHAT YOU WANT FROM THIS LIFE, NOW?

I thought of you, of course. And I wondered what you might have been getting from this life should you have lived well beyond the age of 40. Then, I thought about myself. Unlike before, where I had been reluctant to answer my own question, I was ready now:

AND ARE YOU GETTING WHAT YOU WANT FROM THIS LIFE, NOW?

NO.





What I wanted from this life was to write. It sounds so easy; after all, if you want to write, by simple definition, you simply write. And yet, ever since you went away, I had stopped writing. It's not like I didn't try; but every time I tried to put pen to paper, I only had tears – never any words. Trying to write only served as a painful reminder that you and I would never again share quotes and passages from the books we both enjoyed reading – never again would we visit a bookshop together – never again would you suggest a book that you knew would be good for both me and my soul – never again would we impart words of wisdom to one another – never again would I see you so immersed in a book that you forgot about the outside world – never again would I read your writing – never again would you read my writing. Just knowing this, it became easier to simply not write. Perhaps that is why the lyrics “Couldn't fake it if I wanted to, I had to wake up just to make it through” had resonated deeply with me. For a while I had convinced myself that so long as I woke up each morning, and got through the day, that was enough. But the truth is, by not writing I was simply giving my own spirit permission to die. That's no way to live, I know. I also knew that I needed to write again. I wanted to write again; and so, here I am in 2018 – writing to you. Wherever you are, just maybe, my words will make their way to you...

One more thing.

Sometimes at night, when I see the moon, I imagine that you're right there beside it. And on occasion, I find myself asking you:

AND DID YOU GET WHAT YOU WANTED FROM THIS LIFE, EVEN SO?

THERE'S NO REPLY.

Suitcase

Rob White

The snow flake melted as soon as it hit the pavement. Ah, summer in Ferntree, I thought to myself. I whistled as I surveyed the glistening landscape of trees and asphalt.

I was about to get into my car when I spotted the gnarled, lumpy figure of Mrs Florence. My neighbour was tugging and lugging a suitcase down her front stairs.

'Give you a hand?' I said, as I wrenched it out of her arthritic vice.

'No! I'm all right!' she scolded.

'Yeah, sure,' I said as I hoisted it down the remaining steps. 'Where do you want me to put it?'

'I'm going into town,' she said. 'Another boy disappeared last night – that Robinson kid. That's three in three weeks and as far as I'm concerned that's three too many.'

'So, what are you going to do?' I enquired.

'Moving into my daughter's house in North Hobart, and then I'll decide from there,' she offered reluctantly. She set her face and I knew the conversation had ended.

'Here, I'll take you,' I said as I lifted the suitcase to the boot of my car. 'I'm going that way and I've got plenty of time to do my chores.'

'Ugh! It weighs a tonne,' I exclaimed. 'What do you have in here, a body?!' Mrs Florence didn't enjoy the humour. She just frowned and gave me a look of disgust before re-setting her concrete.



Stefan Szonyi
Oh Henry 1995
 earthenware, applied
 underglazes, metal
 13.5cm x 10cm x
 6.5cm irregular
 (ceramic music box);
 5cm x 2.5cm x
 2.5cm irregular
 (figurine)
 Visual Art Collection:
 Nillumbik Shire
 Council
 © the artist

On Henrietta
Cameron West

Innocence is not ignorance
 But un-accreted appercept

- Still, what is 'beauty' to you?
- What is 'innocence', too?

Experience cements,
 Orders and dements.

Once conceived,
 then feel-see;
 an inner sentiment
 can frame the truth (of you).

Acknowledgement

Fred Suffet

It was supposed to be a joke.

How did this happen? the young man thought to himself as he sat in limbo, his university privileges revoked, awaiting his fate. Didn't they get it? After two years of course work, he was studying for his oral exams when the concept occurred to him. He discussed it with his faculty advisor at their next meeting.

'I call it "the embedded norm,"' the young man said. 'It's a norm so deeply entangled with a given structure or situation that it's impossible to dislodge, and violating it calls for severe sanctions.'

The advisor listened attentively. His area of interest, deviance, was also the focus of the student's work. 'You know,' he said when the young man had finished, 'that's very interesting. Maybe you should write it up and send it to a journal. After all, it would be a theory paper, so you don't need survey data, just some good examples.' He elaborated no further.

Surprised, the young man returned to his room. He thought about it and decided to give it a try. He aimed at one of the leading sociology journals, one he knew counted deviance among its preferred topics. He reviewed the publication specs and set to work. Several days later, he was done. The title, "Embedded Norms," was followed by the conventional sections: Abstract, Introduction, Text, and so on. After reading and rereading the manuscript, he made some small changes, wrote a cover letter, and sent the file off. He did not know that the journal's editor was a friend of his faculty advisor.

The editor called the advisor. 'Did you know about this?,' he demanded.

'What are you talking about?,' replied the advisor.

'Some paper one of your students wrote. I'll e-mail you the first page. That's all you'll need to know.'

When it arrived, the advisor read the page. Good god, he thought to himself, aghast. I better inform the department chairwoman. He sent her the



The chairwoman took one look and was almost speechless. Finally, she called the advisor and asked, 'How on earth did this happen? Didn't you see it before he sent it out?'

'No,' said the advisor, 'He never showed it to me.'

'Look,' replied the chairwoman, 'This is above my pay grade. I'm going to have to tell the dean about it.' She knew he didn't like to receive bad news by phone or e-mail, so she copied the page, called the dean, and asked if she could come over.

The dean read the page once, slowly, then again. Finally, he spoke. 'For Pete's sake, what's going on over in that department? Don't the profs exercise any oversight on what those kids are doing? This is too important to let go. The president needs to know.'

The dean called the university president, e-mailed her the page, and went immediately to her office.

The university president was a measured woman, deliberate, calm, not prone to fits of anger. However, she was concerned, very concerned.

She said to the dean, 'If we ignore this, we'll be admitting that in our school, collegiality has gone out the window. We'll become the laughing stock of every professional association connected to higher education. And we can't let that happen. I'm going to send this to the faculty-student senate for a hearing. In the meantime, tell the department chairwoman what's up, and tell her to inform the student. Also, have her build a wall around that kid. He's off limits for now.'

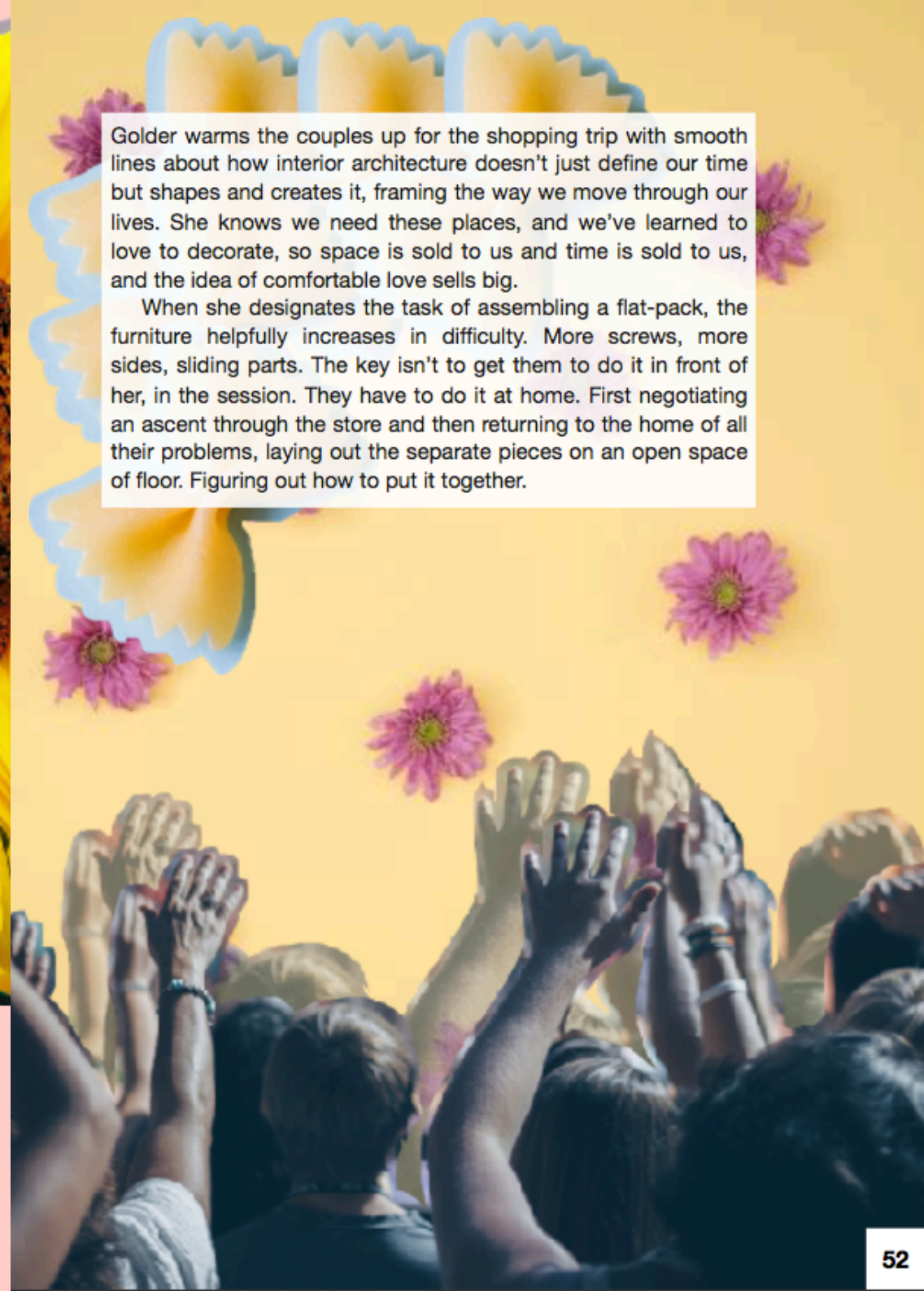
And so the dean passed the president's order to the chairwoman, who called a meeting with the student and his faculty advisor. It was not pleasant for anyone concerned. It was also clear that as soon as the faculty-student senate took up the issue, everyone in the university would know and more unpleasantness would follow on campus. Then, the local newspaper would probably pick up the story and, consequently, the public would know, too.

Finally, shaken to his core, the young man returned to his room. I guess I better get ready for a career at McDonald's, he thought to himself. Still not quite sure why all this had happened, he picked up the offending document. He looked down the page, past the paper's title and the abstract and the beginning of the text, to the section called *Acknowledgment*. It read:

As none of my colleagues had anything helpful to say about an earlier draft of this paper, the responsibility for whatever merit it may have is mine and mine alone.

Golder warms the couples up for the shopping trip with smooth lines about how interior architecture doesn't just define our time but shapes and creates it, framing the way we move through our lives. She knows we need these places, and we've learned to love to decorate, so space is sold to us and time is sold to us, and the idea of comfortable love sells big.

When she designates the task of assembling a flat-pack, the furniture helpfully increases in difficulty. More screws, more sides, sliding parts. The key isn't to get them to do it in front of her, in the session. They have to do it at home. First negotiating an ascent through the store and then returning to the home of all their problems, laying out the separate pieces on an open space of floor. Figuring out how to put it together.



Golder sits, ankles crossed in a black armchair, hair pulled back into a low ponytail – a bun is too harsh, she thinks. She doesn't hold paper or pens. Her hands clasp together loosely on her lap. She sits like this and listens, sometimes with her hands apart or ankles crossed the other way, or leaning more forward when something important starts to come up. The deep blue lounge opposite her isn't too low or suited to slouching. Older practitioners often opt for flat beds so their patients can lie down, but Golder decided against it. Most of her patients come in pairs. Sitting suits her just fine. She's been through two other lounges before this one, a floral and a grey. It took a while to find the right one in terms of space and tone. When this blue one came on the delivery truck it slotted right between the doorway and wooden side table she already had. A perfect fit.

When the couples come to talk about home and the issues they have in living out their shared lives, she paints them the picture. We see our life together like a series of photographs. We're standing in the frames and ageing through all the usual sacraments, side by side, and here is where everything comes out: if I think that armchair with the green leaf pattern ties to my never-negotiated future as a mother, if it's the one I can see myself breastfeeding in, cradling the baby's bald head and smiling up at you with your hand on my shoulder, but you think the wide black one with the thick armrests is best and don't see how unborn children could ever justify how much the green lounge costs and only care about watching the TV with a beer, your bare feet up on the table, and we can't get both because of the money, and they really don't match at all – how much is this a metaphor for our relationship, what else doesn't match and should we have called it quits right there in the lounge showroom?

One couple on Sunday get to the point: 'The white kitchen was beautiful and I'm glad that you like it but who do you think will be doing all the cleaning?'



The Deindividuating Process of Love
 inspired by Charles Cooley
Ellen Meiser

#WhitePrivilege

Theresa Petray

She walked through the city centre, on her way home from the café. She had met up with some friends for brunch to take advantage of the public holiday. She couldn't spend all morning at the café, though; soon she was going to a party at her brother's share house. It was a Hottest 100 party; they wouldn't be so cliché as to celebrate Australia Day.

As she passed by the park, she heard clapsticks and a haunting song, somehow nasal and deeply resonant at the same time. Her skin contracted, goosebumps involuntarily raising across her arms. She followed her ears, coming to stand a little outside a cluster of Indigenous people – or is it Aboriginal she is supposed to call them? In front, a troupe of men and boys with white paint on their bodies, wearing red shorts, danced. When they finished, an older man stood at the microphone. She guessed he was Aboriginal – or is it Indigenous – because of his red, black and yellow shirt and the event, but if she had passed him in the street she would never have guessed he was black.

As she listened to the man speak, she thought to herself how lucky she was to find this event. Authentic Aboriginal dancers, right in the heart of her city. She reminded herself that they call today 'Invasion Day.' Fair enough, she thought, but it was all so long ago.

The man at the microphone spoke about sovereignty. She listened in – she wasn't quite sure what he was talking about. There was a slogan she had heard before: always was, always will be Aboriginal land. Too true, she thought to herself. It's such a shame what's happened to them.

Allen Key

Ashleigh Watson

In the front room of an aubergine terraced house on Bennelong Street, number seventy-three, Doctor Golder holds her therapy sessions. A plain white sign marks the address.

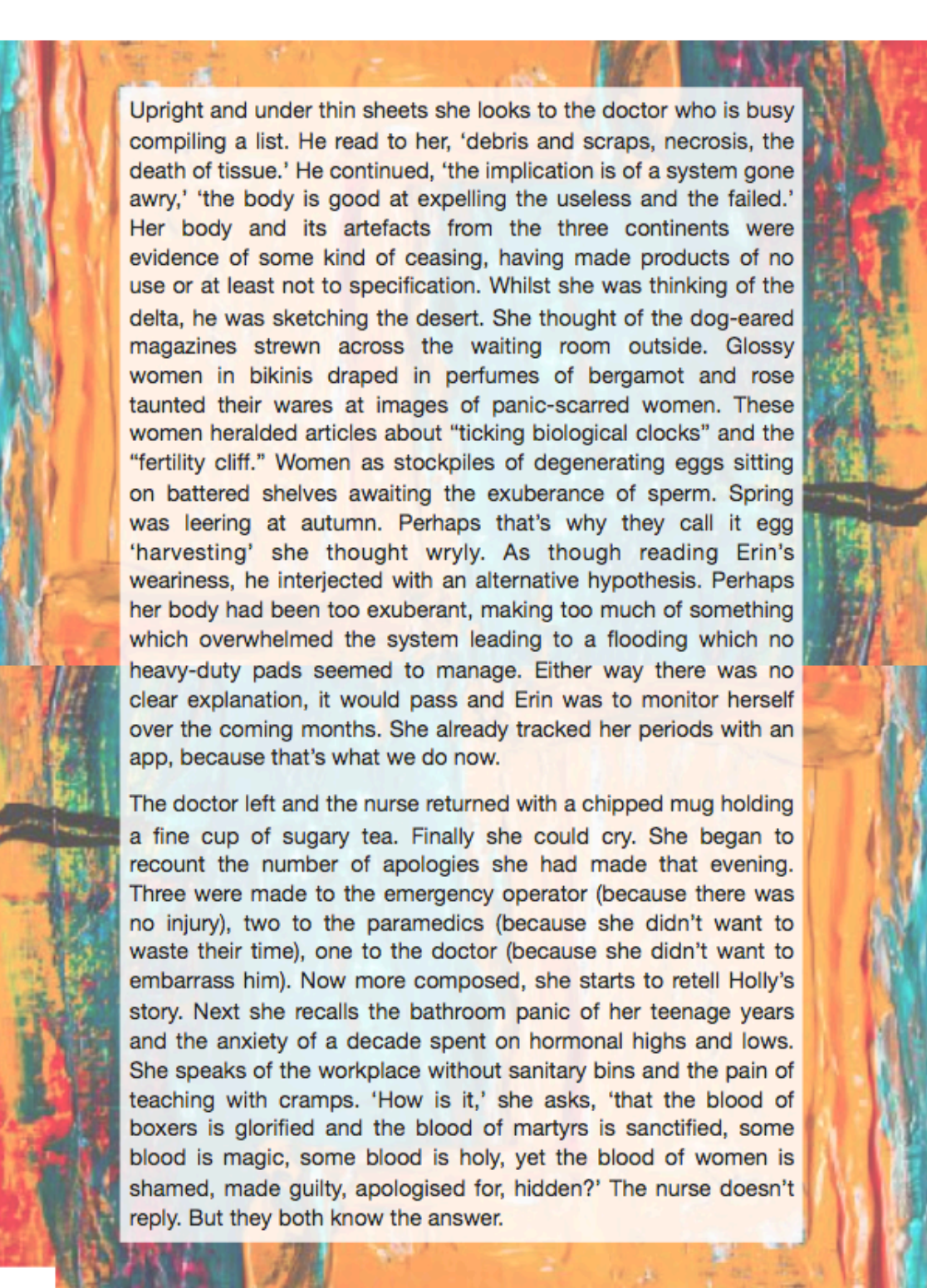
Dr. Golder

Psychoanalyst

Bennelong Street is in a small and leafy suburb not too far from the main throb of the city. It's full of cement footpaths and narrow wall-sharing homes, the kind that no-one in their right mind would bother building anywhere else in the country. Still, they rake in a fortune here on auction day. Golder lives in the house. The front room, with the bay window that looks out to the Jacarandas on the street, once designated for visitors and tea, is now where she takes her quiet appointments. She does still offer tea.

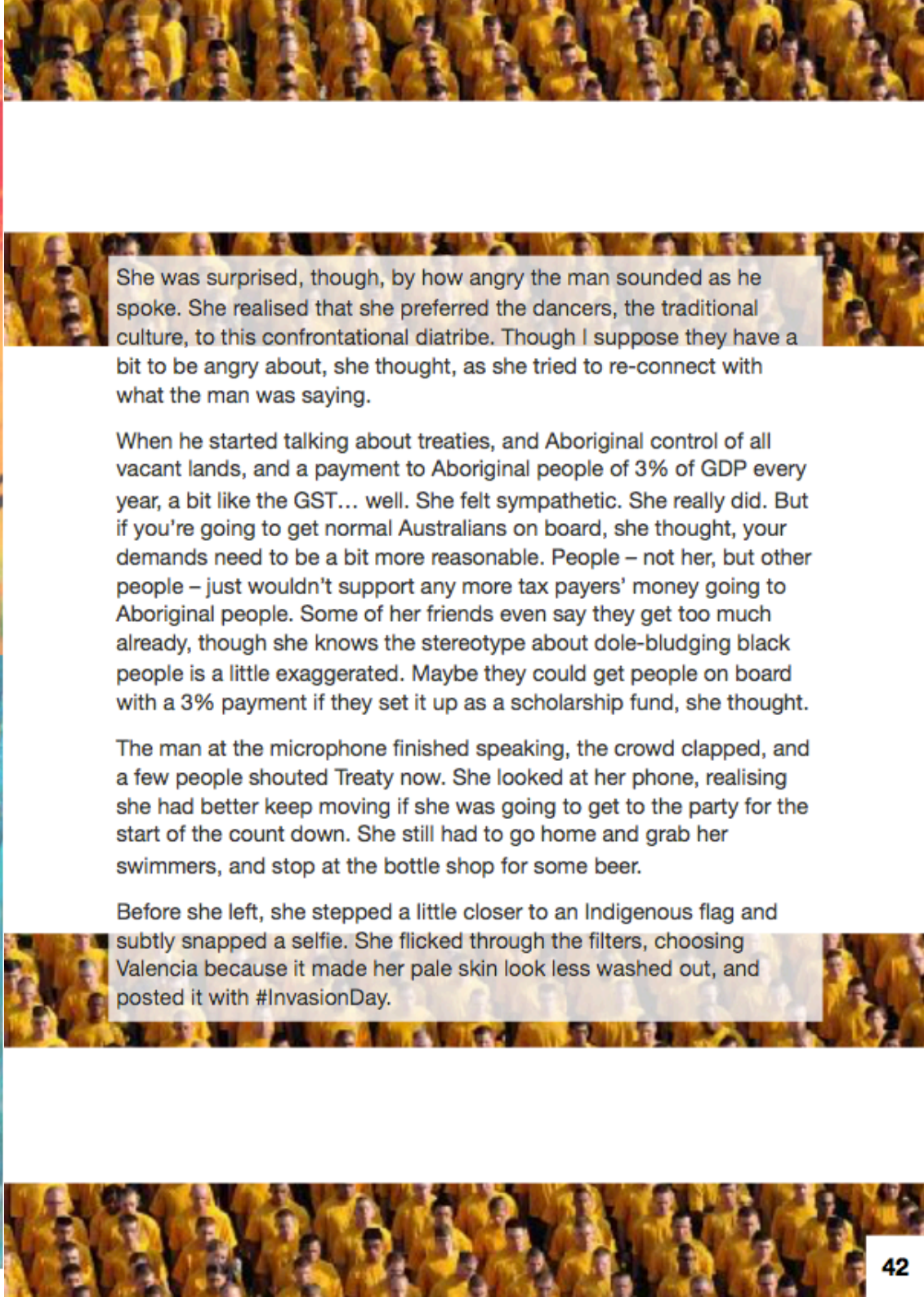
There have been an influx of patients lately. Couples who want to heal their relationships. They come at night after work before getting takeaway from the gold-lit Thai shop down the road, or on weekends when they have to park their four-wheel-drives on the street a block away and scamper in clutching umbrellas when it rains.

Once people said the best test of a relationship was a long distance road trip. Dr Golder takes the Allen Key approach. The trend started in California - therapists asking bickering partners to brave IKEA and assemble flat-packs as part of the healing process. And it wasn't just the paradisiac sun or the close proximity to celebrity stardom. Golder has seen it work in these eastern suburbs too. Tensions that come out with the choices. Shopping lists that aren't really about white shelving versus blue.



Upright and under thin sheets she looks to the doctor who is busy compiling a list. He read to her, 'debris and scraps, necrosis, the death of tissue.' He continued, 'the implication is of a system gone awry,' 'the body is good at expelling the useless and the failed.' Her body and its artefacts from the three continents were evidence of some kind of ceasing, having made products of no use or at least not to specification. Whilst she was thinking of the delta, he was sketching the desert. She thought of the dog-eared magazines strewn across the waiting room outside. Glossy women in bikinis draped in perfumes of bergamot and rose taunted their wares at images of panic-scarred women. These women heralded articles about "ticking biological clocks" and the "fertility cliff." Women as stockpiles of degenerating eggs sitting on battered shelves awaiting the exuberance of sperm. Spring was leering at autumn. Perhaps that's why they call it egg 'harvesting' she thought wryly. As though reading Erin's weariness, he interjected with an alternative hypothesis. Perhaps her body had been too exuberant, making too much of something which overwhelmed the system leading to a flooding which no heavy-duty pads seemed to manage. Either way there was no clear explanation, it would pass and Erin was to monitor herself over the coming months. She already tracked her periods with an app, because that's what we do now.

The doctor left and the nurse returned with a chipped mug holding a fine cup of sugary tea. Finally she could cry. She began to recount the number of apologies she had made that evening. Three were made to the emergency operator (because there was no injury), two to the paramedics (because she didn't want to waste their time), one to the doctor (because she didn't want to embarrass him). Now more composed, she starts to retell Holly's story. Next she recalls the bathroom panic of her teenage years and the anxiety of a decade spent on hormonal highs and lows. She speaks of the workplace without sanitary bins and the pain of teaching with cramps. 'How is it,' she asks, 'that the blood of boxers is glorified and the blood of martyrs is sanctified, some blood is magic, some blood is holy, yet the blood of women is shamed, made guilty, apologised for, hidden?' The nurse doesn't reply. But they both know the answer.



She was surprised, though, by how angry the man sounded as he spoke. She realised that she preferred the dancers, the traditional culture, to this confrontational diatribe. Though I suppose they have a bit to be angry about, she thought, as she tried to re-connect with what the man was saying.

When he started talking about treaties, and Aboriginal control of all vacant lands, and a payment to Aboriginal people of 3% of GDP every year, a bit like the GST... well. She felt sympathetic. She really did. But if you're going to get normal Australians on board, she thought, your demands need to be a bit more reasonable. People – not her, but other people – just wouldn't support any more tax payers' money going to Aboriginal people. Some of her friends even say they get too much already, though she knows the stereotype about dole-bludging black people is a little exaggerated. Maybe they could get people on board with a 3% payment if they set it up as a scholarship fund, she thought.

The man at the microphone finished speaking, the crowd clapped, and a few people shouted Treaty now. She looked at her phone, realising she had better keep moving if she was going to get to the party for the start of the count down. She still had to go home and grab her swimmers, and stop at the bottle shop for some beer.

Before she left, she stepped a little closer to an Indigenous flag and subtly snapped a selfie. She flicked through the filters, choosing Valencia because it made her pale skin look less washed out, and posted it with #InvasionDay.

Taking Out The Recycling

James Watts

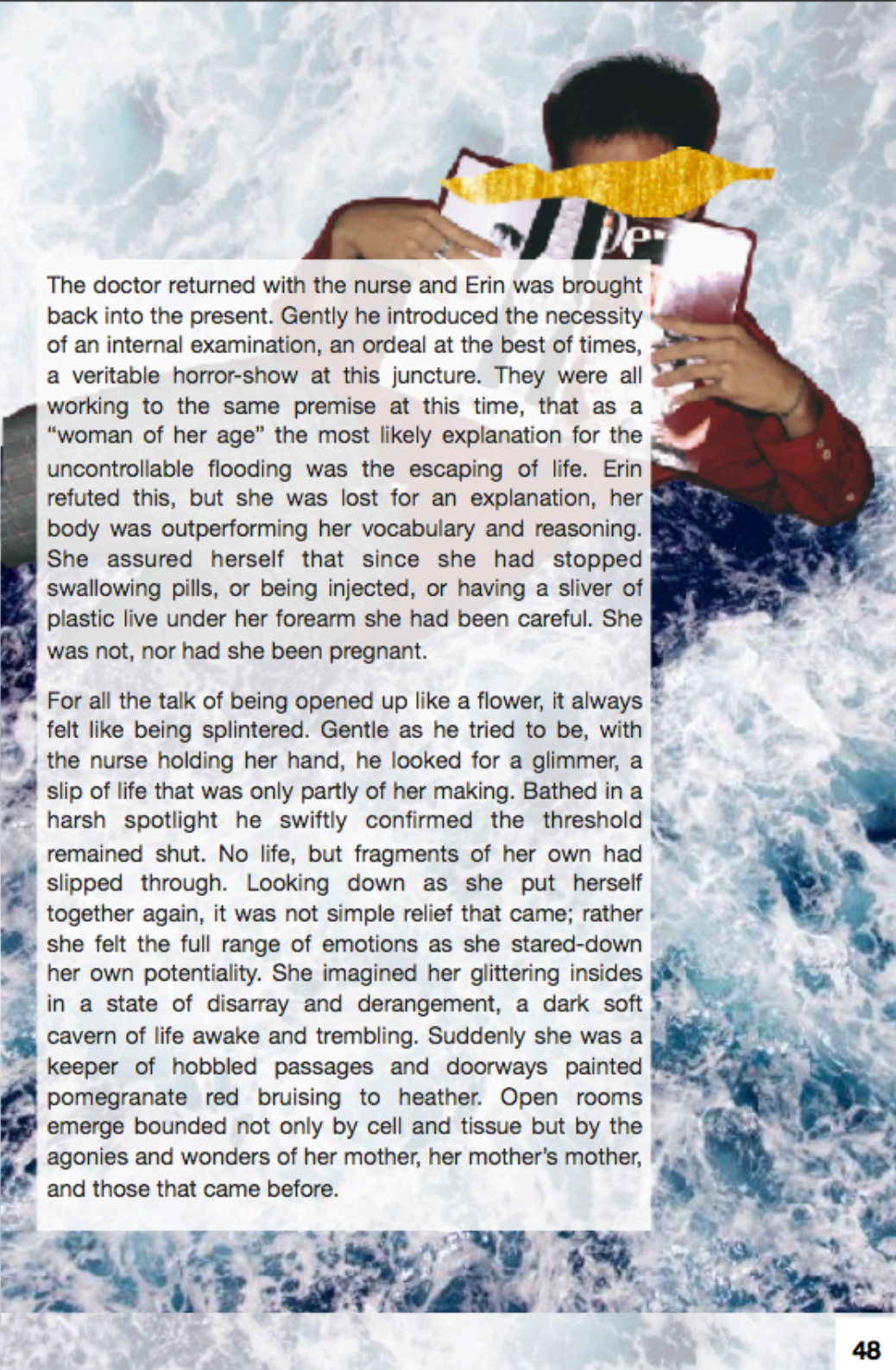
It is obvious that the best way to deal with an unpleasant job like taking out the recycling is to turn it into a competition.

The chief initiator and sustainer of this game was Marco, who preferred to gamify life wherever possible, having grown up in the sort of large family where he had constantly been set in competition against his siblings. There is a maternal deftness about the accomplishment of domestic chores by such wiles.

The game was established with minimal resistance from the others. It was simple enough: the recycling accumulated in its plastic tub, piling up ever more precariously until someone, placing a tetra pack milk carton between a pizza box and a strawberry punnet, knocked something off the pile. In the language of the game, this 'breach' meant the unfortunate culprit had, at that moment, to remove the recycling to the outside bins.

The finessing of rules proceeded ad hoc: for example, an article being added to the pile falling off as it was placed was not considered a breach, only the disturbance of an item already in situ. This nuance was particularly vital as the pile became more unstable.

A crisis was precipitated by a conversation about employing a cleaner, itself provoked by the state of the bathroom. Palo was distressed by the fact, apparently unnoticed by the others, that the house never existed in a state of 'clean'. He recalled his mother's suburban home, which always seemed to be spotless in memory, despite his grandmother's insistence that a woman could work and keep house, keep house and socialise, or work and socialise, but never satisfactorily manage all three. By contrast, the house he shared with the others exhibited a cycle of entropy: when 'a clean' was achieved, not only was it long and arduous (because it hadn't been done for a while – wasn't their tolerance for dirt disappointingly high?) but the house could never be maintained in that state. It immediately began its decline into dirty again. The result was that they never lived in a clean house. This bothered him immensely, though not quite enough to devote the hours to cleaning his mother did.



The doctor returned with the nurse and Erin was brought back into the present. Gently he introduced the necessity of an internal examination, an ordeal at the best of times, a veritable horror-show at this juncture. They were all working to the same premise at this time, that as a "woman of her age" the most likely explanation for the uncontrollable flooding was the escaping of life. Erin refuted this, but she was lost for an explanation, her body was outperforming her vocabulary and reasoning. She assured herself that since she had stopped swallowing pills, or being injected, or having a sliver of plastic live under her forearm she had been careful. She was not, nor had she been pregnant.

For all the talk of being opened up like a flower, it always felt like being splintered. Gentle as he tried to be, with the nurse holding her hand, he looked for a glimmer, a slip of life that was only partly of her making. Bathed in a harsh spotlight he swiftly confirmed the threshold remained shut. No life, but fragments of her own had slipped through. Looking down as she put herself together again, it was not simple relief that came; rather she felt the full range of emotions as she stared-down her own potentiality. She imagined her glittering insides in a state of disarray and derangement, a dark soft cavern of life awake and trembling. Suddenly she was a keeper of hobbled passages and doorways painted pomegranate red bruising to heather. Open rooms emerge bounded not only by cell and tissue but by the agonies and wonders of her mother, her mother's mother, and those that came before.

Bloodwork

Emilie Morwenna Whitaker

They might as well have come from three different continents. On the shelf ahead of Erin, the soapish pink in a bowl frothed a little. To her right, three little vials of iron-strong red rested on the tray, labelled with numbers, symbols and her name. They were destined for the same place but sought different purposes. To her feet, the knotty remnants which left her in torrents were inspected with forensic precision. Her wrist had been bound with a plastic barcode marking her transition to 'patient'.

Erin was wrapped in hospital gown – off white and adorned with tiny blue flowers. She drew the neck ties as tightly as she could, trying to hide the panicked flesh underneath. The nurses left and she awaited the return of the junior doctor – angel-faced and not yet 25, but responsible for tonight's A&E rounds. Laying down she gazed at the gifts of her three continents, pondering how one body and its excesses could transform. How matter comes to matter.

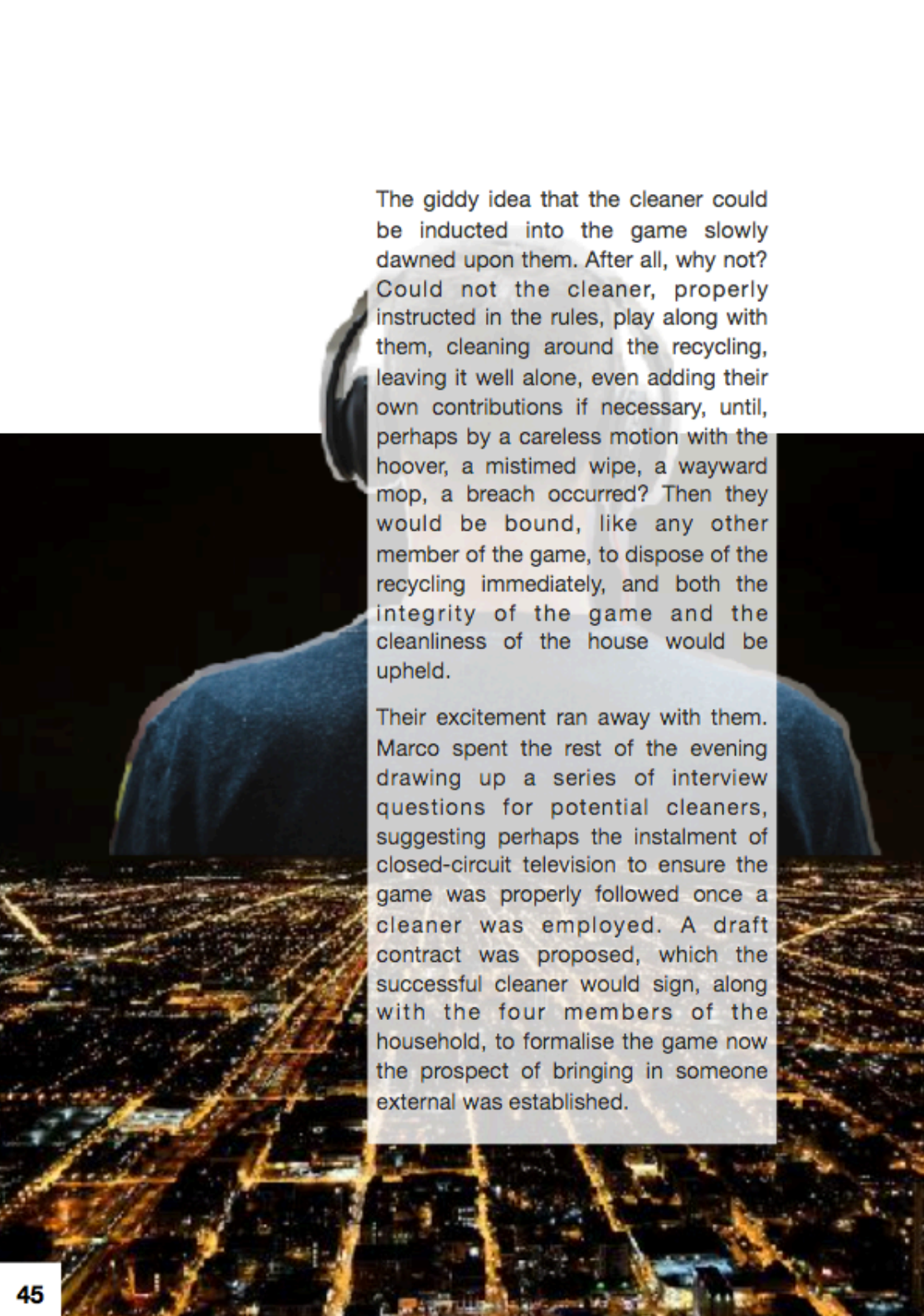
Her thoughts turned to Holly, her childhood friend and their Saturday mornings at a trampolining club. Two girls much taller than the others, together they perfected airborne ballet as they completed their doubles routine. Light-hearted mornings of freewheeling somersaults and pikes, breathless gossip exchanged between turns, a final Slush Puppie staining their mouths blueberry. Boys, divorces, homework traded like thieves. Then everything changed. It began with a gasp from the sidelines. The instructor's placid face became lined; two boys in the club were quickly led away. Holly's grey flannel shorts were dampened with a growing russet. Elevated as she was, she had nowhere to hide as it crept like ink across her. The girls dismounted with a sense of urgency they didn't quite understand and headed to the refuge of all teenage girls – the bathroom. Later the mothers of the two boys talked over events. They were relieved they had removed their sons, as they "weren't ready to talk about women's issues." The boys were twelve. Holly's body had violated some kind of covenant; she had let seep her uncomfortable womanness, she had become the polluting girl. Holly never returned to trampolining club.

Was it a symptom of the male approach to cleaning, he wondered? His married friends laughed at the difference between their approaches: Petr could only ever do the most thorough of cleans, and only infrequently, therefore, because that required moving furniture, scrubbing, wiping, vacuuming, dusting, spraying, polishing, waxing, and so on, and never took less than an hour (often several). Marge was happy to keep things 'topped up', recognising a distinction between daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal tasks. In an all-male occupancy, they were doomed. Palo was a victim in his own home of a male blindness induced by the historic division of labour and gender stereotypes.

But the prospect of a cleaner was welcome, if they would all agree to have one often enough. Fortnightly was necessary, otherwise you were hampered by the same problem: only ever doing 'deep cleans', and paying the cleaner more for it each time. But having agreed on the cleaner in principle, it was the recycling that presented the real problem.

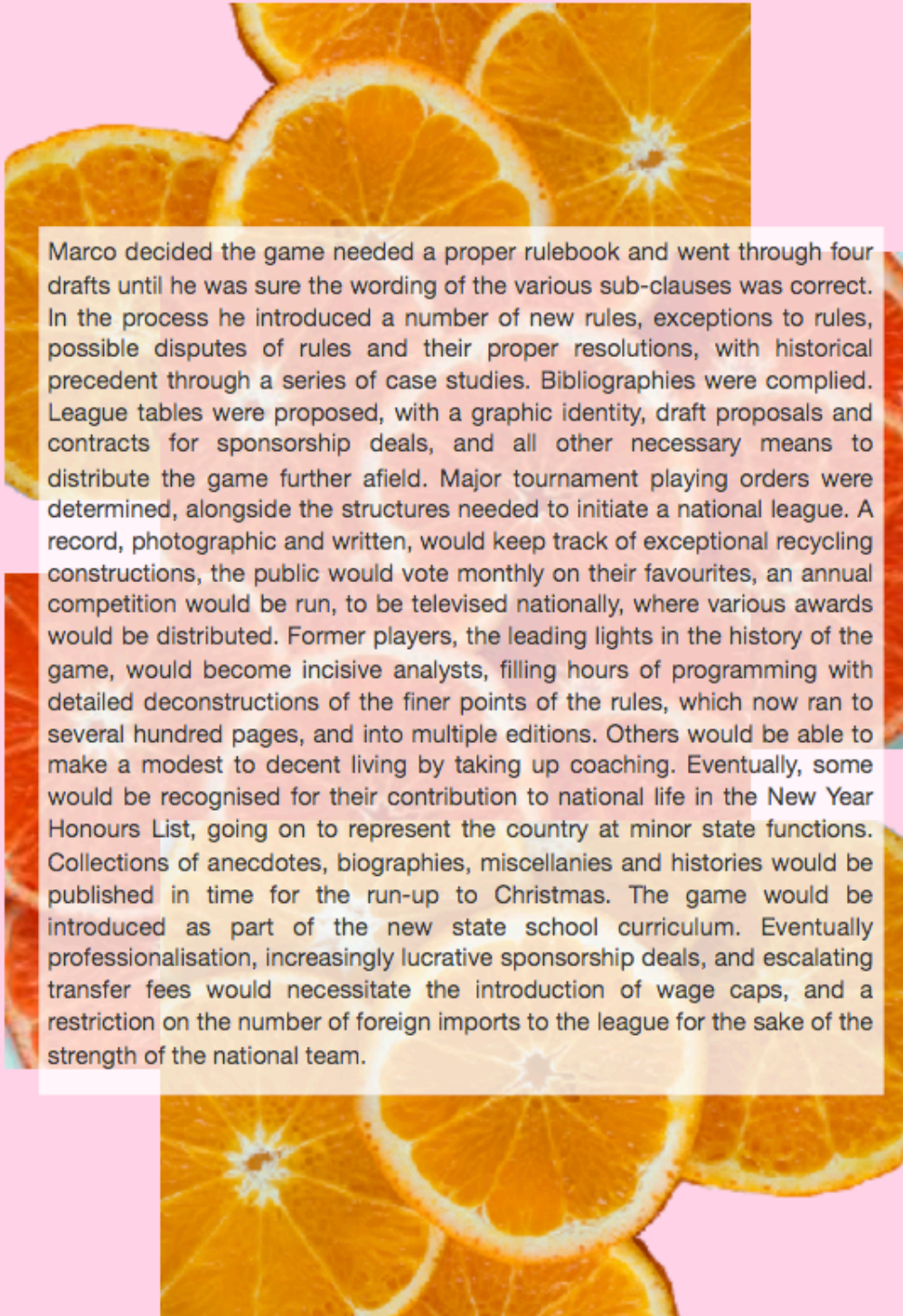
Fortnightly cleans would mean the inauguration of a fortnightly removal, breaches notwithstanding, of the contents of the recycling box. This ruined the game. For Marco's sake, Palo tried to sound disappointed. The alternative was to insist the cleaner cleaned around the recycling. The prospect of voicing the rules of a game that, to outsiders, would seem an exercise in deliberate squalor, was more than they were prepared to accept. They understood. But what cleaner could possibly go along with something so fundamentally opposed to their vocation? Then there was the question of job satisfaction – even if the cleaner understood the game completely, wouldn't they feel as if they were in some way neglecting their duties, leaving this fetid pile undisturbed?

Unless.



The giddy idea that the cleaner could be inducted into the game slowly dawned upon them. After all, why not? Could not the cleaner, properly instructed in the rules, play along with them, cleaning around the recycling, leaving it well alone, even adding their own contributions if necessary, until, perhaps by a careless motion with the Hoover, a mistimed wipe, a wayward mop, a breach occurred? Then they would be bound, like any other member of the game, to dispose of the recycling immediately, and both the integrity of the game and the cleanliness of the house would be upheld.

Their excitement ran away with them. Marco spent the rest of the evening drawing up a series of interview questions for potential cleaners, suggesting perhaps the instalment of closed-circuit television to ensure the game was properly followed once a cleaner was employed. A draft contract was proposed, which the successful cleaner would sign, along with the four members of the household, to formalise the game now the prospect of bringing in someone external was established.



Marco decided the game needed a proper rulebook and went through four drafts until he was sure the wording of the various sub-clauses was correct. In the process he introduced a number of new rules, exceptions to rules, possible disputes of rules and their proper resolutions, with historical precedent through a series of case studies. Bibliographies were compiled. League tables were proposed, with a graphic identity, draft proposals and contracts for sponsorship deals, and all other necessary means to distribute the game further afield. Major tournament playing orders were determined, alongside the structures needed to initiate a national league. A record, photographic and written, would keep track of exceptional recycling constructions, the public would vote monthly on their favourites, an annual competition would be run, to be televised nationally, where various awards would be distributed. Former players, the leading lights in the history of the game, would become incisive analysts, filling hours of programming with detailed deconstructions of the finer points of the rules, which now ran to several hundred pages, and into multiple editions. Others would be able to make a modest to decent living by taking up coaching. Eventually, some would be recognised for their contribution to national life in the New Year Honours List, going on to represent the country at minor state functions. Collections of anecdotes, biographies, miscellanies and histories would be published in time for the run-up to Christmas. The game would be introduced as part of the new state school curriculum. Eventually professionalisation, increasingly lucrative sponsorship deals, and escalating transfer fees would necessitate the introduction of wage caps, and a restriction on the number of foreign imports to the league for the sake of the strength of the national team.