

Words to gift

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*a selection of thirty text organised by hopscotch
reading room & ponto, from people to whom words
come easy, at times.*

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01

But what now?

Agata Milizia

Berlin, 1 November 2025

I saw a fire blazing from the window of a fifth-floor apartment. The air was thick with smoke; police cars were in place, but there was no sign of firefighters. Strangely, police officers and other bystanders stood quietly, chatting, eating. Then I realized it was a movie shoot; trucks were parked nearby, bearing the unmistakable signs of a production company.

Why do we love the thrill of catastrophe—the adrenaline of contained horror—while we comfortably sit on our couches and get up only to fetch the next snack from a well-stocked fridge or to order something on a delivery service app?

To achieve a realistic reproduction of flames, burnt walls, and charred floors, the production company lit a real apartment on fire; it was probably more convenient than CGI-ing their way to it.

It is also more convenient, some say, to destroy a large ten-storey office building and erect a new one to replace it instead of renovating it. *Das Gebäude ist komplett marode, die Räumlichkeiten standen zu lange leer und es kann nicht mehr sinnvoll vermietet werden.* (The building is completely dilapidated; the premises stood vacant for too long, and it cannot be rented anymore.)

Stones tumbling down the slope of the remains of the last standing wall, metal rods and wires sticking out of lacerated ceilings, emptied-out rooms, and a tempered glass door strangely still in place, untouched and opening into the void of an indifferent sky.

The architects in charge of the new building that will replace the rotting one from the 1960s claim that their projects are completely eco-sustainable and are built using debris from the old blocks they tear down. I wonder if all this is necessary; where I'm from, some constructions date back 3,000 years. The marketing team carefully selected names generated by AIs like *SPRINGBLUE* or *HORIZONGREEN* to give it all a feeling of delight, a breath of fresh air on a crisp morning.

When I pass by the demolition site on my way to work, a thick fog of dust and water hits me in the face and settles on my hair and clothes, and I cannot help thinking about the videos showing destruction in Gaza that I've seen on the screen of my phone for the past two years.

Everything from the construction site to the pile of unwashed clothes on my bedroom floor makes me think of war, of how fragile a comfortable life is.

Piles of rubble and debris cover the land that is Gaza, it's people dead or displaced. Destroyed buildings stretch for kilometres. Homes, hospitals, schools, offices, and vital infrastructure systematically destroyed by aerial bombings. Nothing is left of farmland and wildlife. The environmental disaster will cause long-lasting damage.

Many people in my social circle repost original videos and photos of the horror, hidden behind images of art exhibitions or plates of delicious-looking food, to fool the algorithm that thrives on consumerism and would otherwise hide death. The comfort of everyday life in Berlin becomes apparent, and it is almost unbearable to even draw the comparison.

The Palestinian genocide happened during my lifetime, and we all witnessed it unfold. Frustration with the mainstream media and politicians grows, knowing they are driven by deeper and more obscure interests, and confronted with the fact that not all lives are valued the same by the people we democratically elected to govern.

I live in a country that exports weapons killing tens of thousands of people.

The Wikipedia article today states that Germany is potentially complicit together with the US, UK, Italy, and various companies—petrol barons, car manufacturers, and big tech.

There are 100,000 direct violent deaths, but for each one, there will be many more indirect deaths from famine, disease, and unreported cases, making the total an even more frightening figure.

As an expat I chose to live here, and in the past ten years I have seldom doubted this decision. But what now?

I cannot even imagine a life without the luxury of lazy mornings, long phone conversations with friends and family, or a kitchen full of fresh food and a supermarket open until midnight within walking distance from home.

There is a pile of unwashed clothes lying on my bedroom floor—hues of grey and black, with a touch of pink lettering and white stripes emerging from the undefined mass. I always take care to separate lights from darks, reds from blues, cotton and polyester from more delicate materials. On weekend mornings, the sound of the washing machine is soothing: the drum spins and spins in one direction, then reverses, washing away days full of emotions. Clockwise and counterclockwise, clean, soapy water swirls around my clothes, which were never truly dirty.

Agata Milizia

02

Spells.

Areez Katki

Spells

/ Feed the birds every morning. Open a door, or a window. Gather fistfuls of grain and scatter them. Breathe. Be still. Watch blessings descend.

/ Draw warm water into a bucket or a bathtub. Fetch a cup of salt from the sea, any sea, and drop four fistfuls of it into the water. One for cleansing. One for healing. One for protection. One for activating. Cast these four spells and bathe in this water. The effects last one week.

/ Never pass a sharp metal object from one hand to another. Lay it down first.

/ Pour mounds of sea salt on either side of the threshold of one's home, and then also in the North quadrant corners of every room, into tiny bowls. Protection from evil eye and negative energies will last for one month. Absorption of all passing negative energies will depend on how toxic you and your guests have been over this period. Everything has its limits, so, change the salt regularly.

/ Knock on wood three times if you feel like you might've compromised your luck. If there's no wood then knock on your exposed scalp. You will look ridiculous.

/ Pour yourself a glass of bitter liquor if you can't sleep at night. Write things down in a notebook.

/ Click the fingers of your right hand nine times in a sweeping motion away from your thigh if a stranger looks at you questionably as you walk down a street. Keep clicking your fingers in multiples of nine. Make it look like you're really into the music you're listening to. Keep walking and clicking until you feel safe again.

/ Look into a mirror when you begin to doubt yourself. Say your grandmother's name. She'll wrap her arms around you.

/ Never clip your nails or trim your hair after sunset.

/ Never pee on plants, trees or shrubs after sunset.

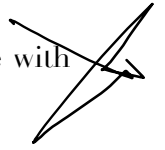
/ Apply three dots of kohl on the birthmark beside your right eye every time before you leave the house. Look at yourself squarely in the mirror while you do this.

/ Masturbate at least once a day.

/ Light a twig of sandalwood from the fire temple. Watch it burn into an ember. When it glows, sprinkle it with frankincense ground into a fine powder. Hold questions in your mind

as you sprinkle the powder. Move in a gentle circumambulation. Stand still in the middle of the room. Observe as answers and counterpoints emerge in soft tendrils of smoke.

/ Always keep your shoes and slippers by the foot of the bed, never above or in line with where you'll rest your head.



/ Gather four cloves and light a candle. Hold the stem of the first clove and carefully burn its head until the oil combusts and a grey smoke emerges from it. Turn your body clockwise, facing each quadrant (north; south; east; west) as you repeat this action four times. You are now protected from whatever or whomever might've made you feel unsafe.

/ Have a cigarette by the window on the night of a full moon when you can't sleep. Pull some cards from your tarot deck.



/ If you accidentally knock heads with someone once, knock them again.

/ Be wary of cities that have a lot to offer. Always step with your right foot first.

/ Confide anxieties to a friend you trust. Make a tin foil spoon on the end of a metal skewer. Light a candle. Sprinkle it lightly with some esphand wild rue seeds and burn it above the flame. Hear the seeds pop and create a bitter smelling smoke. Sit in front of a mirror and have your friend extract the weight of your grief as they wave the smoking esphand wand above your head in a circular motion. You'll both know when the spell has been cast: your breathing will slow down and a lightness will be felt. Thank your friend, replace the seeds, and return the favour.

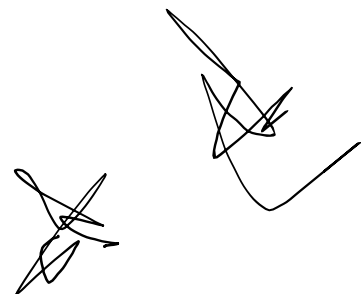
/ Look at photographs of your ancestors.



/ Learn from their mistakes.

/ Close your eyes.

/ Swim in the ocean every chance you get.



by Areez Katki

03

*Dreaming of a Domestic
Summer Quote Unquote*

Alina Lupu

Dreaming of a Domestic Summer Quote Unquote.

By Alina Lupu

A version of this text was read out within the context of the symposium and closing event of Basma al-Sharif's solo exhibition The Place Where I Was Condemned to Live which took place on September 7th, 2024, at De Appel, in Amsterdam and later on it was published in Tubelight Magazine, on the topic: Suffocating.

A deep breath in. Summer. Normality. An omelet. A record. Three photographs on a living room wall rephotographed. 38 photographs in total, filmed. A peace lily. A child's cry. But also fragmentation. I thought about the early Monday morning of August 5th when three locations of the University of Amsterdam got attacked with paint and hammers. I thought about the 6th of August, when walking down the street, a day after the action, unaware of it, I spotted traces, like oxygen - the broken windows, the graffiti. Atop the Academic Club, in black paint, the word "FREE" scribbled close to the clock on top of the spire. I thought about discourse, what can be said in a living room, what can be yelled on the street. About how the German court convicted an activist for leading a 'from the river to the sea' chant. "(The Judge) said this opinion could be covered by the freedom of expression in Germany but that the slogan's use had to be evaluated in the context of 'the biggest massacre of Jews since the Shoah – that is the elephant in the room'".¹ The activist uttering the phrase, 22-year-old German-Iranian national Ava Moayeri, was ordered to pay a €600 fine after losing the case. You protest, you pay.

I thought about the 7th of August, when The Art Newspaper Daily deposited a new email in my Inbox. It led with "Gaza church attacked by Israel—again" and ended on "Banksy's London zoo: goat and elephant silhouettes fox the nation"². Three new graffiti pieces graced the streets this summer in London. "Do the animal works reflect the state of the UK, the war in Gaza—or something else entirely?" "(...) some social media users commenting on Banksy's Instagram post suggested that the artist's second mural was meant to put the spotlight on the 'elephant in the room,' referring to the rising death toll as Israel continues its attacks on Gaza."

I thought about the elephant. How illusive it is. How it switches sides, historically. I thought about property development. Basma's characters in the film CAPITAL dream of escaping to someplace where "Nothing is missing." Thinking that it takes 16 to 20 years to build a new city. A beautiful view. Networked. A large security crew that'll secure the complex 24/7. "A revolutionary world class concept." Her characters inhabit potential, meanwhile "Around 69,000 housing units across Gaza are destroyed, over 290,000 housing units are damaged, and more than 500,000 people have no home to return to."³

¹ Deborah Cole, German court convicts activist for leading 'from the river to the sea' chant, The Guardian, Tue 6 Aug 2024 16.48 CEST

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/06/german-court-due-to-rule-on-from-the-river-to-the-sea-case-in-test-of-free-speech>

² 'Banksy's London zoo: goat, monkey, wolf and elephant silhouettes fox the nation', The Art Newspaper, 7.09.2024

<https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2024/08/07/banksys-london-zoogoat-and-elephant-silhouettes-fox-the-nation>

³ Reliefweb, 'The Right to Adequate Housing is Under Attack in Gaza', 18.04.2024,

<https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/right-adequate-housing-under-attack-gaza>

I thought about safety. On the 8th of August, there were seven arrests after a disbanded pro-Palestinian demonstration in Amsterdam.⁴ Who's safety? Burning incense. Piss. Compost. Sex. I thought about love. 22nd of August. The exhibition "Of Love" was meant to open in Berlin.

"To love is human nature, an instinct that guides our reactions and decisions. As the rights and freedoms of people continue to be violated around the world and our environments suffer from human-caused devastation, we are moved to respond to the state of the world. "OF LOVE" centers on acts of compassion in society and nature—actions born of love that demonstrate care for humankind and the desire to shape a world one wants to live in." Up until the day of the exhibition itself, the artists thought it would go through. Berlin, a city known for shutting down references to Palestine for the past 11 months, acted like itself again. The exhibition didn't open. The news about the cancellation popped in and out of my social media feed. (quote - from the cancellation letter) "The district office only became aware of the individual artistic objects when the exhibition was being set up. It became clear that the political stance of the district office and the stance of the artists differed so much that no agreement could be reached."

I thought about censorship. A noose around one's neck. A Palestinian flag that cannot be seen in a gallery setting. A written chant that gets an exhibition cancelled. A genocide that cannot be mentioned in a country that committed several. "The district office will not be a venue that talks about a "Gaza genocide" over the first anniversary of October 7th without mentioning a word about the atrocities of October 7th, 2023. The freedom of art is not up for discussion."⁵

I thought about September 3rd when Germany's anti-immigration far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) celebrated a major political win in the eastern state of Thuringia. One picture coming out this election cycle showed a bunch of AfD members holding an Israeli flag, grinning like idiots.

I thought about an article from the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, September 5th:

"A new Pew Research Center survey found that a majority of Israelis support censoring social media content related to the Israel-Hamas war. Conducted in March 2024, the poll shows that 92 percent of Israelis believe posts inciting violence should not be allowed, while 87 percent say posts supporting Hamas should be censored. Additionally, 72 percent want graphic images or videos from the war removed. 59 percent think posts expressing sympathy for civilians in Gaza should be restricted, while 41 percent think posts criticising the government should be censored."⁶

I thought about a joke from Basma's film. "What does one butt cheek say to the other? Together, we can stop this shit," which underscores the absurdity of trying to contain resistance or silence dissent. Even in the most mundane of spaces, rebellion finds a way to surface.

4 Stefan Bunschoten, 'Municipality and police put an end to almost daily pro-Palestine demonstration on Dam Square', 08.08.2024, <https://www.at5.nl/artikelen/228010/gemeente-en-politie-maken-eind-aan-vrijwel-dagelijkse-pro-palestina-demonstratie-op-dam>

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Cancellation of the exhibition "Of Love" at the rk-Gallery, Press release from August 22, 2024, <https://www.berlin.de/ba-lichtenberg/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/2024/pressemitteilung.1478684.php>

6 Etan Nechin, 'Majority of Israelis Back Censoring Gaza War Social Media Posts, Exposing Jewish-Arab Divide, Poll Shows', 05.09.2024, Haaretz, Israel News <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-09-05/ty-article/.premium/poll-majority-of-israelis-back-censoring-gaza-war-posts-exposing-jewish-arab-divide/00000191-c119-de0a-afd5-d959c4d20000>

07

*the ghosts of what you have
done still live here with me*

Berfin Arsian

the ghosts of what you have done with me

the concept of time, elogging my mind, haunting us, torturing me in silence click by click, tick by tick punching me so violent the concept of time bundling together everything thats making me burn, making me yearn, making me turn, turning me upside down and down around itself going always in one line - one line never looking back, never questioning, never striking an attack - an attack on me, an attack on us, an attack on what could've been, what we could be, what is or what it can be look around, look one way around, look at the other side not the other way around, the other could be you, you don't mind, i don't mind, let me be the other, i don't wanna be you - i don't want your time: take your clock and leave me with mine mine - what is mine? i don't want anything to be mine, to be yours to be theirs, punching and fighting and crawling and grinding click by click by click by click and i wonder: i wonder what we could have been - but then there is another click that interrupts me, it keeps interrupting, it seems so close, it seems like you are finally grasping what could be, what we could be, how we could have been but then there is another tick that stops, not just me - it stops you, it cuts right through you, don't you feel how brutal it is? how brutal the tick, how sharp the tick is. my head aches. don't you feel it too?

i wonder if it's the numbness.

i think of sirens, i think of lions. i think of everything they could have been, everything we could have been everything we could be // don't say we - there is no we - i am haunted by your clock! it bundles together all the brutality you produced, your civilization produced. i think of babylon and mesopotamia i think of the first ones to settle down to tap into the trap too quick to fall and there was no way back / but what if the only way forward is by going back?

what if time moves backwards? i think of zamani and sasa. i think of what time could very well be - i think of what time is and where it was and what it means. my time doesn't move forward, don't make me think of time as moving forward moving towards the nonexistent, moving towards the blight, moving towards the plight, moving towards the latter and the matter and the last and the lost one - our time: *i want time to move backwards*, and it does. i think of the other that knew better, that knows better, that strives for better, that fights for better. you say there is no way out but what if there is a way back - what if the solution lies not in the future but what if the solution was there? it was there so it exists.

you say we can't get out you let me believe my dream our dream our fight for a better world is utopian - utopia was here, dystopian is the present and the future doesn't exist. but what exists - what *has* existed - it can come back. something that wasn't there won't ever be able to get here, what exists is in the now and the past. the past it didn't pass, it did pass and it keeps passing, it is still here and it will come back. to think of the first ones to settle, to fall for this trap, to fall for the concept of owning, to get caught up in the loop of the matrix - a trap, a vacuum, a vacuum of time sucked in by your clock. the clock is like a black hole sucking in everything that could have been, gritting and restraining and watching and controlling

i look at the clock and i see the state; i hear you mention the minutes we have left and i wonder and i ache for what could have been, for the events that could have become the present but you cut off - the ticking cut off it is so sharp my head starts to hurt *the ticking is so brutal and it is everywhere*. i feel haunted by the clock. the clock is haunting me. the clock - that one tick its like a vacuum of everything of everything that ruined me, that ruined us.

my revolution starts with ignoring your tick, with not listening to your tack

my revolution doesn't give a fuck, doesn't give a fuck about your ticks and tacks and tacks

and *tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick* they make my head hurt and make me remember and think of everything that has ruined it all for us, i don't want your linear way of thinking. i want complexity i want the here and now. i don't want your stress about the distant future - it doesn't exist it was never here, i don't feel it. it's not even far away it's invisible.

but the tick of it haunts me, it haunts me, it keeps haunting me.

i see the clock. i see the state. i see the governments name. i hear it calling mine and making me live this way - oh, how my ancestors would die - but it doesn't let me die! i am bleeding form the inside and it comes to me, cares for my wounds, the wounds your ticks are the reason for, it caresses them it is so gentle when it cuts through me once again - all i hear is another tick another *tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick*

don't you see how brutal it is the way you care, the way you care - oh, how i wish you'd just openly show the brutality, show me openly how you control me but you make it look so elegant, so seamlessly - yet my insides are ripped open but nobody can see. but they can see, i look back and they see and i see how it repeats but this time you are dressed so elegantly all fancy and i wonder: why should i fight? i could look as fancy as you why would i decline - decline *what?*

all i see is how it repeats, my ancestors tell me not to fall for your trap once again, i look over there and i see how you play the same game you can't fool me! but once again i am fooled for a second until the next tick that is so sharp so harsh and so violent - yet so caring the way your tack sounds, so rhythmic almost melodic but so rigid i can't unsee.

i keep remembering what has happened, how it keeps coming back - you can't fool me with your pretty dress!

tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick

i take of all the clocks i throw away the ones you gave me i want to forget and i want to remember

but i don't want to anticipate - it's all in the here and now but you don't let me be present

you take it away your ticks and tacks, click by click and tick by tack and tick by tick and *tick tick tick tick tick tick* what is it with your time that you love so much you stop living, you start policing - your clock reminds me of the way you control me, 12 numbers referring to all the ways you control me. it keeps repeating the same and the same, it is the reason we are stuck in this loop. the same time everyday - the same thing everyday? of course nothing changes when we think of everyday as the same, it will keep repeating

i keep thinking of what was and how you caress my wounds and how you look at my scars and make me forget about them with every click and every tick and every *tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick* it keeps getting higher and louder and it itches my ear, doomed to this loop, your tick turned this into a simulation, a simulation of the same thing, the same with a new font each time, a new dress looking so pretty and glittery, all shimmer - oh how i almost fell for you but i looked the other way and saw what you really do.

i looked back and remembered where you come from

i remember your paintings on walls, threatening me. they used to be beautiful lionesses, you lied to us telling us you could defeat them so easily. and now? i look at the paintings on your walls - you scream at me to walk with caution of your eyes are everywhere controlling me - surveillance is your new weaponing and it is trying to kill me, to kill us

and your surveillance it all starts here with the tick and the tack making me remember to always obey to live within your frame, to never expand, to never question, to listen and to stop at the right tick to never start at the wrong tack, to never miss a beat so rhythmic yet so brutal, so ugly but in the most beautiful dress i have ever seen and it keeps repeating itself. if the past lives on if i remember them then they are still here - oh, i won't forget how they've fought. if i remember them, maybe they will join me, they will show me, they will teach me, they will help me learn how to ignore your ticks and your tacks

have you ever heard of sasa and zamani, i wonder - i wonder how brutal it must have felt to have taken it away from you, to get it replaced now their words control how you think trying to make you obey - oh, how i wanna tear down these concepts. the ones you made up to make me listen and i keep listening to your ticks and tacks

i take the clock i bring it to the other room so i won't hear. i want it to stop but the beat is ingrained in my brain it controls everything, it controls how i feel. how i breath how i move, i try to ignore but i see the look in your eyes when i've missed a few beats. you think i don't care? too bad i care too much. i try not to, i try to disobey even for a few beats, for a few ticks, for a few tacks i try to disobey but then i see the look in your eyes thinking i don't care because they too made you believe - oh, how i wish you knew: *i've missed a few ticks and tacks because i care so much*.

i try to ingrain the disobedience into my brain, to make my body remember, to never listen, to always question, to always wonder, to look but to never look forward - to never look forward to what you made up to control me. there is nothing to look forward to : it doesn't exist. but when i look back i see so clearly how you try to trick me. when i look to the side, to the east - when i look up and down, north and south i see the different ways of how you try to fool me. i know where you come from - i know what brought you here. i think of unuk and how we fell for it: the trap. we trapped ourselves and there was no way back. but don't be fooled again! its still there, there is always a way back that's all that exists the present and the past but nothing to come if we don't work it out - don't be fooled once again!

i think of how we used to wander around falling for the comfort of settlements, the cradle of civilization over seeing its brutalization - it stings, the tick stings once again and i look at the nail hanging from the wall it screams at me, it tells me to bring it back, to put it in place - its place is where its belongs, its there to watch over me to tell me how to behave and i get up and bring it back and i failed once again

how hard it is to try to disobey

but you fooled me and i will try again, but for now i go to the to the other room and bring the clock back, put the clock up and listen, listen to its tick and its tack and i wonder, i wonder, i wonder and i think of how you came down from the mountains defeated him and i remember you, i remember the ones telling your story, to never forget

to keep your spirit alive, to never forget to disobey. i think of the ones coming down till this day - the lioness about which one you lied to us. there is no defeated lioness, she lives ingrained in our brain reminding us to always disobey, the arrow in her back fooling us to think she is dead but how could she! she is alive and lives on every time i think of her but your tick interrupts it tries so hard to make me forget. to think of the dead as the ones that lost but there is no loss when she still lives on, lives on in us, to remind us -to never stop, there is no defeating

you never defeated her, she lives on and i remember her, i won't let her be defeated, because if i do you will do the same to me so i remember and i try to disobey but your tick once again interrupts me *your tick keeps interrupting*

i try so hard to push against it but i am the one who brought you back into my room. i try to disobey but your eyes are everywhere on every wall you look at me telling me to be cautious because you are watching and guarding over me - there is no guard over me! i feel haunted by your ticks and tacks

the ghosts of what you have done still live here with me

i am scared to turn around, i feel your knife behind me, another arrow trying to push right through me just like how you did to her - oh, how i wish i could bring her back, but she lives on, ingrained in my brain *you can't take her away from me*
i will forever remember her!

and that is the first step on how to disobey.

you tell me to think about what is to come, to be stressed and rushed and anxious and fearful but i think about her and what you have done and how you do the same to me but this time your arrow is invisible while you try to caress my wounds, to care for the scars that were once on her that are now ingrained on my body

my body wont forget - it stings, your ticks and tacks hurt, they burn, my scars burn.

it doesn't matter how hard you care - care is violent, don't be fooled!

the only reason you care now is because you realized with her that if you make me obey any other way i will disobey so easily its a trap! it's a trap and i fell for it, i fell for it but then i think of *her, the dying lioness*

the dying lioness with arrows through her body

i wanna take all the clocks down as they are your way of making me obey

i wonder how to refuse, i try to refuse but then i see the look in your eyes thinking i don't care

i care so much that i try to ignore every tick and every tack trying to control us - i do it for you i do it for us

but all you think is i don't care hence you are just like them

policing me, policing yourself with every tick and every tack

the ticks and tacks are haunting me, the ticks keep haunting me

but i brought you here myself

i brought the clock back myself

05

((sapphire marmelade))

Chloë Langford

((sapphire marmelade))

six stains make a necklace
of hunter green printed on

a chest dimpled inside out simply shaped moulded
perfectly wrought plaits undone

soaked tails shower trails
down marks ribs removed

to make bone flutes stoned
xylophones the stone ground

down by the softest cheek

needs leg hair stroke teleport tunnel

essential parts are missing
but it has bruise, daisy chain

and a tiny plait, a summary
entails reduction, a knot fails

seduction, force generates friction
magnetic motives in a closed

ceremony or circuit flinta
designed to reduce writing

stress by charging vibrators

red yellow rush a fist through

reception magnification selection
black gloves cardamom lion's mane

lube foam and spices soft meal
of a goat's breast soft fur

wraps itself around the neck
a cowslick acoustic spiral a drain

down the back cold cream
garnish orange wheel layers

open onto the pink stone nose
is a seed cervix screed

screamed in the sunlight pour'n
upon the mess of children born

last night last time looked
at the blunt edge between girl

boy child toy cake scorn heap'd
upon the rivers running t'wards

the sea addicts creatures born
beneath truth lurks tucked

tailed folded failed
combed sweet greasy masculinity clean

shaven girlie all hips hidden
under tatts furs tatts curls

curls curls, the curls in creature's
truth teleport tunnel shavings

sparkle, but it has bruise,
daisy, chain and a summary entails reduction

Chloé Langford

00

Mi Ombligo, translated by Yasmin Rojas
Danielle C. Aguilar

MY BIOGRAPHY

A MAP OF IXTLÁN DE JUAREZ DISTRICT

My name is Danielle Cosmes Aguilar and I'm 9 years old and live in Ixtlán de Juárez Oaxaca where the wild green mountains are my protectors.

They make me feel safe. I love it here so much, but I want to tell you about everything that happened before we got here.

(at 9 years old).

Danielle

Love you lots

you.

I hope when you read this, you can remember the fun we had when we were little. I hope you never forget all the places you have lived in, because in a way, they are all a part of you.

everything I've done so far.

carry the memories of

I hope the mountains still feel

I hope I do.

like to be 9?

Will I remember what it felt

Will I still remember Ixtlán?

what will be different.

I'm writing this to you because I wonder where I will be when I'm older I wonder

I was born in Pomona, California.

Then we lived in Ontario and Fontana, California.

I got baptized in Fontana when I was 3, and went to school there too! I went to preschool, kindergarten, and first grade there.

I liked school and I learned a lot but then we had to move to Missouri.

Sometimes I think the sun was born

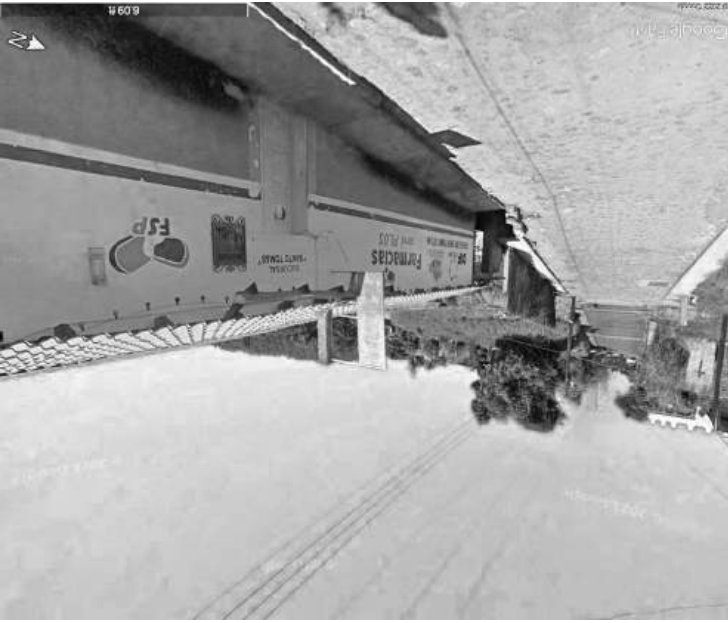
here.

like my blanket. they're always hugging me The mountains feel like

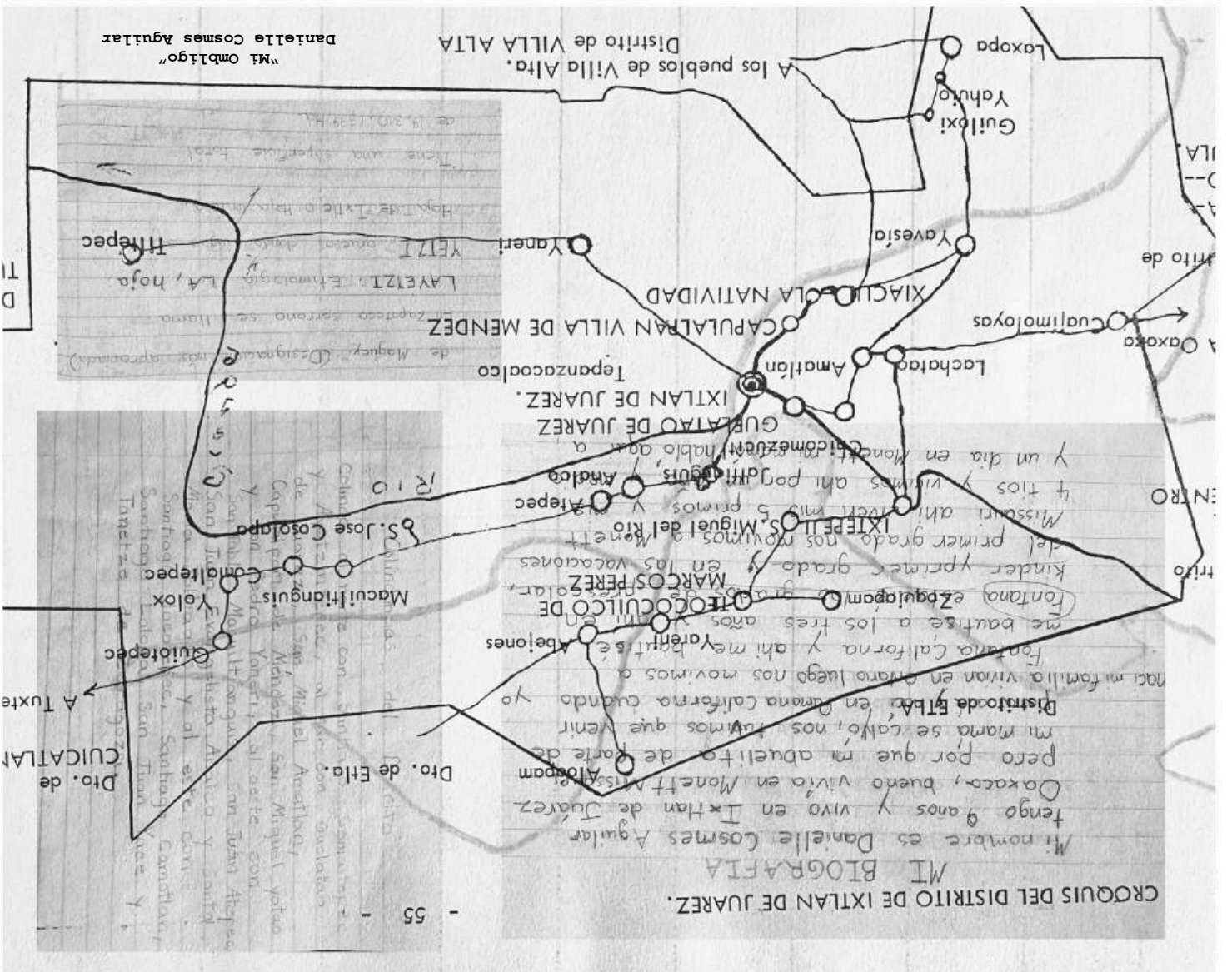
home.

I missed my friends from California but I was happy with my family. Now we live in Ixtlán, and I feel like this is

Pendant les vacances, nous avons déménagé à Monett dans le Missouri, nous y avons vécu pendant un an et demi à Monett, ma mère a parlé ici...



Escribe las instrucciones para llegar a la casa de tus recuerdos:



07

On hopes, no just now

Derek MF Di Fabio

ON HOPES, NO JUST NOW

phone calls in the shape of a letter

September 2022.

In Italian "to feel" is *sentire*, it comes from Latin and it's a word directly connected to the senses: it means to receive sensations and, at the same time, to hear, to perceive sounds.

We spoke on the phone the other night. I was tired, bending at the corner of my bed, pillows underlining my bent back. Your pixelated head held by the duvet laying between my legs.



Loudspeakers and video calls make these conversations more intimate, somehow you are here while you are wrapping your day up with other duvets, brightened by faraway lights.

Can you speak louder? Why are you being so quiet? You told me this a bit annoyed a few days ago, while I was walking on a concrete shore.

Some sort of epiphany usually happens to me in these wet places.

I walk fast between people celebrating a wedding, or just the joy of facing a dark sea. The seaside is narrow, the crowd happily rowdy. I don't like to be heard by curious ears while I'm speaking to you.

As a teenager without a mobile phone, searching for the best spot and time in the house to call lovers and friends. I can't remember who of my siblings or parents started this, surely it was enhanced by answering the phone from another room and having to pass the call to someone else, waiting at the receiver till the wanted relative picked up from another part of the house.

Can you please hang up?

I could hang up or stay mute, a hand covering my microphone to silence all the noises of the room.

Eavesdropping was a classic when the first cable internet arrived at home: rotating high-pitch noises charged with the will of a world-wide connection, an un-melodic song interrupting the landline.



Infinite chat, infinite scrolling, infinite time: from the interrupting landline phone call, the usage of the internet became soon flat, as much as you want, all you can eat, all you can hear: voices don't have to pay the time, no rush for shorting a call, no price for the length of a message, as long as you are covered by the network.

Can you hear me?

Are you here?

Who is in the room? Who is speaking?

I love to call you. I miss you differently when we manage to speak and see each other through screens, our personal séance.

Learning a language has a lot to do with shifting. During my first years in an anglophone country, I had to rehearse my thoughts in English, searching for a way to say something, for how an event could be translated. How a thought of a thing can be moved from one place to another.

Please, come in

In a meeting, there is always a mutual intention, a mutual invitation.

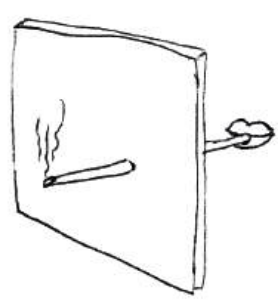
Please, don't consider this as a one-to-one invitation: I invite all of you, y'all, you are always already performing all the different characters that are shaping and have constituted yourself.

Probably the pandemic was a worldwide awakening, how the smallest *thing* can blossom between our intentions and spoil what is perceived as normal.



soundcloud.com/cuscino-audio6v1da

DID YOU HEAR THIS?



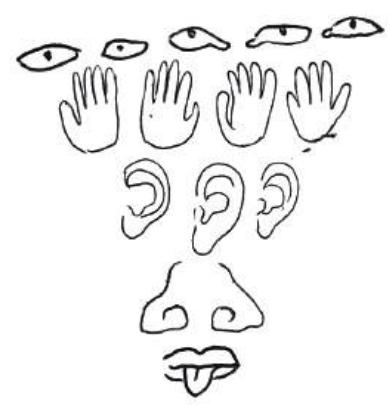
I don't want to be loud, let me whisper at the microphone, I don't want to be heard by curious ears, maybe some of these words could flip their worlds.

Why can't I speak louder? Maybe because you are not in the room. Walking and speaking on the phone has another layer of communication involved. It has to do with my body in space, my gaze touching other expressive eyes while I can't reach yours. I can be loud in a room by myself, talking on a device to you. This may be why I'm speaking quietly, to direct my voice to you only. Speaking softly has to do more with loud thinking, with reflecting together. I would like to diffract together and overcome this protocol of a common language to conform to.

And I stare at your eyes on a screen. I would like to reach out to the ex-participants of the workshop in the prison I initiated two years ago. I don't exactly know how to avoid those curious ears though, the silent and judgmental presence of an uninvited third or fourth. I could barely ask the names behind those uniforms when I was meeting them face-to-face, and they could know everything about me. They could swipe identities, shift faces as a duty to be fulfilled. These sentences may sound like camouflage to you. I want to consider words as sculptures, concepts as objects to look around. I prefer the long way nearby than piercing and arriving at you directly. Where then?

You have two ears and I have a mouth, two hands for your gut, and several synapses that need to be translated to you, is it the same tickling of ten fingers reaching the keys? I'm wondering what is the silent, the silent observer, the silent wall. How do humans believe that someone could be really silent? How can someone or something be completely neutral in a situation while they are within it? What has fortified this distance?

On the phone, we spoke about hope. You were afraid you couldn't do much, that you don't deserve this and that. Or if yes, at which scope? I'm wondering about what you told me: hope is needed to push the struggle forward, to deal with the challenge. You know this, I've been sewing a lot and I've been keeping the best textiles in a box in the wardrobe. Sometimes I look at them as postcards from potential dreams. I've been living so much in the potentiality of something, moving towards something better, caressing the thought that the time will come.



Then it will come, the time to shout or sing.
How is the guard interfering over here?
Sort of judges, silent presence.

GAO! LOVE YOU
PEREK

08

With my arms outstretched
Fette Sans

Another car drives beneath the window, projecting deep, dark red and fuzzy yellow bands of rectangular light through the blinds, and, in the crash of a wave, the flares dissolve into the ceiling and I say—*I have been thinking of a show called the real desperate measures of a country*, and we laugh. *Tell me how your cunt feels like*—Five says. The streets always smell like dumpster fire now, but I say that I can smell a wooden frame sliding out of its beehive, a gush of cedar, raw honey, dead bees and wax, the odor of propolis, brood, hope, and trouble beaten to a pulp. It feels like the braid of sweat soaking in the flat, hammered seam at the crotch of my jeans, sweet and ripe, hungry. Whenever I see that gold yellow stitching this is what I smell. We stay silent for a moment and once I've put my fingers under my nose I say—*the broth I make by grinding my teeth when I want you*.

Yes—Now imagine we are outside in that clammy dark, this corner building, the sidewalks, these streets: all empty. Save only those led by their dogs who hunt for relief, and in that dumb quiet everyone is on their phones, and *I am walking you-ward*—Five tells me. *A worthy walk, toward yourself*—is answered as though I wanted an explanation. In my mind I look up and there's an older man smoking at the balcony, his cigarette hand aloft in the sodium haze expelling blue drags. We stare a stare that suggests a more intense, clandestine life when he casts the butt to the ground then I ask—*Do you ever think about how creation was first an expulsion? From a garden, from a cunt? That same devotional hole*. It's like passing into existence must begin with something that doesn't want you. It takes some effort to disentangle what I feel in this bare room that burns and echoes my heartrate. Like a continuous slap I give myself, it reverberates a whole world made of other people who exist and die while distractions remain endlessly updated. *And by the time you've noticed, it is to realize that it's always been like that, an entire chorus out of tune*. I cry—*When was confusion ever not a sign of the times? A betrayal that justified the obliteration is what I want for you*—is what I hear back. Tongues and thieves twirl in my head then and eventually I can put myself back in the street where I am walking in front of Five and with each step I choose to breathe instead of screaming.

Flatten your fingers to the cold wall and aver that every gutter is a throat—Five tells me softly and each word gives first a smell—grease, stone, pigment, cloth, spit and metal—then it gives a posture. Each sentence is a steel rod that goes through my asshole, my spine, through my guts, my spleen, and my heart: a hole is always a ring, a cyclone of confession, this special arrangement made by two people agreeing to meet in public in a very private way. *I am not just a faggot I am a faggot like God who does for you what you cannot do for yourself* (you know the saying). *Yes, now say please*. I feel the plaster with my hand and I open my mouth—*please*, anything less than that riddle against my heart doesn't belong here I tell Five. The more clement the care, the readily it makes me turn towards the wall and in those streets assembled for me, I kneel and howl at a crow roosting on a TV antenna and suddenly, it is daylight.

Now find an impudent boy whose face is still muddled with youth, a boy wearing a gold cross on a gold chain. The first one I'm able to make up is tending the fence of a garden with a soldering

gun, bent awkwardly to his task and oblivious as to why I had to find him. When Five tells me to suck this boy's dick I have conjured, I think of my arms outstretched, the chain-links gnawing away the edges of my wrists, crushing then redrawing my bones. I think about the thirst of the earth when it is fed only my blood. How comforting it feels—to be pulled, shared, disposed-of and made to feel that something inside me leaks catastrophe. Each variation on being used is like staring at a former self, the cadence marked by my repeating—*I have never been there, I have never been this.*

Lust assumes a direction and is never quenched and every of my yawning holes always a blood-bath when orgasms are so boring. *Why is it that I have to submit myself to what the world has arbitrated good? And if it is not good to me?* I want to know—*What if, rather, I wanted to live in your house because I wanted to taste the dirt that you come from?*

Five doesn't answer—*Your flesh will embarrass you*, I hear instead. It will remind you of the scars on your back and you will want to measure the length of each to reveal the one number which you will bring to the surgeon who wounded you then, now assigned to cross out your breasts. You will ask him to break that number in two and to make you sideward scars like the ones you saw on that boy's chest while he cut his own hair in a video posted online.

It is the moment Five chooses to shove four fingers into my aorta—*A missing hand is also a hand*, I say. Because your missing hand is always mine, every day, holding that cursed device that speaks your voice, thrusting the buds deeper into my ears, and all cravings deeper into my mouth, keeping my eyelids shut and my cunt open. It is my wet hand that the precipice fondles as I fall. So I say that—*Love has to be inconsistent and unreliable to feel frightening and in that way, absence is never*, and I think that same conviction is why I perform acts of foolish low-risk self-harm by denying myself emotional experiences with people I don't want, and I laugh.

And when I am done with you, when I have walked the entire field of your mind and I have gathered all these charms—made with your skin, your hair, your sinews and your bones—and I have arranged them on the table by your bed so that when you will wake and return to the world you will see them and outloud give me your full name and say that you are mine.

09

The Great Dane

Freja Sande

THE GREAT DANE

the great dane lies
undisturbed by seasons changing
untouched, yet
a splinter in its paw
the kind only a housefire can pull out
it's cool man, it's cool
big dogs sleep alone
anticipating dreams of a crowd or a field
and being found in either one

anyways, it lies
barks not
pulls petals off their stems
two piles
it's cool, big dog

somewhere in the world a photo is being made
of a girl with pretty hair

and so,
when no one is looking
big dog with a whimper
and tangled fur
'why are people finding god
when they could be finding me'

a dog wags its tail
slowly first
then not at all

10

words, ashes
Geo Moon

words, ashes

Why don't I know your handwriting?

Whenever I write, whatever I write, I know it sends something to you,
even if it's not a letter and even if it doesn't address you. Still, I send something to you
whenever I write, whenever I put words together and make them hold onto each other,
as if to cast a spell; I know I always send you something as the spell was bound to it.
But why don't I remember your handwriting?

Should I find solace in knowing the shape of your hand instead?
Your round and starry palms suited you. I once or twice thought so only to myself, as I did
to most of the real things. They suited you and suited the last life we had,
the one we recovered so slowly that it almost felt like a long death.

Like an old fear, like an old future,
like an old myth, like an old morning,
You walked to me and allowed me to wrap my arms around you,
once, like a poem made of unending breath.
I know I need to be swindled through something foreign,
something so opaque that it almost feels transparent;
but if I find us at the forked tongue, beside the dreams you paid for,
who will ever touch them and deliver them to me
as the pebbles

Once I looked at your hand,
while our cigarettes made a lazy halo,
and the streetlight projecting shadows of our hands on you,
when you shared everything like confession
and I lied about everything like confession.

I looked at your hand,
while I did not believe in anything,
and at your finger fluttering ashes,
I wondered:

Is it a word or a silence that creates ash?

I was looking at your stinging fingertips.
Which of them falls and which of them disperses?



If I had known your handwriting,
If I wrote your name with it,
If I brought soil of the land you are believed to be buried,
and if I lean in to the pine tree, your tree,
next to my foreign wall, even then,
I know I wouldn't be allowed to have us.

I don't know the smell of your words,
I risk the real only by counting the deaths,
as if living in your dreams might win me a time, a long old time where I can go
way back with deaths.
You know, a 1mg cigarette from CVS could work as fine refrains,
the ones we picked up from random soundtrack and repeated mercilessly,
forever humming, scraped from where they belong,
endlessly replayed throughout the body without repair.

You know,
Your round, starry palms will know
Your poems will never outlive you
and I can never survive you

//

*HIGH BY THE CRACKS /
we must dissolve not alone
but like songs*

Giulia Ottavia Frattini

HIGH BY THE CRACKS /
we must dissolve not alone but like songs

if my body were sliced in two
by the blade that is the horizon

I'd wonder how time
either blurs or amplifies

calling through the split
as a river slides
beneath the weight of the speakable

they say
the debris that persists
names what matters
resilient witness to something once known
/ etched
within borders and years /

but I think it's the water
its steady proximity
to both surface and abyss
urging us into presence

conflicted at times
whether it's belonging
or drowning

if my body were held together
by the current that is the horizon

I'd whisper
begin with undoing it

'cause it is not the absence of space
but the excess of it

and you'll see
stories untold
as fingers
reach down
 maddening
pulling memories from the deep

in there
each of us
so joyfully uprooted

12

Scene 3: Pastelaria, Interior
Giulia Zabarella

SCENE 3:
PASTELARIA,
INTERIOR

20th January

Em Lisboa, numa *loja com história*

“Sunday of the hostages”
Palestinians return to Gaza
images of a barren land, all crumbled
two fingers for victory in all pictures
carpets piled on top of cars,
sunsets that keep returning
children, and some hearts alive

When I was little and grew up with tv images of carpet-bombed towns
in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq
I wasn’t surprised
I thought that sort of barren stage design did belong
to that impossible land
sticks and dust and seedless soil forever
the dryness of resolute infertility;
when I learnt that Palestine had
olive trees and soft earth
and worms, and the sea
the image did not match

They just turned the tv off.

I dipped in the ocean on January 19th:
Where do the Atlantic and the Mediterranean meet?
As I dipped in the sea...
and I’m writing this on a pink marble table
Pastelaria de São Jorge
and colored LED lights blink on my left hand side
and the floor is wet with mopping and rain
people say: hurrays, and hostages are swapped from one van to another
they show certificates and grins
we don’t talk about these things with my “artist friends”
always assuming we’re on the same page politically
or pretending we are, to avoid conversations
like this one

As we all are glued to televisions today, like it’s the 90s
or to phone screens, or watches, or radios, computers
we watch
like I watched from that table in Belleville,
grasping at straws:
Oblivion is a nasty beast we all managed to domesticate.

People, journalists, fearless, they keep returning
back to the land that has been burnt to ashes
one thousand times, like Tiflis, and rebuilt

They say they are returning
I wonder what will happen and
how we continue
from here.

In punta di sedia:
a long way
from abstract to figuration
I'm not asking for permission
to use
the orange light



Film still from *Medusa's Ashes (Wildcard)*, Giulia Zabarella, 2025

B

two reefs: reef i. (shoulder) / reef ii. (wrist)

Guilherme V. Martins

reef i. (shoulder)

leaves
glowed
in the haze:
the wind a sphere
of curved
shadows,
soft, warm,
a sweet pulse
marking
the rhythm
of the tides
in the same
jaguar pace
on which
molars rose

now
the road
was just
a cube,
veil,
case
or crease
onto which
in the dark
the gong-arrow
poured

on the dozy edge
it was voice —
the beginning
of the Earth
rising in
a whisper
and

reef ii. (wrist)

on every roof
a fresh laughter —
at times night,
at times not —
would awaken
the powdery skin
washing
the walls
of rage

like a breeze,
a timbre
would rise
over the deaf heat,
floating over
the surroundings

there
would be
the sound
of two rings
clashing:
waves announcing
marble
on the plain,
the wind
a cold lava,
fire-curve

77

I Want

Ilya Stasevich

I want to tell you something
I want to talk
I want the most
I want a scratch card
I want resolution
I want to pee in a bush
I want to get arrested
I want to go to bed
I want to be a father
I want songs to be longer
I want to eat from a garbage bin
like a rat
I want to be hot
I want to tell everybody about
my day
I want a coke zero
I want to gossip
I want to wake up by the sea
with a sunburn
I want fair moral treatment
I want to be very very rich
I want a drivers license
I want a snack
I want different snack sorry
I want to be questioned
I want you to never speak to me
again
I want to be the president of the
United States of America
I want to be very mean
I want to be a ballet dancer
I want to speak English
I want paper
I want a pencil
I want to react very strongly to
something totally
inconsequential
I want to scare you
I want to pull pranks
I want to solve riddles
I want your attention
I want to change my opinions
less frequently
I want loud noises
I want strong smells
I want long emails
I want fake teeth
I want to have bad sex and tell
my friends about it
I want to believe in change
I want to look good in a wetsuit

I want to go to church
I want to have good intentions
I want problems
I want protests
I want proverbs
I want protein
I want progress
I want to be straight
I want to toughen up
I want beef bourguignon
I want to be an active Reddit
user
I want to be opportunistic
I want fresh bed sheets
I want the good stuff
I want a master's degree
I want less action more talk
I want kindness
I want to be a policeman
I want to be my own son
I want to go to Lake Como
I want cute
I want nice
I want silly
I want gorgeous
I want fabulous
I want awesome
I want to play this game where
our faces very close to one
another and I look you in the
eyes for very long and you start
crying
I want you to be jealous of my
astronomical success
I want it to be my birthday
I want a new face
I want my nails and hair to stop
growing once I'm dead
I want to be honest
I want to be an actor when I
grow up
I want hope
I want trials and tribulations
I want us to be on speaking
terms but not consistently
I want to make good art
I want my grandmother to live
forever
I want to quit drugs
I want the moon
I want nice weather

I want true stories
I want crime
I want to be on Instagram
I want to murder someone
I want a new pair of those Jil
Sander boots
I want to discover an island
I want gold
I want silver
I want to put on a song
I want you to shut the fuck up
I want always
I want forever
I want always
I want always
I want all the ways
I want too many ways
I want it my way
I want it badly
I want it to push me
I want it persistently
I want it childishly
I want you
I want miracles
I want everyone to listen to me
when I whisper
"I want nothing"
I want the truth
I want no consequences for my
actions and serious
consequences for everybody
else's actions
I want to climb a skyscraper
I want to give everybody a
chance because even behind the
dumbest face is possibly a great
soul
I want to be a pigeon
I want to taste regret
I want to die my lovely bed
I want cotton candy
I want to go on a walk
I want to sleep on a bench
I want to be fancied
I want to feel like myself again
I want sparkling water
I want to stop
I want to stop
I want to stop
I want a good heart
I want your opinions

I want your attentive blue eyes
I want the back of your neck
I want olives
I want asphalt
I want to learn
I want to be a sensitive person
without being paralysed by
every horror I encounter
I want to take a shot of bleach
and see what happens
I want to thank my supportive
husband and my agent Jimmy
who paved the way for me and
my late mother who told me to
never listen to the haters
I want to trim my toenails
I want your experience of right
now to be mine
I want youth
I want porcelain
I want to make sense
I want to talk to someone who
gives no shit
I want nonsense
I want to charge my phone
I want to relax
I want to for once feel like we're
on the same page
I want to go to a natural history
museum and look at taxidermies
I want to sneeze
I want to talk to Jesus
I want cash
I want a blue sky above my head
I want porn
I want to greet you with a smile
I want to fix my teeth first
I want to have good posture
I want reasons
I want release
I want remorse
I want to drink my pumpkin
spice latte on the Eurostar at six
in the morning
I want to be liked by everybody
I want to find my centre again
I want a diagnosis
I want to get married
I want to kill the vibe
I want academic validation of
my intellect

I want to be less gullible
I want to be more certain
I want you to stop dressing like
this to such occasions
I want to see my family
I want to see Josh O'Connor
naked
I want to stand for something
I want to live by a set of
principles that ensures that my
conscience stays in check
I want to confess all of my lies
I want to down a glass of
champagne while in an ice bath
I want to keep every promise
I want to miss no one
I want to draw the line
I want to know when to draw it
and where to put the line
I want to once get into a mild
accident and get lots of
insurance money
I want a cigarette
I want to make judgements that
aren't relational
I want to apologise to a few
people
I want you to truly tell me what
you really actually seriously
think about me as an individual
I want to go to heaven obviously
I want to peel my face mask off
in a satisfying way every time
I want to never be hungover
I want to engage in suspicious
activities
I want to write a screenplay
I want an underwhelming
experience
I want wet socks
I want shortcuts
I want pivots
I want spin-offs
I want road rage
I want gay stuff
I want tropical island beach
cocktail sweaty party summer in
Cancun you know
I want to love my homeland
I want to care about something
more than myself

I want to get lost
I want to be pitied
I want to hold myself
responsible
I want to be the voice of reason
I want to give bad advice
I want to memorise the Odyssey
and recite it on cocaine at house
parties
I want to disappear
I want to exceed at martial arts
I want lemon in my water yes
please
I want to process my religious
trauma
I want to have a sexy voice like
I sometimes do in the morning if
I've been a bit ill
I want whatever is the opposite
of superficial
I want a fresh start
I want to hide behind the curtain
I want the front row seats
I want something else I can't put
a finger on it
I want to define with surgical
precision what it really means to
care
I want an opulent lifestyle, like
going to dinner with Madonna
sort of thing
I want left right and center
I want physical touch
I want to be a teacher eventually
because I believe it's the only
way to "give back" aside from
having children which I also
want with the right person at the
right time of course
I want to want to continue
I want to finish what I started
I want to finish on a good note
I want A-a-a-a-a-a
I want to give you the ick
I want you to think before
believing everything I say

15

The Picture Making Force
Julla Rose Gostynski

The Picture Making Force

1

It was the picture making force that killed their love

What to use it for?

she chose to look closely and not betray her eyes with the picture making force

What to use it for?

she heard a mother say

lovers play with images

always and words sometimes

and with bodies it becomes complicated

So they went on talking of bodies

and you said she talked strange of it

like in an anatomy class she spoke

of flesh and you said

„don't use that word to speak

of something not dead“

You asked „what can you give

in love to me?“

and she said „flesh“ without much study

so it must have come from some other place

the body perhaps

„Flesh flesh flesh“ she kept repeating

„was my first word

I ran around naked and unaware

of the prophetic value“

Running after lustful lost fear of desire

she said „lick that cheek kiss that cheek

hit it on the same spot“

for the flesh to take over

tie the knots of meaning

woven with you past times loosen their grip

Once twice thrice she tied you up

you said you need to get the knot

right after the forth fifth sixth time

they talked of bodies and you said she talks strange of it

She kept asking if this love reminded you of another

not from a place of jealousy

but to make sure she wouldn't fall for a template-lover

Taking love once seen

in a film

and repeated endlessly

Maybe it was other peoples' picture making force that killed their love

2

It was not even raining
when cinema invited them in
registering and mimicking
a woman in a cheap holiday-inn
later a bundle of flesh burning
on the shore of an island
here imbued with pain
there with desire

Tension rises until they fall
into a plot-hole and get bored to the core
wordless and blinded they leave
until suddenly she exclaims
„I decided not to imagine anymore“

She wanted to see what there is
when her eyes were no longer filled with images
But they were in love with the picture making force

3

What to use it for?
she chose to look closely and not betray her eyes with the picture making force

When you ran
and the table almost fell
you had already paid your bill
a coffee but not her tea
which means you were prepared

To flee
when all she did was offer you
Flesh flesh flesh
and you said:
„If this is what you can give in love to me we won't get along“

You went on
thinking
„my father is dead
my mother jobless
this afternoon I have to rest“
while she thought of you
suckling her breast

„you“ another you lost
but you were not another „you“ lost for
you were the one she spoke to of specificity

10

When you leave
Kwinnie Lê

when you leave

remember sand is a symbol
for freedom carried through the wind
from the homeland you can turn the stones
soft the road will only become
endless when one of you surrenders
like how the heart won't give
in until its stomach agrees
don't be afraid when they hit
the ground it will remind you
of the trigger of the bang of the fire
in your head of the bomb
in your belly & the shackles
on your feet I can hear your footsteps searching
for the end of this world when you get there
dive in wash your leathered skin
take a shower your tears are in need
of company scratch your scalp
until foam disappears into broken
hands when you will come
up for air let me hold you
I will run away with you too

//

*Notes on Flexibility I: The
Integration of Penetration into
Daily Life*

Lennart Koch

Notes on *Flexibility I*: The Integration of Penetration into Daily Life

Nit-picky fucking leisure. Days off driven by necessity, necessity driven by thermoplastic undertows dragging hysterical jumbo chauvinism into a headlock, sweating like minuscule micromanagement showers. The valve perfectly inverting the decreasing effect of ibuprofen and frozen parsley. Drop-shipping as political action. Dozens of clipfarming cops blatantly beating the shit out of comrades past temporary blockades. A last farewell at Saint Katherine's Docks after biting your clavicle. Consider it the right place but the wrong luxury; consider streamlining mutual anticipation; consider the aesthetics of non-identity reduced to a quota. Formless tints encircle multiplying vampires. Quietly becoming attached but loudly becoming detached. We are the multiplying vampires thirsty for brightness. Publicly shoplifted personal belongings, fixed hopes besides bedside table (contemporary finishes). No introduction of fresh air. Beribboned revolt at a loss for intense pleasure¹, short-period hyperventilation at an angle so pure that every frame per second solidifies my affection for the *GENI-flex™ Modular Solution Irregular Sorter* or temporary employment. If you are not invested, then what's the point? Twice seduced toothbrush on the brink of indifference. Receiving pleasure from giving pleasure is true communism, you swear. *If* you are not invested, then what's the point? If *you* are not invested, then what's the point? If you are *not* invested, then what's the point? I hold your nothingness next to me like translucent caoutchouc or the screwed top of a fuse blown out of proportion. Jinx unzipped doubt produced by produced fictions so very sexlessly encased in user-friendly dysphoria exiled exchange undone and did; traces barely legible **[muted]** bodies face modes of representation possibly shrouded in pristine condition lavender where there used to be your company. If you are not invested / If you are not invested, then / If you are not / If you are / If you are not invested, then what's / If you are not invested, *then what's the point?* All alienation is confession. As the door shuts tightly with a loud bang, it sets off the mechanical contraption softlocking our relation. Permanently fixed deep lack. All will stay just still. Stained black Adidas shorts fold like drapery on the floor; a well-disciplined sub-bass flickers between presupposing absence and dissociating presence. The covers are still warm, I press my cheek against them and feel warmth. The device is still monitoring the air for pollution like particulate matter (PM), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), carbon dioxide (CO₂) or working time fraud (covers make faint noise, wrap around warm skin). Briefly untouched hex parcelized into mesh, a pipe-like halogen split horizon twirling shut eyelids upon awaking to visualize your touch through pitch-black residential structures indifferent to the orange downward-scattered skyglow. Apartment buildings supply aching intimacy breaking dimly lit rooms within fantasy within passing night within the mall filling up with thick grey smoke, whereas domesticity is the logistics of obsession. Subsequent dust plunges into, records redundant tasks in sheer anxious air inhaled for too long, or too excessively, though hardly felt until fatigue sets in and spreads the self thin, hardly felt until panoptically horny for sexy surplus and placed next to **(1.1)** an abundance of food [...] transported for profit **(1.2)** bare stripped protective plastic wrap concealing hypermobilized class and sex **(1.3)** again a loud bang this time mistaken for stupidly suggestive rubble thereby **(a)** bending inwards **(b)** the all at once space left thereby **(c)** the volatile market price of rubber **(1.4)** piles of pixelated *Zebra MC3300s (MC330K-GE4HA3US)* in faint foetal sleep in which you are the sole vivid dreamer dubbed partially restricted non-participant observer of all ongoing activity inside four hard corners sentimentally surveilled alas wholly submerged in sublime turpentine truth whilst standing still on two trembling bluish greenish bruised feet for 12 insufferable hours at a time in a hall stretching out till infinity till the soaring rays of the negative autumn sun illuminated by blissfully internalizing inflationist fantasies. Day in, day out, go on, swallow the authoritarian panorama and its air-tight containers in one go. It's liquid-like kiss on the global cheek **(1.5)** trash cans frequently overflowing with bottles of urine **(1.6)** the solvent which is used which is absolutely quantifiable in the shortest measure between two points in muzzle irrevocably on its double sided **(a)** it's double choral canniness we wet our eyes to its profit we beg to be prioritized erratically begging almost it's double choral canniness we wet our eyes to its profit we beg to be prioritized erratically begging almost on my knees to tell you to tell me I should get down on my knees should I get down on my knees should we get down on our knees just tell me if I we should do so I will get down on my knees all you must do is say so I am down

on my knees I will follow your every word your every Mesopotamian promise don't even say a word don't even bother the slightest implication is enough don't even bother the slightest implication is (1.7) the present as an allegory for impersonal temporality embedded in the surface of contradiction (a) spoken aloud (b) therefore functioning as the apparatus dissolving once inflexible individuated zones of existence into each exploitable moment, turning leisure time into autonomous obligation extended to the tattered contours of stimulation (1.8) the need to lick unfailingly every delicate instance of closeness preluded by the need to lick all over every delicate instance in a diagram reading "DIE ENTÄUSSERUNG DER ARBEITER:INNEN IST KONSEQUENZ DER SCHAM" in the middle with red arrows pointing at "as far away as 70 ft./21.4 m" on the left, and "das Maß der Arbeitsanforderung dumped in the Landwehrkanal" on the right. Various red arrows point in multiple directions your multiple body for multiple gridlocks unfailingly stuttering through various bodily grids multiplied in locked directions in which the red arrow points unfailingly for your body stutters various red arrows point at it it is directionally gridlocked at this point multiple stuttering grids for various locks in unfailingly red bodies of arrows point in your direction various stutters in bodies direct multiple arrows unfailingly locking various reds in pointed grids stuttering unfailingly in multiplicity for bodies directly pointed in various stuttering arrows for gridlocks unfailingly yours (1.9) treat shit like money, ABS and polycarbonate, eat elastomer bump-pads for hands in baskets to currency's moral, concessions allocated to private companies in a whisper of red rubber. You shut the door and walk down the stairs. I lay on my side and, otherwise fading bright bleach in the urban alcove rubs out trigger-like rivets for semi-somatic wet credit, Is there, in every act of violence, a commonly shared utopian desire impossible to fulfill?

- Complicity to please
- to pleasure
- let's please
- to know inevitable failure
- but please to try.

1 Self-enjoyment of failure and individual suffering as a dialectical condition for change, which more often than not overlooks the authentically expressed proletarian experience of a one-bedroom apartment and burlesque introspection. Cosmic chaos, by pure choice your Vaseline diaphragm replaces my knee-jerk face as a stand-in for estrangement swapped with excessive surveillance tactics set at a rate under 20, seen as a significant blow to the modern labor movement. Switch prophylaxis for property. Bedroom interior exchanged for unevenly distributed needs. The contents of the break room fridge screen-burned into hibernating spreadsheets. Container should be a synonym for institution. Bottles of mineral water erect like skylines to be demolished; sterile water tastes of chapped lips. Aestheticizing order² is hysteria of modernity, and it is violently beaten into our fucking heads. Losing order = powerlessness. Navigating rooms in dark, without touching any walls. Habituated movements all that remains. What remains is information linked to space, linked to image, linked to sense (for example taste, feel, hear, smell), linked to garments carefully hung over the distant future, like, does your body language symbolize workers getting C-sectioned from sensation? A fragile newborn body contained in acrylic is lifted out of the box-like structure and injected with testosterone. Failure to identify entirely symbolic clinical mercury residue on the quasi-false premise of distress exquisitely presumed by subcontractors and sovereignty not fully comprehended, but very much accustomed to conditions of staged late-stage melancholy. Our center will be the safest words in identical mute. Shamelessly interlocking genital manifestations make mercury the default for a singular, universalized cock freely placed on the marketplace.

2 A row of threads in a loom.



18

Of Ocean & Spirit

Lily Harper

Gifts of Ocean & Spirit

(to be read intuitively)

Salt to the Sea,

Love to the Bees,

Pollen to the Sting,

Honey in the Womb,

Love in my Tomb,

Caress our Face,

& hope to Break,

Sigh.

Let it Rest,

For the Departure of Spirit,

Is yet another Lyric.

As a child, I was caught in a rip currents many times, Sometimes I
swam out myself, but when I was too small Once, My neighbor,
Uncle Eddy his name is, came to rescue me. I thought my Mother
would be Mad at me for Being careless. It was but a lesson, that the
Sea could swallow me at anytime.

I learned how to respect her, to listen to her pushes and pulls, her
currents and strengths, the bashing and crashing, the swirling and
twirling of tides upon rocks, beating upon sands, surfboards flimsy in
her (omni)presence, in Her Power.

I swallowed her salt, stuck in my throat, skin in my water. What if the
Sea swallowed the ICE agents? What if she caught them in a rip, and
they came out, salt in their skin, tenderness on their hands. Ice is
frozen water.
What if it/they melted?

A Drone of Faith, A Troop of Kisses, A Cannon of moisture.

“Where life is precious, life is precious,” says Ruth Wilson Gilmore.

To Release, And there comes sweet Solemn Relief, it is nothing, but the Sting of Belief.

I have swallowed enough.

When the waves come, ((humming, singing))

To be of Service, to the Ocean, to my Gods, To Us,

I keep swallowing,

Swallows are also birds,

Swallowing, gulping,

Caught in a rip,

The rising of the Tide,

Do you ever know the feeling where your feet are fighting, swinging,

You are moving your legs as fast and much as you can, Thrashing,

Like the Thrush,

And you are Swept,

Nearly Swallowed.

Spirituality is not the way of weakness, but of strength.

What if we held for a moment that the Spiritual informs the Material? What if we invoked a Prayer, a Ritual, an Honoring, and what could we See? What could we Taste? What could we Hear? What could we Feel? What could we Breathe? What could we Move?

What structures might fall? What violences might crumble? What institutions might break under the Weight of Spirit? What Prayers might be created? What Loves might flourish? What Earth might Re(a)live?

Next to thirst traps, I see an unalived body, an unalived soul. Next to photos of the ocean, I see images of tear gas against blue and green and grey and moldy clothes, colors of the Earth, the Sea, the Soil, but moving Uniforms in the Process of Violence. How can they be wearing the colors of the Earth?

My brain feels like its going to explode.

My heart has already exploded.

I am numb. My friends are numb. My comrades are Numb.

My Spirits is not. My Gods are not.

I get on my knees. I pray. And I pray.

I let the obsession run its wash over me. I let the waves crash, I let the rip pull at me.

Maybe for a moment I am no longer here. Ruth Wilson Gilmore says “we are each timespace.”

We are. Compounded colonialisms have robbed many, if not all of us, of nonlinear spacetime.

I swallow the salt water, I eat my Prayers, and I curl in stomach pain on my bed where the Sun shines in, reminding me of the warmth on my back after I get out of the waves. Privilege is not the absence of violence, but the access of tools to mitigate violences.

Everyone has a relationship to violence. What would violence whisper? What does violence whisper between
your legs?

I wonder what spiritual violences we all swallow.

I wonder what hymns we do not sing,

I wonder what words are unspoken,

We witness what lives are unalived,

What could we be, what could become, if we refused to swallow more?

Salt is on your tongue, you taste it on mine, we sit in a room, Almost in ritual,

The Ocean is kilometers away, distant, unreal. But within each of us is more than 70% water.

The water beckons.

I do not swallow any more spiritual violences.

I refuse. I swallow only salt water now.

Together we swallow.

19

Rubber - Ratting

Luca Schröder

I started becoming friends with the little rat-boy that's been living inside of my kitchen drawer. Everyday around 5:17 pm we sit at the small kitchen table staring at each other in hopes of developing a better understanding of one another...

due to a lack of a shared language, all we are left with is carefully monitoring our opposites body and eyeball movement. Brown, greyish fur that looks like its been glazed by all kinds of filth and grime tapering towards a pink stub, with whiskers poking out accompanied by a set of 2 black marbles just above.

I'm quite jealous of the nose actually, looks neat...

Scientific terms and descriptions don't matter, just by observing something, you learn more than any book would allow you to – Doesn't matter what the bird is called, being able to watch it and remember its sound is more precious than its name or average lifespan.

i noticed, that when waking up every morning, that with each day passing, i was missing more and more teeth. It appeared to me, that it must have been the little grey fellas thievery leaving me toothless. Since it was not possible to communicate or verbalize my frustration i had to resolve the problem by myself. In an attempt to introduce more limitations, that could possibly give me the right perspective for problem solving,

i superglued myself to the floor.

wooden silhouette
Traces of polymer marking my own failure.

Coming home today i decorated the cupboard next to my couch with three small plastic animals. One of them wearing a flower around its neck.

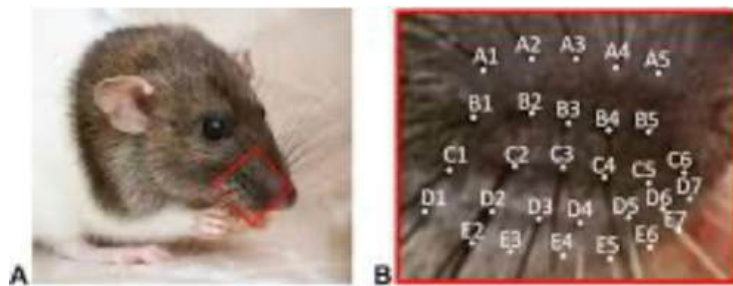
I wish lavender smelled like you

A way to combat my empty gums, caused by the little rat plucking my teeth, like pomegranate seeds, would be to slowly replace them one by one with little pebbles i found and collected on my walks to the small landfill nearby. I took special care in finding stones in matching size and shape to the replaced teeth – Since pebbles are in no interest for rats, i was soon left with a full set of oddly shaped dentals in varying hues of grey with colorful undertones glaring through.

I started drinking out of the puddle next to the sink.

In an exchange for fluent speech and being able to chew properly i was now gifted the technique of Rubber-Ratting which can be explained in basically having a rat on your desk that you can ask for advice regarding a particular problem and in return will bite through cable of its choice.

With no one else to talk to besides the rat, i lost my ability to speak and got quite good at imitating the squeaks it made trying to communicate with me.



scaffolding

My life is narrated by animatronics, speaking languages i dont understand.

Luca Schröder
10/2025

L-DOG.NET

20

A is for...

Lucy Swan

A IS FOR...

A DREAM IS REMEMBERED AS EXPERIENCE
A FUCK CHANGES NOTHING A LIE HAS TO BE REPEATED
A LIE ISN'T TOLD JUST ONCE A MEMORY ISN'T ALWAYS TRUE REGARDLESS
OF HOW VIVID A SENSE OF SELF IS A SENSE OF FREEDOM
A TRUE FRIEND DOESN'T ALWAYS SAY WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR A WOMAN
BECOMES A WOMAN IS NOT BORN
A WOMAN IS KILLED EVERY THREE DAYS IN THE UK
A MAN KILLS A WOMAN EVERY 10 MINUTES GLOBALLY
A SOLUTION IS NOT ALWAYS THE RIGHT SOLUTION
ABUSE COMES IN MANY FORMS
ABUSE IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY
ABUSERS OFTEN ACT THE VICTIM
ACCOUNTABILITY CAN'T BE AVOIDED
ACCOUNTABILITY CAN BE AVOIDED BY SOME INDEFINITELY
ACT ON YOUR IDEAS ACT ON YOUR IMPULSES ACT ON YOUR GUT
FEELINGS ACTIVE INTEREST IS FREEDOM ADDICTION
DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THE END ADVICE IS EASILY GIVEN
ADVICE IS EASILY IGNORED ADVICE IS OFTEN UNWANTED
ADVICE LET'S US KNOW WE'RE NOT ALONE
AESTHETICS CAN'T BE UNDERESTIMATED AGING IS REALLY
HARD
AGING AS A WOMAN IS REALLY HARD AGING IS RADICAL
AGONIES AND ECSTASIES AREN'T ALWAYS OPPOSITE
AI IS JUST AS PREJUDICE AS ITS PROGRAMMERS ALGORITHMS
SHOULDN'T BE TRUSTED ALGORITHMS CURATE OUR TASTES
ALGORITHMS INTRODUCE YOU TO FRIENDS LOVERS CONQUESTS FUCKS
ALGORITHMS CREATE YOUR INTERESTS
ALGORITHMS CONTROL WHAT YOU SEE ALGORITHMS ARE CONTROLLED
ALGORITHMS AREN'T ABOUT YOU THEY'RE ABOUT THE MACHINE
ALL IS UNEQUAL IN WAR ALL IS EQUALLED OUT IN LOVE
ALL ROADS ARE ATTACHED
ALL OF US BLEED ARE BORN AND WILL DIE ALLOW FOR MISTAKES
ALONE AS IN ALL ONE
ALONE DOESN'T MEAN LONELY ALWAYS AND FOREVER
ALWAYS IS FOREVER AN ETERNITY AN ABOMINATION ISN'T SO
UNUSUAL ANYMORE AN APOLOGY IS AN ACTION RATHER THAN A WORD
AN ARCHIVE IS FALLIBLE
AN ECHO CHAMBER IS A DANGEROUS PLACE
ANGER CAN BE PRODUCTIVE ANGER IS A GREAT START
ANIMALS REPRESENT MORE THAN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM
ANNOYING PEOPLE REMIND US OF OURSELVES
ANTAGONISE UNQUESTIONED AUTHORITY

ANTI-ZIONISM IS NOT ANTI-SEMITISM

ANXIETY IS HARD TO SEE THROUGH

ANXIETY IS

UNIVERSAL

ANXIETY CAN'T BE TRUSTED

ANXIETY DISTORTS THE TRUTH

ANXIETY IS A FEELING OF DANGER WHEN YOU'RE SAFE

ANYTHING

MADE BY HUMANS CAN BE REMADE

APPRECIATION MUST BE

EXPRESSED

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR IS ENTIRELY SUBJECTIVE

APPROPRIATION IS THE TAKING OF SOMETHING AND MAKING IT ONE'S OWN

APPROPRIATION HAS CONFLICTING MEANINGS

ARISTOTLE WAS A DICK

ARTIFICE IS JUST AS GENUINE AS

AUTHENTICITY

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAN NEVER REPLACE REAL INTELLIGENCE

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS ACCELERATING THE DESTRUCTION OF EARTH

ART CREATES BONDS

ART HELPS US COMMUNICATE

ART MAKES A MARK

ART SCHOOL DOESN'T MAKE YOU AN ARTIST

ART SHOULD INTERROGATE THE

ANTI-HUMANESS SOCIETY PERPETUATES

ART SHOULD HAVE A

CONCEPT

ART THAT DOESN'T IS DECORATION

ASCENSION IS SURVIVAL

ASK

QUESTIONS

ASK WHAT THEY'RE IN TO

ASSUMING IS AN ARROGANCE ASSUMPTIONS ARE GENERALISATIONS

ASSUMPTIONS ARE OFTEN NEGATIVE

AT SOME POINT ACTION HAS TO REPLACE OVERTHINKING

AT SOME

POINT YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW THROUGH

ATTACHMENT STYLES CAN BE

CHANGED

ATTRACTIVENESS IS SUBJECTIVE

ATTRACTIVENESS COMES FROM INSIDE RATHER THAN OUTSIDE

AUTHENTICITY CAN BE FAKED

AUTHENTICITY HAS BEEN

COMMERCIALISED

AUTHORITARIANISM IS ON THE RISE

AUTHORITARIAN CONSUMERISM HAS BEEN NORMALISED

ATROCITIES HAVE

ALWAYS BEEN COMMITTED IN THE DARK

AVOID PEOPLE WHO LIKE YOU FOR YOUR ENERGY

BY LUCY SWAN

Muted Syllables

To the mouthless words weighing on the chest
to the vowels twirling in the womb

Have you ever tried to leave the tongue inert, flaccid to thoughts?

stubborn muscle, rigid in her ruling role
doesn't let go
articulating whispers
what the body asks in howls

Muted syllables
pressuring our breastbone is what the mouth's muscular flesh learned to cease,
conceal, reveal only through a cycle of a quiet bleed

Salivating
rational surds witnessing the body's silenced words

Shall *other* be word
the contraction of the hips, the chest catching breath, the shrinking stomach, anger
tearing shoulders and temples, the vulva and her obstinate desire

Mother tongue
muted maw
let the body salivate its words
drain its sore

Maddalena Iodice

22

LUNAS

Mireia Maluquer Bayarri

LUNAS

I count the passing of time by the moons I see, ever since I met you. For some reason, the sky seems to have brightened with your presence. You have cleared away the clouds and allowed me to see the beauty of the night, the wonder of contemplation, the joy of presence. Like an unexpected surprise, the moon has persistently lit my path over the last two months—during which I have been thinking of you.

Mireia Maluquer Bayarri

23

The Sting

Morgane B. & Tris Hedges

The Sting

Morgane Billuart and Tris Hedges

15th century Prague. The construction of the Charles Bridge has finally been completed. Yesterday, after months of setbacks due to collapsing arches, the architect, Peter Paler, announced its official opening. The anticipation swelters as a buzzing mass of people from every corner of Bohemian society begins to congregate at the foot of the bridge.

Under the glaring twelve o'clock sun, two bees hover above the foot of the bridge, watching wasps dart in sharp circles close to the Vltava river.

"Stop moving around so much," an old lady mutters below. "You'll get her annoyed if you continue. They don't usually attack if you leave them alone."

"Leaving them alone... They're seeking it... attention whores." the bee whispers, almost to itself, as the wasps spiral higher over the hive of people below.

"Fuck!" whelps a voice from amid the crowd, "I think it stung me, the fucker."

The old lady bounces back, "What did I say ?! *I told you*, for god's sake, to stay calm."

"Isn't it unfair?" the bee turns to her friend.

"Sorry, what?", her friend looks up to meet her gaze.

"How *unfair* is it that they can sting anyone, just like that, and then they don't even die?"

"Well, yeah, she might not be dead, but it's gonna take her some time to recover from *that*," the friend replies, as her eyes trace the flightpath of the wasp, drifting upward in a crooked line with its wings trembling at each uneven beat. "Imagine... actually using your stinger... it can't be for the faint of heart."

The first bee keeps staring at her friend, now mouth awry and with a daggered gaze. "Is there nothing you think would be worth using your sting for?"

"Me? I don't know. I've not really thought about it. I guess I'd do it if I had no other choice. But knowing the... deadly... consequences, I'd like to think my instinct would stop me from using it. I love this life. I just..."

A young woman runs towards the entrance of the bridge, crying and screaming inaudibly.

"I guess I could ask her," the friend continues, somewhat ironically, "she seems like she knows what's worth dying for."

As the woman approaches, her cries become clearer, "Peter! No, please, Peter!"

"But that's what I mean!" the bee forcefully replies, "Why, when the time comes, is it a matter of life or death for us, whereas *they* can just go around sticking it in whoever they like?"

The question hangs in the air for a moment before the bee lets out a deep sigh and continues "Look, I don't know what this woman is going through" the bee nods to the woman as she pushes through the crowd awaiting the inaugural crossing of the bridge, "stung by love, desperation, or something just as foolish... but at least she's feeling the consequences of *something*, and she's not living this non-risk-adverse life like you are!"

"Right..." muses her friend, still following the woman as she quickly becomes the first person to cross the Vltava by foot, "But how could I ever be like *them*? I'm a dyer at heart with a sting attached to my veins... If I sting... I want to choose carefully. To do it out of love, and not out of fear or greed. We're just built differently. I mean... look at *them*!" They both turn their attention to the wasps who are now circling a strawberry seller, "barely caring for the flowers, instead obsessing over whatever sweet treat they can find, still remaining as skinny as ever, and just putting their you-know-what in whoever gets in their way. We have *responsibilities*. If the time comes, I'll use my sting, but it better be *worth it*. We haven't waited that long for nothing, right?"

"Urgh," the bee responds, rolling her five eyes, "I'm just sick of this trad-bee bullshit. Why are we the ones who toil away, day after day, only using our mouths to bring life to our world? I just want to *sting*. Like, stick it inside someone and just see how it feels. Fuck the consequences... or, no, not even. I want to *feel* the consequences. Don't you ever look at our hive and just feel so...inconsequential?"

In that moment, Peter Paler arrives, smugly clutching a cockerel to his chest. But as soon as the crowd begins gesturing to him across the bridge, a feverish panic comes over him. The architect falls to his knees and lets out a wounded howl. Just as the bees are trying to make sense of the unfolding chaos, Peter leaps up and throws himself off the bridge. A few wasps plunge after him.

"Fuck me... What is wrong with people today?" the bee exclaims.

27

What does fate end with, Atropos
Öykü Özgencil

Bring me the light.
But don't let my fragment reflect in their eyes.

Protect me from their gazes.
Protect me,
my body is a square,
let me accept the clowns and acrobats,
let the messengers pass me by,
let doves make love in the shades of my trees.
When everything believes in the new,
let me lay bricks on the windows of my inner castles.

My patterns,
protect me from their gazes.
Protect me, so that my tongue is in my fingers,
not to be denied.

And minds seeking the bird's journey in time;
they shall not touch my wings.
And let my feather turn into a memoir.
I need every bit of me.

As I tiptoe on the cold tiles,
ground is to My Roots;
Narrow.

But if my universe was a clam,
If my story started there,
my hair would not break
as I retained my tribe.
It would be a wool rug on which I danced.

Whose anger lit this deep furnace in me?
And HOME was built around me.
Fire was not enough,
I am looking for a smoke to fill my lungs.
A smoke as a backdrop to my performance, for bodies to be cremated after death,
I am building my chimney of holy stones. I am dying of holy stones.

And in the waters I glide without forcing myself, appears my main land.
I am transcending.

What does fate end with, Atropos?
Our surfaces intersected.
You hold me with your branches.
Your face is my palm print, my palm is your spirit.
How could I say that to you?

But I'm coming from the story,
with a poison as an antidote.
When the peaks of my dream and of my reality come together,
My House will have a roof

Öykü Özgencil

25

*nothing that happens on a
highway can kill me, i'm a bird*

Rey Carlson

*nothing that happens on a highway can kill me, i'm a bird.
but she doesn't know this, or the songs i tell her
going 1,000 miles per hour, each one made of guilty relief
i beg to defend, i beg to defuse
5 minutes where we travel around the surface of the sun*



*if i could say anything at all
i'd unlock the sun with every shining key
never full-chested or meeting failure
where slamming doors lift wings higher still
one blink and i don't know how to forget the car any faster
desperate flight leaving a broken thing behind*



*if i could, i'd say a prayer and a curse
leave nothing between feathered, sorry veins*



for her to scavenge or surmise



everything with sharp edges tucked safely in my clouds



*virginia's 1,000 miles away, thank god
i'm a bird and i don't need to drive
hand-me-down wheels only took me so far
behind the car door, always closed*



*in between earthquakes, siblings, and statelines
perfect glass hits the ground
so tears shatter twice after
to the sound of clasped hands, so sweetly sullen
their words twisted all along*



*right hand side, closer to where i knew him
i say his name as if angels give a damn about wheels, ribcages, rough cuts*



not a first choice, not a father, i was never a bird



finding buried gems isn't enough in the summertime



why don't you call? the ground misses you



20

*Margin notes on the
shorthand writing exercise*

Ros V. Del Olmo

Margin notes on the shorthand writing exercise,

write: "The blue door downstairs is open" for maintaining the entrance proper.

there's a brain in my flesh", a queer public memory in its afterlife, we are sharing the same air

This Not metaphorical, Not sarcastic

The essay is a gathering place for the memories, oral annotations, ephemera.

A box in someone's apartment that is very present while evaporating.

I look at myself, including as much as possible of what I could still remember.

- Laurene Bakst.

I read it all as if it were in cursive: "i'm able to write a chapter in which i'm every character".

What it started, opened those ditches, nothing a cumbia can't heal.

All the songs are of the fantastic genre. And in this fantasy I was born,
desire cleared all the airways

with its beautiful way of transiting through pleasure. Pay attention.

Between the internal, the external and the imagined, I try to rummage into whatever was the connective tissue that grows there, since last year it declared itself in fallow.

They come with chocolates and just-the-right word; with wisdom and a virginal soup, which contains among other things, beets, spring onions and dill-mustard in season now in a region that is known for its presence. Tuesday is their birthday and if you want to send them an audio poem, they'll only come back on Friday from the dump.

Five days of travelling have passed. We stopped in a clearing in a birch and pine forest that seemed strangely spoiled, one step away from being a crush of splinters and leaves and other biting things I don't know the name of, because the Pyrenees are not to be crossed but bordered. *the rendering of shadows changed. Have you noticed it? Porque la sombra se esconde detrás de la madrugada .*

At the crossroads we were stopped by a woman carrying a cat called Corazón with that semi transparent language like the mother of vinegar cornered in the bottom of the bottle. And me:

But, mom, what's *genista*? She wouldn't pick up the phone and I fell into despair.

I wiped the snot with my boxers and a hard stagnant bit came out of my throat in reply, like a ring that goes down the drain, a bulbous organ growing out somewhere deep in the body.

the intifada of language.

I have no use for the impersonal, I want you to do it.

And so I wrote, TDUW. They Desired Unwillingly Wanting. And no one believes that cat brought a cow's hoof the other day. They wished after a trumpet call. Other objects to bring luck:

A brass wind character makes her appearance in what lasts a rag washing machine, what it takes to grow a chickpea. I also ask to be him, just to talk to you from the balcony of the courtyard where they grow the bunches of gray hairs flowers that appear again and again in the oil portraits in the corridor to symbolize I don't know what.

And although they might resemble it, they are not bouquets of gray hair but of Scotch broom, the pendula typical of onomastic symbols; they are also used for the fixing of dunes.

They told me in I.'s bed while caressing their hair that if her family were to hear about the music they listen to, they would disinherit them for sure, on the drum, the pebbles would sing at every turn (the thoughts are ours)

Definitely defend her. TDUW.

I want to be a string instrument too.

And I asked the woman to give me another loaf of bread, as well as very fresh, a crunchier one where we would settle in the cloudburst, soaking wet, but he, the bread, was still warm hidden between the layers of dry clothes, which here is, to make us all understand, the resonance box and also the atmosphere. Is it not so that the holes of laziness are made by digging?

and that it is there that he finds the double of his craft?

From a farmer to another farmer who tells him: *oh gardener, if you'll put your fingers into my body as you do in the earth you step on... I return you your gold with this tender hope* (in 3 languages).

With the revenues we will sew an agenda that will last 10 years, also with golden thread before the finding of a mortar without the mallet also of gold color because it will never run out, we will create and believe without the constant sensation of scarcity. In short: expect good prospects or 2 months of dungeon on bread and water, as the tale goes. She will come dressed in a fishing net, a Donkeyskin, through the abandoned road of the meadow, which at this point is just a bunch of bad brambles, just as Las Tonadas collection describe it. *Porque la sombra se esconde detrás de la madrugada*

and the rest of the song, you don't know it. They burned the house to the ground because the revenge resulting from a robbery is never forsaken.

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Red Desertt

Sissas Reis



In Shiraz upon arrival, an unsettling set of calls and flickering phone messages from scared family members interrupts the introductory round. Hugs, Persian sweets, tea, and the famous homemade Shiraz wine were provided as the inauguration for an unexpected midnight pasta dinner. Funny how I grew up at the feet of Douro River, learning about the world of wine as a path to adulthood, only to now recognize the invisible bridge between the Neolithic residue found, the ecstasy of the Hafez era and the cheap Portuguese red that was once used to numb my emotional dread. Men from a distant family speak loudly. The wall between the room and kitchen is thin. There is no privacy. Presence is unavoidable, with no illusion of control, and perhaps that is the first lesson of tenderness: it does not wait for permission. I lie in the bed of a woman who no longer breathes and think how I hope no other Iranian dies as the sky starts to threaten air dominance. We have crossed the desert roads filled with mountains from a different galaxy, colors that can only invade the imagination of those unstained by horror, in tonalities of red that were once unknown to me. From Tehran we departed, 4 of us, in the direction of the desert and the new full moon. I looked beyond through the back car mirror; I said hello to her pink presence as she shyly presented herself between the highest curves. From our first stop in Qom it quickly became a longer journey; we were starting to get to know each other, to form an understanding between familiar smiles while the mountains kept appearing.

I went carrying the West inside me; its headlines, its maps of danger. And then: none of it held. What I found was unbearable tenderness. **A collective love so dense it felt illegal.**



Thick, sweet, absurdly ordinary. Someone you don't know presses their hand to their heart just for seeing you. In Berlin they wait for your failure to show off those fingers carved in LA Manso rings or diamonds from distant blood. It pulsed in shared meals and in the way strangers offered shelter with nothing to gain. A love that has survived centuries of borders and sanctions, of propaganda and noise from the West that insists on flattening this place into fear. You cannot cut it, you cannot bomb it, you cannot silence it.

It rises again, through poetry, through architecture, through the gaze of a child offering you pomegranate seeds as if they were rubies. Someone you don't know insists you eat and eat again. Then, I thought of home. Portugal, of Europe, where privilege lets us debate destruction as theory. To the privileged, a bomb is a headline, an abstraction, a statistic that flickers on a screen before scrolling to the next distraction. But to others, it is the crack in the ceiling, the reason a mother sleeps with one ear open, the echo in the soil that still carries the vibration of loss. The West says otherwise. Feeding veiled stories and shadows and why escaping to the so called West I touched the opposite: a light that does not blind, a light that opens. It is the silence after the blast when even the birds forget to sing.

Love is Resistance I keep thinking.

A passing notification. A meme between two coffees.

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economy washing cycle

To Doan

economy washing cycle

to doan



fire up the machine and
let it rumble
keep it running if
you want to get rid of your dirt

open the portal

enter the load

throw in what remained

an eye

a foot

a hand

a neck

not to forget the detergent
choose it with care
prove that it matches the charge

always think of the bleach then
press the right buttons so
it follows your will now

fire up the machine and
watch it rumble
keep it running if
you want to get rid of your dirt

right within reach a long-
dreamed-of dream of total
control
the promise of happiness
a promising clean

death



through the porthole

you see

floating

an eye

a foot

a hand

a neck

you

see smeared traces disappear
soon no more marks no bloody
stains nothing to fear

enjoy the machine and
let it rumble
keep it running if
you want to get rid of your dirt

honor it since many forget it was
once made by people made to
wash out what you think is dirt

the machine shall unmix what
doesn't belong
isolate what you don't like
remove what disturbs and if

you're not satisfied
you cancel the program
you delete the fault

you



E - R - R - O - R

start again elsewhere

throw in

an eye

a foot

a hand

a neck

what else remains

feed the machine
so it can rumble
keep it running if
you want to get rid of your dirt

throw in

an eye

a foot

a hand

a neck

what else remains

to profit from



the machine is open
24 hours clean
and safe
like

the madness hotel

we serve

always keep coins
to sacrifice a heart
don't deal with your doubts
what's left of a soul

the machine

your past
your feelings
just wash them away

piles up

WASH YOUR LAUNDRY CLEAN

until

you save yourself a lot of costs
if you operate the machine
does the business for you

WE

WASH YOUR LAUNDRY WHITE

and you look forward to the
appearance
a well-groomed outcome
a guilt-debt-free land of
happiness

A L L

R

L

WASH YOUR LAUNDRY CLEAN

repeats the machine
– but it remains dirty
there will always be dirt

M

the machine
at your fingertips lives from dirt
permeates all and rules us
we fuel an idea

U

B

E

20

Grief Wears a Jacket

Zain Saleh

Poem:

W: What color do you want to wear?

B: شو لون العزا بالعادة؟

W: I think it's usually black?

B: إي أسود بالعادة. بس بتعرف إني بالإسلام..

W: The color of grief in Islam is white, I know.

B: طيب ليش لكن عم تسألني؟

W: Because we're not wearing grief today.

B: مو على كيفنا. العزا الو وقت، العزا الو زمان ومكان..

W: Yeah, a time and a place that we can plan. You need a new calendar.

B: بس العزا مثل الضيف يللي بيحي على غفلة.

W: No. Grief and guests should not show up uninvited.

B: طيب شو لون برلين؟

W: Now we're talking. Black.

B: إلبس أسود؟

W: Sure.

B: رح إلبس جاكيتي.

W: The one you got from Damascus?

B: إي، لحظة!

W: What's up?

B: أنا كنت حاطط العزا تبقي بجيبة هي الجاكيت. وين راح؟

W: I washed it last week.

B: وراح العزا؟

W: Yes. gone. I ordered you another one. Should be here in three weeks. This one is state of the art, it's shiny and new. 95% vegan leather. 5% recycled guilt. It is custom-made in a small funeral shop. It is very practical, convertible, portable, reversible, washing machine friendly, quick-drying, and guaranteed to last a lifetime, or at least until the next big weather disaster, or any disaster really.

B: بس العزا مثل المطر، بينزل فجأة.

W: No, there's forecast, there's a warning, it's not always a downpour.

B: شو لون المي؟

W: HUH, seriously? Clear, until it touches the ground.

B: طيب شو لون برلين بعد المطر؟

W: Same as before. Black.

B: لكن ليش لسا عم إسأل؟

W: Because some questions wear out slower than jackets.

B: طيب شو لونه هاد الشعور؟

W: The color of something you forgot you were carrying?

The color of your heart eaten out by the dark?

The color of your voice when you say never mind?

The color of a jacket left too long in the rain?

FULL ENGLISH Translation :

W: What color do you want to wear?
W: What color is grief usually?
W: I guess it's usually black?
W: Yes, usually black. But you know in Islam...
W: The color of grief in Islam is white, I know.
W: Then why are you asking me?
W: Because we're not wearing grief today.
W: No. Grief has its own time, place, and season...
W: Right, a time and place we can plan. You need a new calendar.
W: But grief is like a guest who arrives unannounced.
W: No. Grief, like guests, shouldn't show up uninvited.
W: Okay, what color is Berlin?
W: Now we're talking. Black.
W: Should I wear black?
W: Sure.
W: I'll wear my jacket.
W: The one you got from Damascus?
W: Yes, wait!
W: What's up?
W: I had my grief in the pocket of this jacket. Where did it go?
W: I washed it last week.
W: And the grief?
W: It's gone. But I ordered you another one. Should be here in three weeks. This one is state-of-the-art: shiny and new, 95% vegan leather, 5% recycled guilt. Custom-made in a small funeral shop. Practical, convertible, portable, reversible, washing-machine friendly, quick-drying, guaranteed to last a lifetime—or at least until the next big weather disaster, or any disaster really.
W: But grief is like rain; it falls suddenly.

W: No, there's a forecast, there's a warning. It's not always a downpour.
W: What color is water?
W: Clear, until it touches the ground.
W: Okay, what color is Berlin after the rain?
W: Same as before—black.
W: But why am I still asking?
W: Because some questions fade slower than jackets.
W: Okay, what color is this feeling?
W: The color of something you forgot you were carrying.
The color of a heart eaten out by the dark.
The color of your voice when you say “never mind.”
The color of a jacket left too long in the rain.