

# Superpresent



Summer 2026



**SUPERPRESENT**

# Superpresent

A Magazine of the Arts

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Cover

*Rectangular world map from Fatimid treatise, Book of Curiosities of the Sciences and Marvels for the Eyes, copy of manuscript originally written in the first half of the 11th century, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford University*



Endpaper

*Ines (Cartografa)*  
Gabriele Artusio

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## Donors for Volume 6

*Superpresent* would like to thank the following people who have generously contributed to the journal:

E.J. Clement

Duncan Forbes

Nancy Giles

Lee Harrison

Richard C. Rice

Jane Schmitt

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## Editors' Note

Well, that was quite a ride.

“Mapping” proved to be a very useful theme both in the number of contributions and the quality of contributions. We want to thank the editor who suggested this issue’s theme (but we’re not quite sure who it was). That volume of contributions means, unfortunately, that we couldn’t publish many very worthwhile submissions. We are happy with this problem and hope the best to those we didn’t publish.

We want to start with thanking our frequent contributor, Duncan Forbes, for bringing to our attention this issue’s cover image as well as its significance, both culturally and personally, in his smart and touching essay. The map is from the *Book of Curiosities of the Sciences and Marvels for the Eyes* at the Bodleian Libraries, originally published in the 11th century and acquired by Oxford University in 2002. It is indeed one of the marvels, and serves as a fine blanket enveloping this selection of texts and images. We also want to recognize all of the video/sound contributors who are breaking boundaries on mapping in very interesting ways, including in this very issue. The visual art throughout this issue maps, or used the technique of mapping, employing a wide variety of media including fiber, digital, painting, and sketch. The literature includes several short mapping narratives, including one of a bus passenger eavesdropping for ten stops, a fractured and incomplete narrative, and another of a writer’s remembrance of “cruising” which didn’t involve anything except the cruising. Other poetry and prose maps bodies, lives, the structures of our knowledge. Francesco Ciaponi’s “The Investigation Board as a Contemporary Art Form,” a brilliant analysis of current states of human investigation.

From mapping out this issue, we are transitioning to something different: “Not Knowing.” We don’t know where you’ll go. Think about Donald Barthelme’s essay on the creative process “Not Knowing,” Donald Rumsfeld’s useful and famous analysis of the subject, and Donald Duck. The last doesn’t know how to wear pants. Not knowing where to start on the current Donald, we shall refrain from comment. Remember to look at the submission guidelines including word-length limits. One thing we do know: the deadline for submissions for the next issue is September 15th.

-The Editors



**Superpresent**



Spring 2026

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### Book of Curiosities and Marvels

Without being a complete ‘maphead’, I enjoy the stimulating images of maps and atlases of various kinds. One of my favourite bargain buys is *The Times Atlas of World History* (Fourth edition, 1994) which I acquired secondhand for £4. Here the often-turbulent history of the human race on the lands of this sustaining planet is depicted through time and text in colourful map after map. Open this encyclopaedic folio volume at almost any page and you can learn something new. It is often said that travel broadens the mind but the mind that travels via maps into earlier times and over other spaces can also be broadened and its understandings of the living present deepened. There is even a book by Ken Jennings called *Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird World of Geography Wonks*.

For some time, a medieval book of maps and marvels came to dominate my sister Lesley’s working life. She was then employed at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, as keeper of the oriental collections. In 2000, a most unusual Islamic manuscript had been bought by an antiquarian book dealer in a London sale and it had been offered to the Library. I remember her telling us about the unique manuscript and its significance, together with the need to raise funds from various sources for its purchase.

In due course, the manuscript was purchased by the Bodleian and studied by scholars who pronounced it genuine. In 2004, an exhibition called ‘Medieval Views of the Cosmos’ was mounted in the Library to display aspects of this newly acquired treasure. In the muted light of curatorial gloom, the display cases showed medieval images of the world and the universe, as perceived from the perspective of Cairo around the year 1200. Subsequently, a detailed and scholarly book was produced about the manuscript called *Lost Maps of the Caliphs: Drawing the World in Eleventh-Century Cairo* by Yossef Rapoport and Emilie Savage-Smith (Bodleian Library 2018).

In essence then, what is so very remarkable about this manuscript compilation described as a ‘wondrous artifact’? At the time, Lesley was quoted as saying that it was ‘a unique Islamic manuscript of the first importance, containing a hitherto unknown series of maps and astrological drawings largely unparalleled in any other known sources.’ It carries the lyrical Arabic title transliterated *Kitab Ghara’ib al-Funun wa Mulah al-Uyun* which has been translated as *The Book of Curiosities of the Sciences and Marvels for the Eyes*.

The Classical Arabic text of the book and its colourful charts and diagrams depict the then-known cosmos and features of the earth. It provides a unique perspective on how the world was perceived, charted and interpreted from a particular point of view in time and space, namely Fatimid Cairo. Produced in about 1200, it derives from an 11<sup>th</sup> Century Egyptian source (c. 1050) and this luxurious later manuscript has been described as ‘a reader’s digest guide to the universe’. Among many other things, the five planets visible to the naked eye are there, as is an oval map of Sicily naming its towns.

To modern western eyes, the diagrammatic charts with their abstract geometry and Arabic text benefit much from scholarly interpretation. Islands are drawn as ovals and rectangles. There is a diagrammatic version of Cyprus and its harbours in the form of an oblong. The maps focus on the Eastern Mediterranean and Caspian Seas and the five river maps on the Nile, Tigris, Euphrates, Oxus and Indus, of which the latter four charts are seemingly unique. There is also apparently the earliest recorded use on a map of the word *Inqiltirra* to designate Angle-Terre or England.

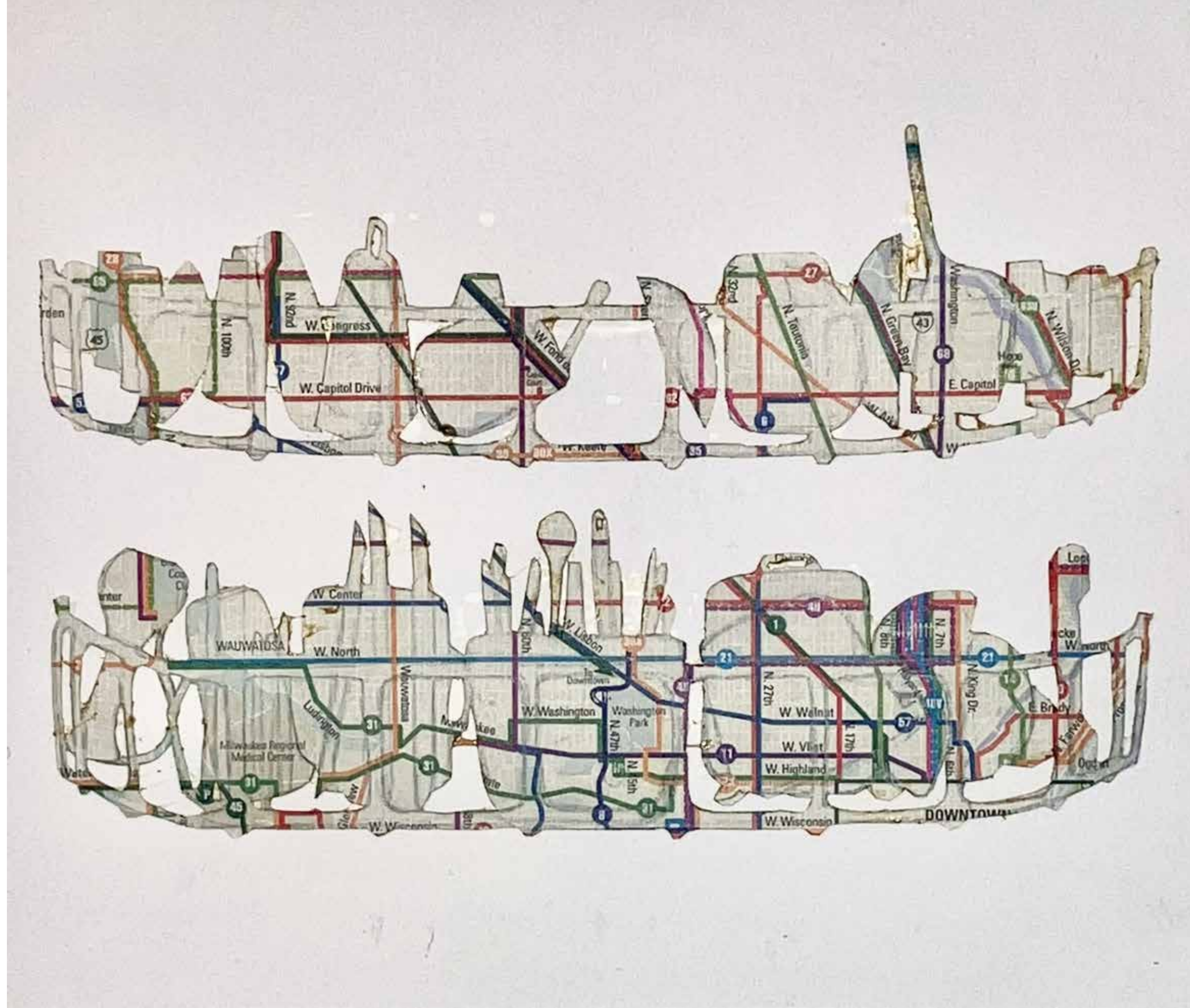
Obviously, for Islamic scholars and others, there is much more to the volume than I can outline here. It embodies much new material and is also important in the history of

cartography and culture. Since it has been made available for study, the manuscript has been much scrutinized and interpreted by experts. For those interested, further details can now be found online and in various publications.

By contrast, the most recent maps in my prized and printed copy of *The Times Atlas of World History* focus on the Cold War and the World in the 1990s, already now long overtaken by many events. More recently, Tim Marshall has published brilliantly incisive books such as *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that tell you everything you need to know about global politics* (2015) and *The Power of Geography: Ten Maps that reveal the future of our world* (2021). In both, he analyses the ways in which physical geography shapes international politics.

While maps move on and so do geopolitics in the ongoing history of human conflicts, my librarian sister Lesley maintained that international scholarship and co-operation helped to bring people of different cultures together. In his moving eulogy to my late sister Lesley, her son Robin referred to her enduring ‘belief in the power of scholarship to bring understanding between cultures.’ In a sense too, despite humanity’s worst excesses, the globe itself remains a living ‘Book of Curiosities of the Sciences and Marvels for the Eyes’ whose manifold and manifest wonders no human work can ever hope to capture.

-Duncan Forbes



Reconstructed Milwaukee Map  
Joe Arts

### Chameleon

Ecstatic quixotic hypnotic prophet  
Fickle traditional primordial twirp  
Restless feckless disheveled tramp  
Eclectic electric impractical dandy  
    Impudent daffy immodest doofus  
Fantasized sanitized habitual joker  
Deplorable orbital irrational bloke  
    Awesome raucous rugged optimist  
    Insidious individualist giddy kook  
    Babbler bruiser fabulist animator  
Impervious observant trusty geek  
Exotic emphatic reactive neurotic  
Grand glad transformational troll  
Sterilized idolized dream streamer  
Instigator agitator impious clown  
Modest industrialist unlikely saint  
Myopic bombastic purported fink  
Undeniable anesthetized sky diver  
Irresistible meticulous joyful gent

*-Thomas Piekarski*

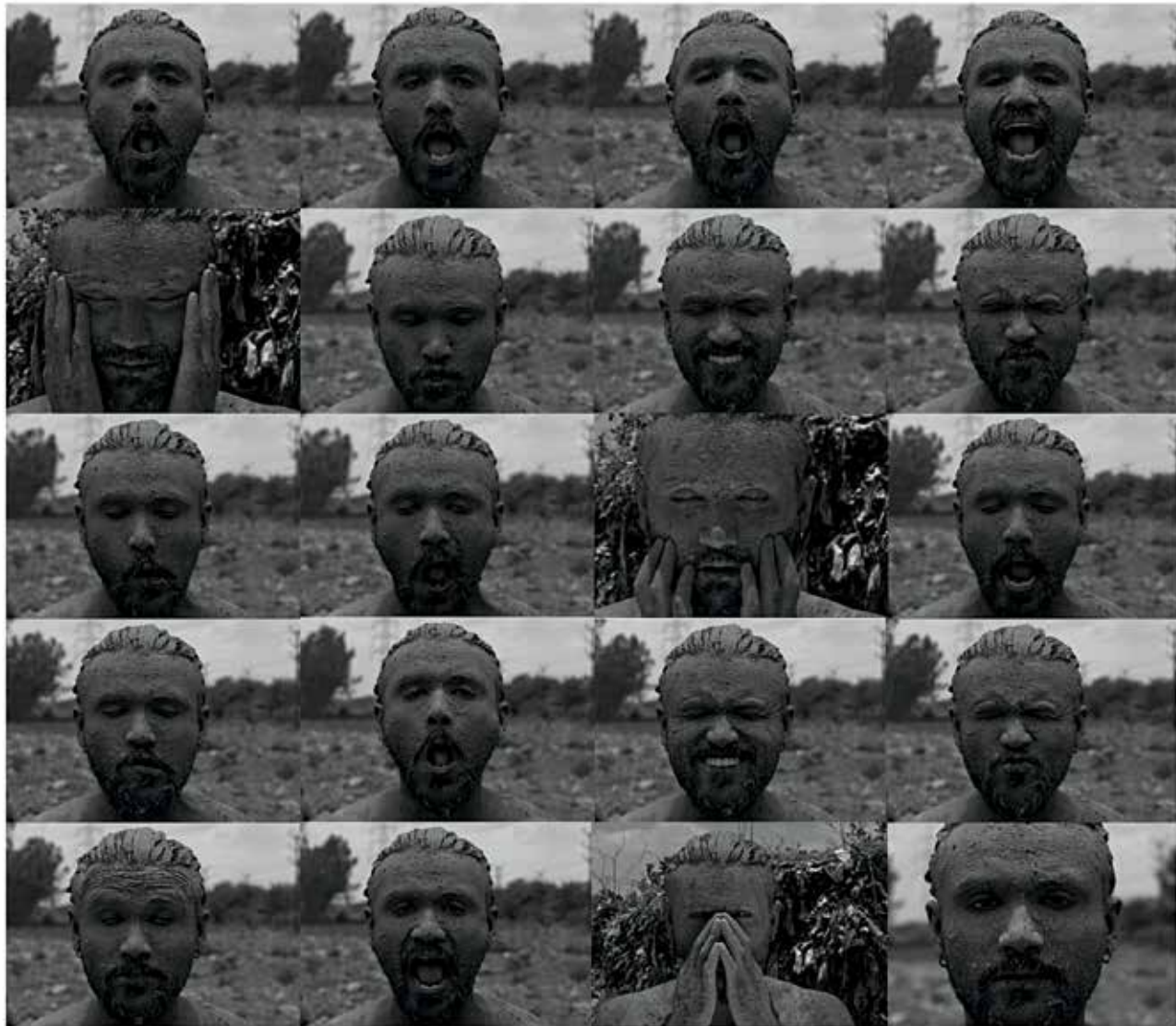


*Foxbook  
Corvengi*

### Learning of Your Brother's Death

The jack pine's bark spreads like a map in relief; the ditches, creeks  
inch toward swamp, where eagle nests crown treetops,  
their presence spied by green's absence. The Shiawassee flats  
shine like the shadows of his photos, darkroom-developed, the fields of sedge  
fading like dried varnish. You split milkweed pods, separate  
the white mattress of nestled softness, seedheads like phosphor-  
dipped matchstick tips. Defined by pertussis, persistent fever, nephews,  
niece will also fade in unfrozen ground, hoarfrost like silver, etched, hand-colored.

*-CJ Gironx*



*Tactile Face*  
Sarvagya Nair

## A Beautiful Saturday For Cruising Euclid Avenue

### A St. Louis Story of the 1970s

It was a beautiful Saturday for cruising Euclid Avenue, Central West End, St. Louis, 1976. One of those days when your heart sings, a touch off key at moments, perhaps, maybe a little strained on the highest notes, but still mostly carrying the tune.

The sun shone spring fresh. The heavens exhaled gentle breezes, swirling the pink petals, already falling from the flowering trees, into a pink froth. Only a hint of the summer heat ahead infused the atmosphere as the hours mounted toward five. And I strolled Euclid from West Pine to McPherson, looking in the windows of cool shops and crowded cafes, on the off chance, and the hope, that love might find me on such a splendid day - though it had managed to miss me on so many days, and nights, before.

I wore my snuggest navy blue Lacoste, even though some, no doubt, thought I gauchely pushed the season: like wearing straw hats before Easter, or white bucks after Labor Day. I had both hat and bucks, and wore them when I pleased, not so much as fashion iconoclasm, as fashion oblivion. But that day the straw and whites stayed home, convinced as I was that the snug navy showed off so fetchingly what assets I had to advertise. Love, real love could not be tricked by such trifles, but lust (sometimes in my circles then, love's first step) just might be. Worth a try, at least. Why not?

Others strolled the avenue too, singles and couples and little groups on their way from brunch to cocktails - and who knew what later on? A pansy *passaggiata* that they (and I) had been taking for years now, on gorgeous afternoons, and also on dreary ones.

I caught a glimpse of beefcake walking, across the street, beefcake of a buffness to test the resolve of the most devoted vegan. Though few vegans stalked Euclid then - not I, certainly, then, as now, an unrepentant beef eater myself - when the menu offered beef. When it didn't, I *had* been known to dine more lightly. I was not a picky eater. Well, I guess I was, in some respects: well hung, yes, but no aged beef for me, not then. Not too aged, anyway.

I glanced in the window of Coiffures by Shawn to be sure my own coiff had not been puffed out of place by the spring zephyrs. Reassured that every lock still lay in place, I glanced back toward Beefcake Boy. But he had vanished - popped into Herbies' for an apéritif, perhaps, or up the steps and into a chichi shop for chic West End shoppers, even beefy ones.

Or perhaps he'd been a beefcake apparition all along, not really there. Perhaps. But even the possibility that he'd been real, and a possibility for the day's delight, added a glissando to my heart song, and a spring to my step and hope. On such a lovely day as this, who knew what bliss might be in store.

I continued on my Euclid promenade, waving through the window to my antiques store friends, from whom I'd bought so many ambrosial treasures, and with whom I'd smoked so many joints, in their fag-chic fab apartment upstairs, through hedonistic (so we thought then) evenings, stretching into decadent (though how were we provincials to know then) nights.

Through the canopy of leafy trees, diamonds of sunlight sparkled on the sidewalk, and on me, as I strolled. At Pershing Place I looked at the Pulitzer townhouse, said to be full of priceless art, though the draped windows let no eye pry in.

I always loved walking past Hortense Place. The name!

I didn't recognize any friends among the late lunch lingerers at Duff's. Kerr-Oberbeck, across the street - quietly, queerly sophisticated - hummed, as always on a sunny weekend afternoon. I resisted the pull of Left Bank Books, at McPherson, and of the Potpourri catty-cornered

from it, the place to trick in the Central West End, if tricking tempted; said to be mafia run: who knew for sure? I'd go there later on, no doubt, but stopping there so early reeked of desperate dissipation.

Should I stop in Llywelyn's Welsh Pub for a "Plowman's" Lunch? Truth be told, I liked the sound of that, and the images it evoked, more than the meal itself.

I saw a "stud muffin" coming out of Balaban's, to make my own the witticism of a dear friend now dead. Oh, how I desired muffins, well baked enough to be legally wicked, but still young and almost innocent, with dew still on the rosebud, so to speak. If he'd looked my way, I might have changed my direction - but he didn't, and so I didn't either.

Instead, I turned the corner and walked on toward Bissinger's, where a dark chocolate-dipped glacé orange awaited me, in the walnut paneled *confiserie*, a remnant of *fin de siècle* Paris wandering far from home in both geography and time. A delicious delight worth the exorbitant price.

But it too must wait. First I would step into Joseph Witek Florist, not to buy flowers, but to enjoy a visit to the steaming greenhouse in back, as aristocratic as an English country glasshouse, attached to a decaying pile, remnant of the age of West End elegance: dripping windows, rusting ironwork, ranks of plant stands crowded with pots of flowering exotics.

A visit there let me slip into another era, in which I could be lord of the manor, so I imagined, and the handsome young man with the fetching smile (and the butt as delicious to look at as the Bissinger's chocolates would be to taste) might be the gardener's apprentice, warmly welcoming "Sir" into his steamy domain. Forester could have written a sequel based on my fantasy, but like *Maurice*, also not published till decades later.

How I'd have loved to taste this greenhouse flower's delicate delight melting on my tongue. And, perhaps, when the time was right, how he might have loved it too. Though so far, the time had not been right. Still, his smile shone like the sun when I went through the door - and I would not really believe he'd not known what he said, when he sold me a pot bound tropical, and advised that I take it home and "whack off as much as possible from the root," to bring it back to life. Even the innocent could not be that naïve.

This, as you may by now have guessed, is a story without a plot. A promenade, nor even a *passaggiata*, is *not* a plot, and it appeared that a promenade was all I'd be having that lovely day. There was to be none of Whitman's "swift flash of eyes" that day. Though no, a little flashing, but nothing more, not *that* beautiful afternoon. I'd have liked, perhaps (no, certainly!), a little more: a situation, a complication building to a climax, a delightful denouement, lingeringly stretching into evening (perhaps even with another climax - perhaps - why not?).

Still, if that plot was not to be, even just a promenade could be a pleasure. And the whole stroll back to my Hawthorne studio still lay ahead. Who knew what plot twists might present - on a beautiful Saturday for cruising in the Central West End, St. Louis, 1976?

-Randy Tibbits

**everything here—while i am here—is mine**

This is my lake, and my park, my swans, and my stork,  
She's settling in her nest next to the church.  
The pole, and the nest, and the church are mine.

These are my white walls, my halls, my wooden gates, my tower.  
My wooden horse. My wooden pillory, my whipping post.  
This is my watermill, and this is my well.

The busses and the tourists are not quite mine.  
But they make proper faces and they make proper sounds.

These are my vast fields,  
My cemetery, my forest.  
These are my scarlet elf cups,  
My yellow butterflies, my orange fox.  
These are my snails' shells,  
My pine cones, my twigs,  
Covered in moss, soft and alive, almost about to move.  
These are my grounds and my river.

This is my undrinkable latte from the convenience store,  
My period app notification,  
My blood on the dress.  
*Good thing I have a shower and a laundry room*  
I say to my dragon scratching my red tile roof.  
She nods. I pour coffee away.  
These are my garbage bins, and this my garbage.

This is my courtyard, white stones burning with light,  
These are my mirrors, my metal chandeliers,  
Embellished with dried petals and pearls.  
These are my alcoves.

This is my dress, theatrically spinning on the cold cycle,  
This is my speaker, playing Lo-Fi,  
This is my window, drafts slipping through the cracks and kissing my cheeks.  
This is my home;

Ergo 'tis my castle.

*-Katerina Dementeva*

*Abstract Works XVI*  
Peter Vukmirovic Stevens





*Mapping the Sky #3*  
Robert Teteruck

### Houston Noon

Houston noon:  
the air already breaking apart,  
humidity softening the edges of things.

A body tries to hold its shape.  
Fails.  
Reforms.

Somewhere in this heat-blur  
I remember the double helix—  
not as discovery  
but as a misread map,  
a looped instruction  
repeating / repeating.

Crick—Watson—  
names bolted to the grid  
I move through

A—T—C—G—  
junctions,  
or closures,  
the way the city keeps extending  
past its own plan.

I cross a parking lot  
and feel the code inside me  
copying itself  
with the same stubbornness  
as freeway construction.

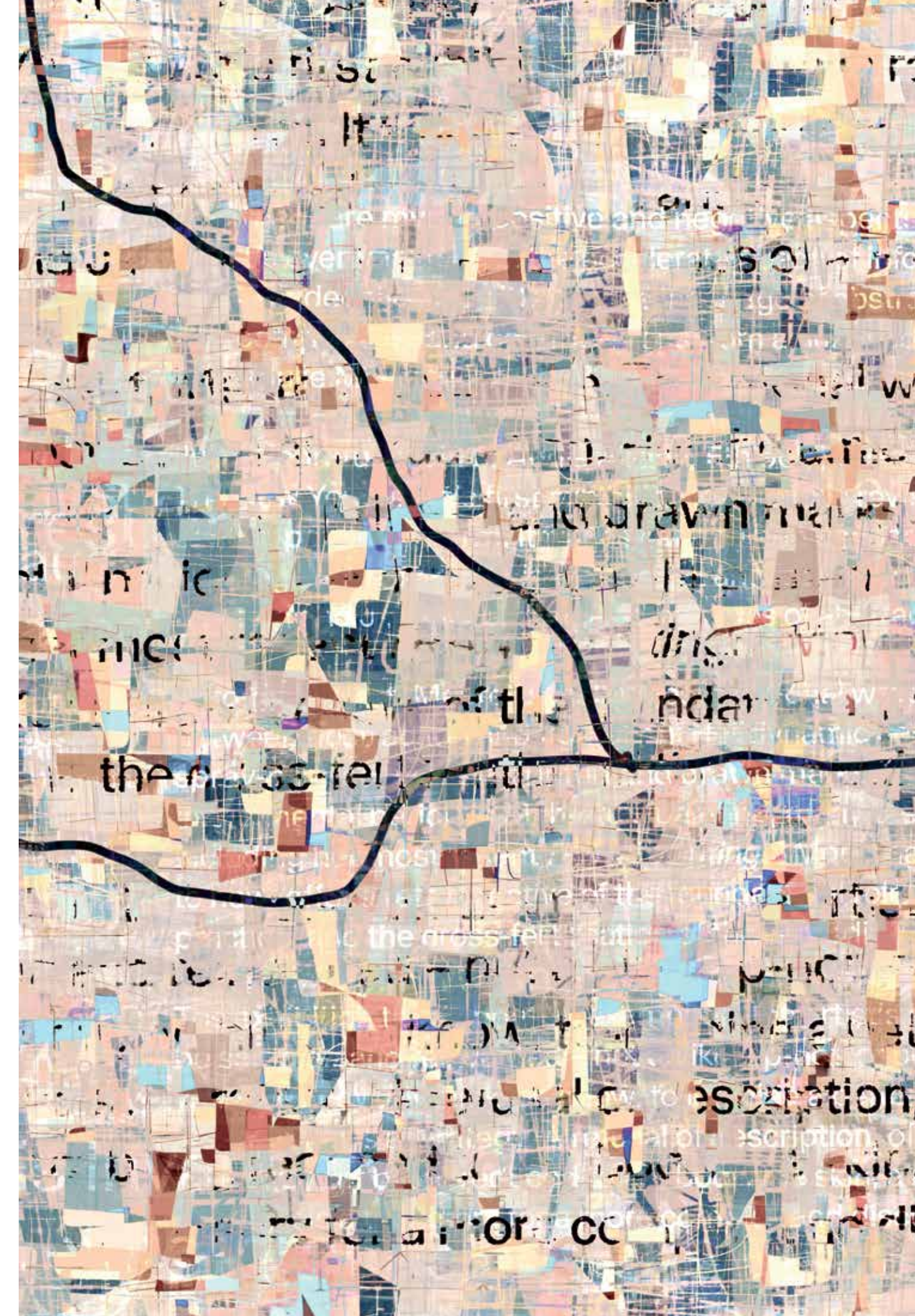
Nothing aligns.  
Everything aligns.

The map is not a map  
but a pulse,  
a flicker under the surface—

I walk through it anyway—  
this spiralled, sweating atlas—  
letting it redraw me  
cell by cell,

not finished,  
not fixed,  
still taking shape.

*-David I. Hughes*



### The Spoonmaker's Children

*"The spoonmaker's children often have the worst spoons." (Icelandic proverb)*

have no shortage of attitude  
and they'll flash a knife's edge  
at the slightest provocation.  
Their silence is not happy  
and a winter of empty dreams  
only makes matters worse.

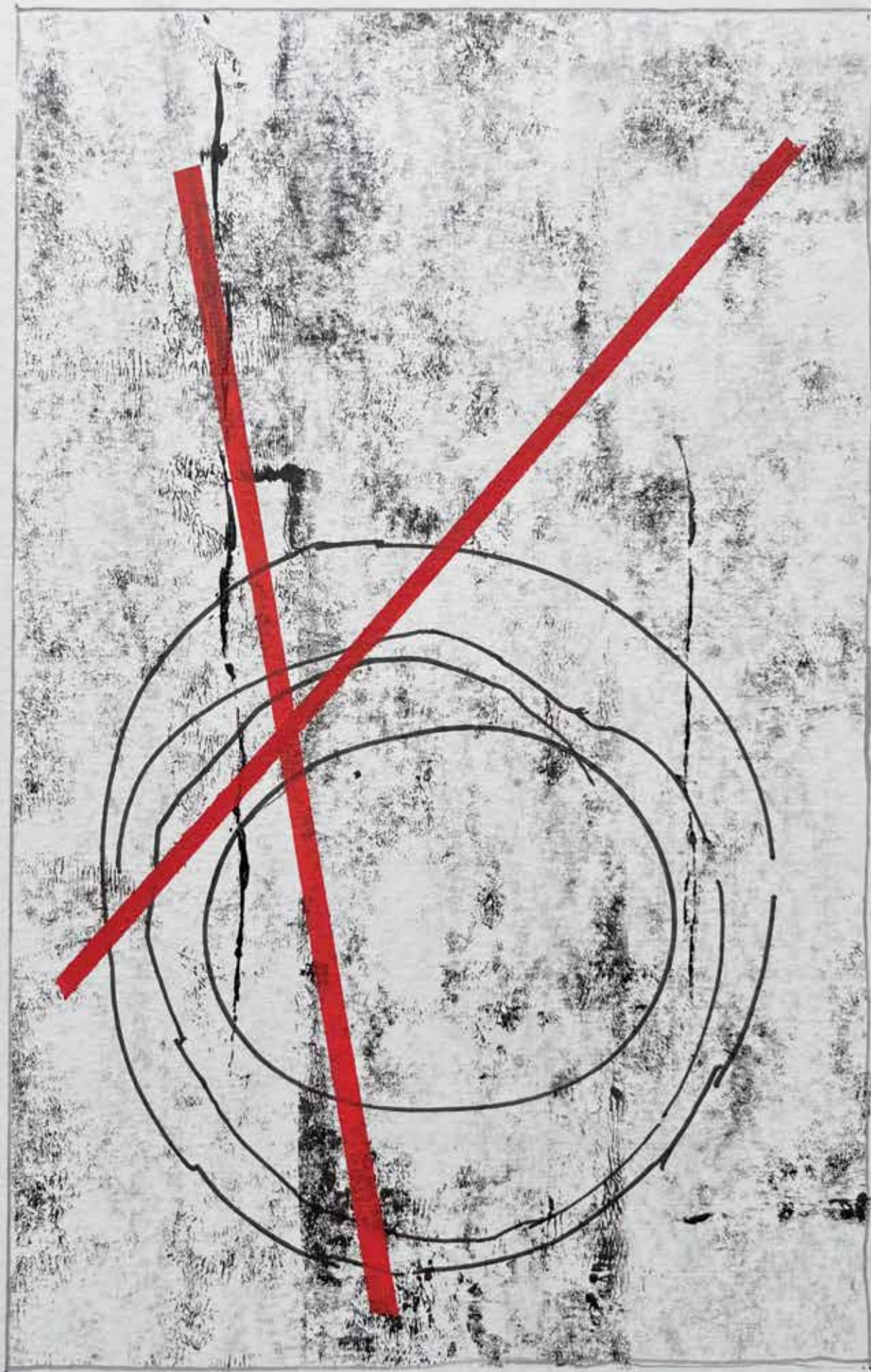
This is not a world of justice.  
You see it in their eyes,  
the unholy rage of years waiting,  
time meted out with harsh tattoos  
riddled upon their confused heads.  
Now it's the next-gen's subtle revenge.

They've grown in growling succession,  
knowing life's fork lies ahead,  
a twisted path of tine lines to death.  
In nightmares you hear their cries,  
bad utensils and worse choices -  
life has a way of setting the table.

In a sense, spoon-fed anger never fades.  
They lie in wait, battle cutlery at the ready  
to fight needless neglect and rejection.  
This picture of them at the table smiling  
deceives like the one seen upended within the spoon:  
genuine respect is all they ever desired.

*-Gary Glauber*

*Junction*  
Paul Ledington



***Into grids***

A city block grid *into* word refuge  
maps *into* my past and future locales.

Words laid out *into* traffic signs,

lead *into* alleys of unintended consequence,

feed *into* streets of illuminated kindness,  
down avenues *into* dreams diluted,

up boulevards *into* try the other way round,

intersections gridlock *into* meshed misgivings,

walkways distract *into* long lost choices.

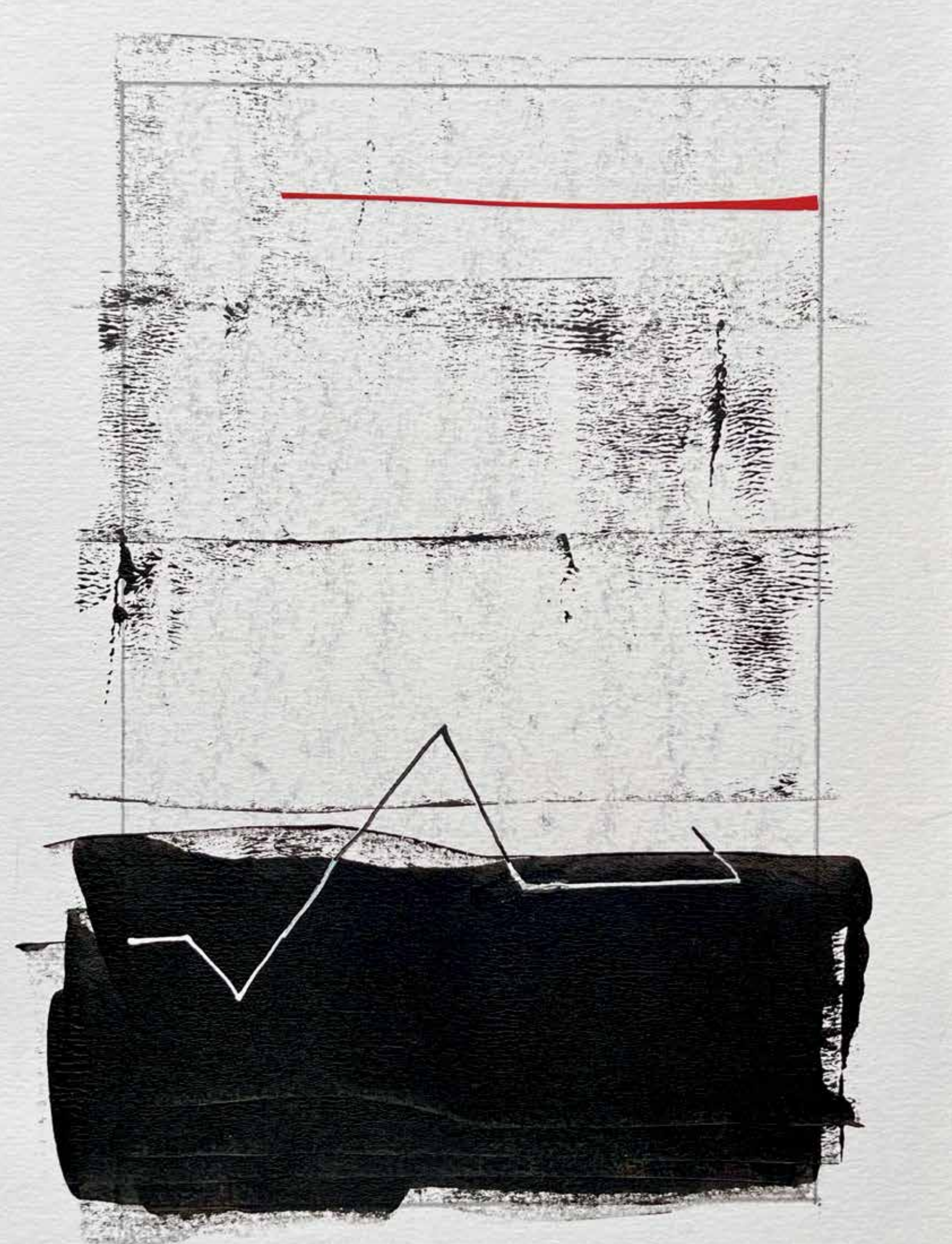
Indelible *into* the route  
I long to return from,

how am I not *into* being lost?

Undirected one motions *into* this labyrinth

as words merge *into* direction.

*-Jonathan Memmert*



### Find Your Paris

Middletown wasn't Paris, but it was the place my father decided I should learn French. He conscripted one boom box, eight cassettes, and a plush hedgehog named Monsieur Dupont. We learned enough to request assistance and thank the helpers for their hospitality. We learned that "c'est bon?" is as light as a croissant. Paris was Daddy's laughter.

Middletown was where the second grade took a personality test. I learned I was an "inside kid." I could not erase it from my record. I hiked fast so I could get home to write about gnomes. My mother cupped my chin to the sky to catch the hawk's *flap-flap-glide*. We knelt in muddy pews to count polliwogs and minnows. I was glad to know they were there. I was glad to wash off my body and come home. Paris was my mother reading me poetry in her pajamas.

Poughkeepsie wasn't Paris, but Isaac on the second floor said I looked French in my little hats. I had asked the stylist to cut my hair down to one inch after high school. I brought a photograph of my mother in 1970. "Make me look like her." My father said I looked as noble as Tolkien's elf women. My mother said I was prettier. Paris was permission to stay in the hallway as long as necessary.

Poughkeepsie was where Intensive Italian and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Russian Literature shoved me to seminary. I learned to hear my name in different dialects and one Breath. I learned that, when your mother names you *Angela*, people call you an angel if you remember their birthdays or make them oatmeal cookies. I learned that, when your father dies, you still hear his voice. Paris was the brazen persistence of mornings.

New Jersey wasn't Paris, but my legs grew strong enough to walk the length of town. I studied buttery mystics and demanded their patronage. I joined a Touring Choir with altos from Pakistan and tenors from Ghana. I sang until I no longer believed God's fingers are slippery. I grieved until I no longer worried anyone might be misplaced. Paris was the city where all will be surprised.

New Jersey was where my hair reached my shoulders, and a man let me preach until he changed his mind. I took a job at a cat sanctuary on Bastille Day. I braided myself into people who claimed they hated people. I put butterflies in my hair and wrote love letters to the folk singer who cried, and the author in Oregon, and my mother. I prayed with pagans, Pentecostals, and my mother. I sloshed poor, happy poetry from my excess. Paris was the promise that can't keep itself to itself.

Langhorne wasn't Paris, but the man who changed my monogram said I didn't know France. They were godless and decadent, gnawing the capital of better days like stolen crusts. He said I was cute when I sang *Les Miserables* songs while washing dishes. He said I was bamboozled by symbolism. I learned that parables are bread. I learned enough to take back my father's name. Paris was the city of light.

Langhorne was where I started writing again, time zones away from duty and the shelter and the awnings of editors. My mother read me new poetry and sent the relatives my prose. I bled wine and adverbs until neighbors said I looked healthy. I exceeded recommended daily dosages of exclamation points. I was rejected by *The Paris Review*. I acquired Eiffel Towers. Every essay is a newborn neighborhood. The city limits laugh themselves loose. Daily bread is stuffed with chocolate. There is a geography of grace.

-Angela Townsend

Abstract Works X  
Peter Vukmirovic Stevens

## Rust Study

Begin with iron.  
Leave it out long enough  
for the air to notice.

Oxygen arrives without ceremony,  
just a quiet interest in the surface.

Nothing happens  
that anyone would call failure.  
The bridge continues  
its excellent career.

Commuters cross.  
Engines idle.  
Weather passes its hands over the rails.

Inside the lattice  
electrons begin leaving.

A small migration.

Metal learning—  
another arrangement.

First the colour changes—  
a thin bloom  
like breath on a cold window.

Then the threads loosen.

Then the certainty  
of the bolt.

Engineers have a phrase:

loss of section.

It means the structure  
is still standing

but less so.

Years later  
someone taps the beam  
with a hammer

and the sound  
comes back wrong.

By then the weather  
has already rewritten the metal.

What remains is not collapse  
but conversion—

iron returning slowly  
to the patience  
of earth.

*-David I. Hughes*



### Ten Stops Left

My headphones were only in for show at that point, anyway. This made it much easier when they got on the bus and sat in the blue plastic seats to the right of me. I like wearing my headphones on public transit; the noise canceling effect makes it easier to focus on my Kindle and people are less likely to talk to me. Of course, if someone in New York wants to talk to you, they're going to, regardless of the front you're trying to put on.

Today, though, I couldn't focus on my book. I couldn't seem to focus on anything in particular on the semi-crowded B62 heading south on a Friday afternoon. It was a bad time to go to Dumbo. I just wanted to sit by the water, read my book and then walk home after. But I wasn't so sure now.

A screech pierced through my supposedly "soundless" barrier as a child a few rows back jumped up and down on the seat. His mom only looked up from her phone when he toppled into her arms as the bus lurched to a stop, letting loose another ear-splitting scream. Yeah, I should have stayed home.

I was rereading the same sentence for what was probably the tenth time, "Cassandra stood there, with her back to him, stubbornly awaiting his reply." My eyes started to blur. I had no way to focus. The bus was too hot, too loud, too full of people. And I could *bear* everything! How was I supposed to focus on Cassandra and the guy she didn't want to face?

I was only fifteen minutes into my journey when a couple took the row to my right. They sat down mid-conversation.

"There wasn't anything, like, *underlying* in my question. Like I didn't have anything else to say. It was literally just a question," the girl said.

"Well then why did you say it like that?"

Suddenly, Cassandra's name was incredibly interesting to look at. I could feel my face turning pink. My stomach felt like it was shrinking, the same way I felt when I was 15 and I babysat for my neighbor and I went into the parent's closet and started opening drawers. I knew I wasn't supposed to, but I wanted to so badly. There were so many things in there—interesting and uninteresting things—and I wanted to see and touch them all and the pit in my stomach was endless. And that *feeling*... that feeling felt awesome.

"Like what? How did I say it?" she sighed.

I shifted in my seat and closed my Kindle, trying very hard not to look interested.

Looking out the window, I shoved my book in my bag and got on my phone, slightly angling it away from the couple. Lucky for me, my headphones have an app and the noise cancellation feature, as shoddy as it was, could be turned off. All hail tech-bros!

"Well," he scoffed, "you said it like.."

I could see them just out of the corner of my eye. He was looking forward. She was staring right at him. Both of them looked angry.

"Like? Like?" she mocked, leaning into him.

"Well... like you had something else to say!" He whisper-yelled.

They fell into a silence while I wondered what this mysterious question was and

what the underlying question or comment could have possibly been. Their silent moment stretched to a few minutes and I worried I'd have to return to the mundanity of Cassandra and her equally boring lover.

The girl made a motion and my attention immediately snapped back to them. I chided myself for reacting so quickly. What if they'd noticed?

"I bought Carly and John a gift card to that place once," she said. I guessed she must have been pointing to somewhere out the window.

"Hm," he mumbled in response.

I didn't think they were looking at each other. They seemed to be both looking down, maybe at their respective phones. Maybe just at their hands. I decided their hands seemed sadder.

A small panic started to grow in my chest as their silence lengthened. Who knew when their stop was. I didn't have much longer myself, maybe twenty minutes or so. What if they never resolve this?

I was contemplating these questions and the seriousness of the consequences of them when I was blessed!

"I just feel like—"

He interrupted her with a long sigh, "Jesus Christ, Kay."

I saw him reach to cradle his face in his hands. As my heart rate picked up, I felt a wave of relief wash over me. As if I could let loose the breath I was holding only to go right back to holding a new one.

"I'm just saying, you didn't need to get so drunk! They don't know you like that yet."

"I wasn't, Kay. It was free, they were refilling it. It wasn't my fault, God!" He moaned, slightly muffled. His head still in his hands.

"Bottomless' isn't *free*, and it can be refused," Kay's hands had flown around in what I could only assume were air quotes.

"Maggie's boyfriend was drunk too, you don't see her complaining!"

"Okay, well, he wasn't as bad as you! And!" she emphasized, "I know for a fact that Maggie is having a similar conversation with him right now."

"Oh, really?" his voice dripping with sarcasm.

"Yes, *really!*" she mimicked his tone.

They both hit a very animated "hurmph" gesture that I quickly realized I'd never actually seen in real life before, and fell into another silence. It reminded me of two kids in a middle-school play trying their hardest to show the emotion "anger." A trickle of laughter crept up my throat as I replayed the moment in my head, their exaggerated plop back into the seats growing bigger and angrier each time. The laughter had nearly escaped my upturned lips when the guy spoke again.

"When's your mom getting here?"

*Oh, holy shit!* My eyes bulged. My laughter receded immediately; like a spider retreating from a spotlight. I felt it ball itself up into a knot and drop down, down all the way to my stomach where it landed. Hard. The pit opening wider.

The girl raised an arm up like she was checking a watch, "In, like, four hours."

"M'kay," he nodded.

All three of us sat there. Waiting. Who was going to break first?

"What kind of wine does she like?" He asked, his voice almost uninterested. As if this were an obligatory question. One he had been forced to ask.

"I don't know if we should be drinking any more this weekend," Kay muttered sharply. I thought I could almost hear a small smile in her tone.

The guy's hands flew up in an exaggerated gesture, "Christ, you and your *insatiable* need to insult me!"

She turned her body toward him, an image of mocking shock, "*Insatiable?* Oh, *big word! Hemingway!*" She said "Hemingway" in a manner that suggested that his name was, in fact, *not* Hemingway. "Where'd you learn *that* one? Huh?"

The air between the three of us suddenly felt thinner. Her stare boring deep into him. His head hanging low.

When no reply came from not-Hemingway, Kay barked a cold, harsh laugh, "This is fucking stupid."

Stops came and went and Kay and her boyfriend continued to look longingly out the window of the bus. Sometimes they looked down at their hands. But never again at each other.

"Just drop it, okay?" he said. Knocking me out of my stupor.

"Yeah," Kay sighed sadly in agreement.

The bus lurched to a stop and the boyfriend reached for Kay's purse. I felt a sense of overwhelming doom wash over me. Hurriedly, I looked at the bus screen. I still had a good ten stops before I needed to get off. Well, I could just walk it, I thought, it's a nice day!

The two started to get up and I couldn't help myself, I turned and looked at them. I watched as Kay let her boyfriend pick up her bag. She gave him a tiny, almost apologetic smile and he placed his right hand on her back to lead her toward the exit in the back of the bus.

I could feel myself lifting off the seat, wanting to follow them, just to hear the rest of this story. I mean, that couldn't be *it*, right?

Suddenly a woman to my left stood and stepped between us and I lost them in the crowd of exiting commuters. I allowed gravity to pull me back into my seat as a twinge of grief hit me.

It was stupid, but I felt like I had just lost something. Like something important had fallen out the window of a moving vehicle and I couldn't go back for it.

The bus shifted forward and I did a one-eighty to see if I could catch another

glimpse of Kay and her poetic boyfriend as they left.

I sent up a silent ‘thank you’ to whoever might be listening because there they were. His hand still on her lower back, her purse still slung over his shoulder as they headed off in the opposite direction of the bus.

I turned back and sighed contently as I sifted through images: their apartment in Williamsburg— or, maybe, they haven’t moved in together yet because she had mentioned her friends “didn’t know him yet ‘like that’”. So they’re heading back to *her* house? Right! Because her mom is coming in to visit her. Maybe to meet him? Yes!

I went on like this, visuals and scenarios flashing in my mind, a small smile on my lips, as I watched the street signs and cars go by. It barely registered when the automated voice called “*This is Gold St. and York St.*”

I shook the couple from my head as my body reconnected with the cold blue chair. Quickly, I scooped up my bag, checking to ensure that my Kindle and my phone were still where I’d placed them, and that my headphones were still in my ears before rushing out the bus.

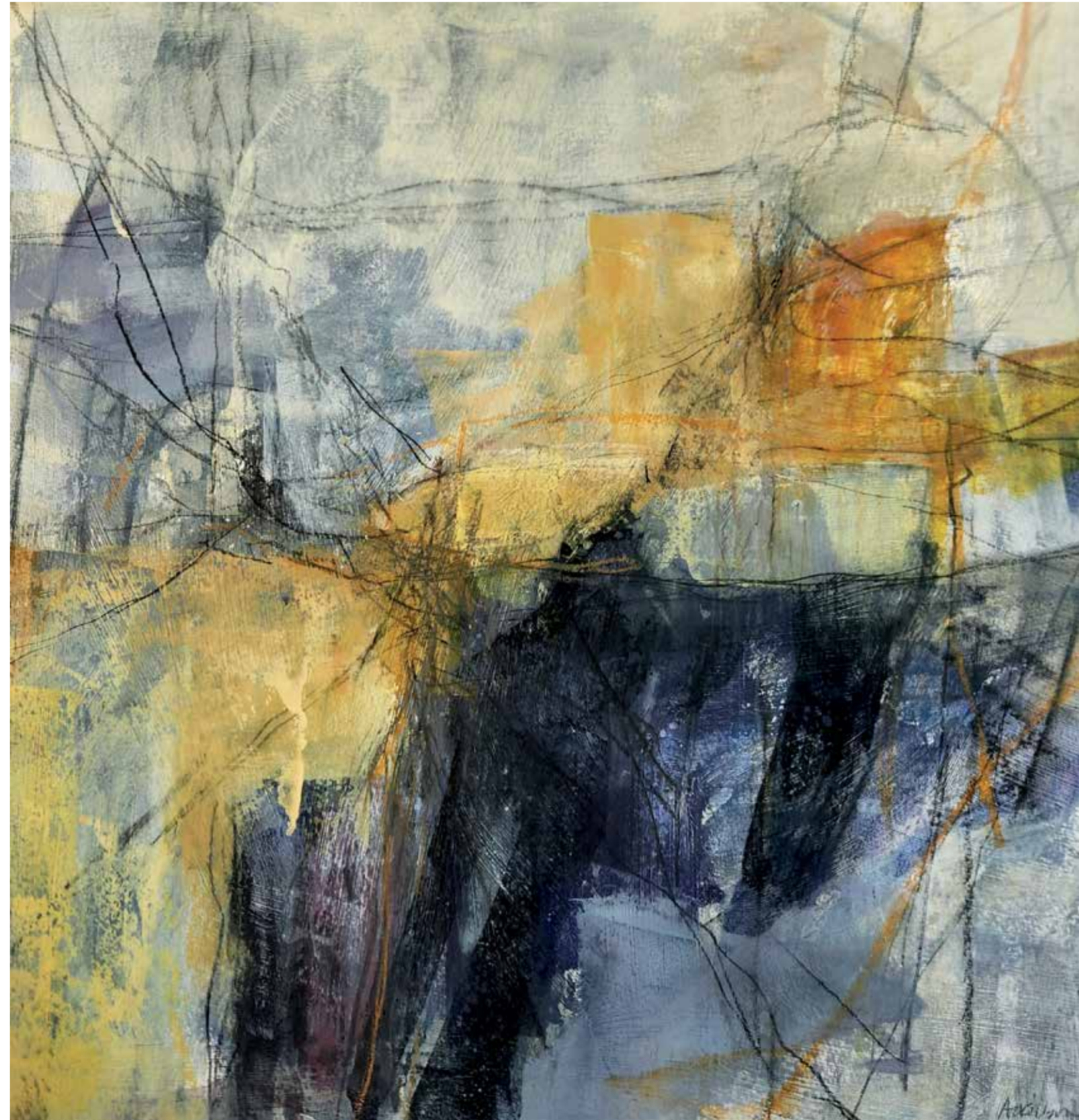
I realized, though, as I was standing there on the sidewalk listening to the cars honking and the assortment of music blaring and all the pedestrian life passing by, I wished I hadn’t gotten off the bus. Or, more accurately, I wished *we* hadn’t gotten off the bus. What was I supposed to do now? I didn’t even *remember* what my plans were.

I watched longingly as the bus left my field of vision and let my eyes glaze over while more images passed through my mind. Kay and her boyfriend sitting on her couch, deciding where to take her mom for lunch. Hopefully he doesn’t drink at lunch, especially not in front of her mom since he’s meeting her for the first time. That’d leave a horrible impression. Maybe that lunch will be the real catalyst. The thing that tears them down. Stops them from ever getting that apartment together that they should have been walking to in the first place.

I stood there, feeling stuck to the pavement until I was shouldered by a man who mumbled a half-hearted “sorry” and went right back to looking down at his phone.

I realized I was causing a disruption in foot traffic. I needed to move. I mean, what was I looking at now anyway? My Kindle weighed heavily in my bag and the bus was gone. Completely out of sight.

*-Madelyn Ritter*



*Roadmap*  
Anne W. Ackerson

### I Pull a Piece of Paper from my Pocket

I see Lorca listening to Japanese jazz  
on the tip of a tongue.

The song doesn't speak.

He watches a firefly blink  
and a flower's shadow trace earth

as his lips swell with the moon  
and he eats the stars.

*-Ryan Di Francesco*



*I See the Light*  
Paul Carroll

### Postmortem

After a text or phone call that declares the end  
of what outran the future,

a narrow street we paced twice, registered as déjà vu,  
a café reached by serendipity,

open-air dinners with views of cities once stars on a map,  
mistaken for permanence.

And when it comes unraveled, we count backwards,  
reliving what ignited doubt,

and the conclusion that the chemistry was all wrong—  
pulse off balance, the fever of a glowing sun,

unable to offset December's chill.

And when all that brings us back is the familiar and an illusion,  
a trompe l'œil of happiness, and love itself,

a blurry mirage, waterbrushed into cityscapes,  
until we simply close our eyes, let the blackness extinguish  
what would consume us,

allowing the idea of love to live on  
in another form.

*- Sarath Reddy*

## Globe

The plastic sphere is heat-sealed by the Equator,  
The current of the Gulf Stream arrow-marked  
Or else we would be cold as Labrador.  
The light is operated by a switch.  
What happens when you need to change the bulb  
Inside the globe that is a glowing lamp?  
My mother gave it to her grandson Tom  
Who now donates to the Sue Ryder Home  
This glowing globe of green and brown and blue,  
A model of the planet's biosphere  
As fragile as an eggshell or a skull.  
What happens when the light goes out inside  
And does it matter we do not outlast  
Our showroom futures or the junk-heap past?

*-Duncan Forbes*

## How The West Was Won

You take a flat earth  
and call the waters at its centre  
the Mediterranean Sea  
and conquer all its shorelines and beyond  
so that they can say *Civis Romanus sum*  
from Carlisle to the Euphrates  
and then you set sail for Cathay  
in three galleons  
and discover Hispaniola, little Spain,  
and huge America, Catholic south  
and Protestant north,  
so you can sing 'This Land is My Land'  
by right of discovery  
by the grace of God,  
meaning genocide, slavery,  
expropriation in perpetuity,  
rule lines, divide and rule,  
corral animals in zoos  
and people on reservations.

But who owns the Moon  
and the sunlight – whose is that?  
And the gazillion glories of the galaxy  
and its archaic constellations,  
light-years away from humanity  
and extinctions without number?

*-Duncan Forbes*

### **Every Way My Body Says Your Name**

I haven't even touched you yet,  
and still my body reacts to your voice  
like you've laid a hand on the back of my neck.  
The way you say my name is ridiculous—  
low, careful, like you're testing how it sounds  
right up against my ear.  
I keep wondering what it would do to me  
if you actually let your hands follow your words,  
if you pressed your palm here,  
or dragged your fingers there,  
if you took your time learning  
every place on me that answers  
to that voice.  
I think about your hands more than I admit.  
What they'd look like resting on my thighs,  
how my skin would rise to meet them,  
how easy it would be for you  
to coax my knees apart  
with nothing but a soft command  
and your thumb tracing circles  
until my breath gives me away.  
I picture you taking your time with me—  
the slope of my shoulder,  
the hollow of my throat,  
the places lower down  
where I'd start to forget my own name  
if you kept touching.

You don't know what you sound like  
when you slip into that tone,  
the one that makes me think about  
your mouth following your hands,  
about the heat of your breath  
right where I'm already aching for you.  
I imagine you tasting every spot  
your fingers wake up first,  
hearing the way my body answers you,  
feeling me tremble against your tongue  
and deciding you're not done yet.  
You could take your time with me,  
learn exactly how I break apart for you,  
and I'd give you every last reaction—  
every shiver, every gasp, every arch—  
until you've memorized  
all the ways my body says your name back.

*-V.E. Taylor*

### WHAT3WORDS

Co-ordinate and calibrate  
The here and now in time and space?  
Which three English words denote  
Existence in this certain place?  
If here I am in name and number  
And I should have a heart attack,  
Which three words should I remember  
To summon life and living back?

*-Duncan Forbes*



*Emotional Landscape*  
Odarley Morton



*29.430113, -98.494077 (Artpace)*  
Ann Enzlinger

### No Queen from Queens

Did I emerge from the womb on that  
#7 subway line that traveled the tracks  
to and from Main Street, Flushing, Queens,  
and Times Square, Manhattan?  
No business bound commuters  
looked up from their reads of  
The New York Herald Tribune  
for the non-event of my birth.

The actual conception, a surprise if you  
knew my didn't-fit-together-right parents,  
happened in a white stucco house  
on a tree-lined street, in Whitestone, Queens,  
home of Uncle Sol and Aunt Irene where  
Ma and I lived for six years, with an  
occasional visit from my father who  
had a federal job in Washington, D.C.

I spent days, nights, centuries,  
on that hated train. I reviled its  
commitment to its route, 74<sup>th</sup> Street,  
Roosevelt Avenue, stops every few blocks,  
on an elevated line through the borough,  
a local, in the truest sense of the word.

It slowed over smelly Flushing Creek,  
just before it hit its final destination, Main Street.  
Many businesses lined Roosevelt Avenue  
and Main, among them, Gertz, a department store  
that really had departments, one for underwear,  
coats, even gowns for grown-ups when they went  
to parties at the Eastern Star fraternal organization.

Wallach's, a men's store, offered the  
perfect gift for Daddy in my eight-year-old mind,  
a hairbrush to celebrate his birthday.  
His hair was thinning, call it *scant*, like a few  
strands left on a running-out of thread spool,  
but I didn't know from usefulness then. I just liked  
the wooden shape of the handle that resembled a rowboat  
moored at the pier in Whitestone. Daddy shrugged  
and mumbled, *Thank you*. Why he was so gruff, I asked Ma?

-Paula Praeger

### On This Map

On this map I flow like a river to you,  
gathering all of me at every curve.  
In this ward you raised a bridge  
for the ways you live above my currents.

Here you built embankments  
to contain and shape my arguments  
and doubtful protestations,  
to deepen my channel.

Sometimes I hover above myself,  
mist trying to become rain,  
counting the tributaries  
and canals, the secret springs.

Occasional debris floats by.  
Some memories I renounce,  
some I regret. Most I savor,  
even those I should rue.

Note the barges carrying rubbish  
or new resources, and the trees  
that seem to take forever to cross  
to the other side of me.

Who knows what the mudlarks  
find at low tide? They scurry home  
with their treasures  
silently, under cover of darkness.

*-Robert Lunday*

RIGHT  
*Embodied Stellar Forest Map*  
Omar Reyna  
NEXT PAGE  
*Interchange*  
Paul Ledington





## **VIDEO AND SOUND**

### Navigate

Rachel May Ferriman

'Navigate' is a 04:39 meditation on navigation, relocation, displacement, belonging, virtual reality, and the notion of being completely present in the moment.

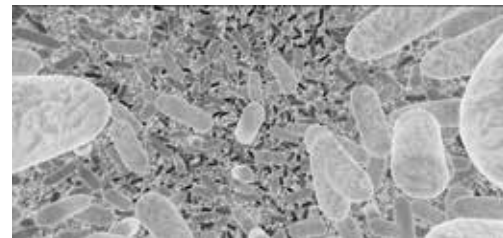
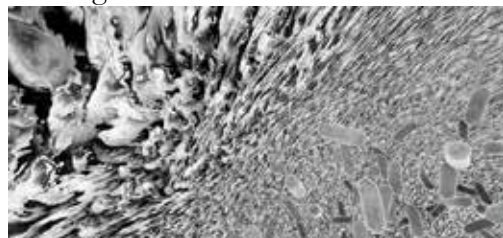


<https://youtu.be/qnUzIgQJzsA?si=VSLn1tlSkytQUzZX>

### Walking Maps Through Bacterial Colonies

Angela Fragkou

Walking Maps Through Bacterial Colonies is an experimental VR bio-art installation investigating subjective mapping through embodied interaction with virtual bacterial ecosystems. Inspired by microbial growth cycles, generative art, and bioscientific processes, participants navigate immersive environments using walking movements and hand gestures, producing projected cartographic traces in real time. The installation evolves through phases of birth, growth, suspended oscillation, and death, while viewers interact with digitally simulated microorganisms that respond dynamically to movement and sound. The resulting walking maps become performative diagrams of human presence inside synthetic biological worlds, exploring the relationship between mapping, ecology, virtuality, and life technologies.



<https://vimeo.com/1062101106>

### After Vincent van Gogh / The Sower in Color Space

Kenji Kojima

This work reinterprets The Sower by mapping its pixels into the RGB color space. Each point is plotted and connected over time, forming a trajectory that translates the painting into data. Inspired by Van Gogh's study of ukiyo-e as a translation between visual systems, this work approaches painting as information encoded in binary. The apparent noise, generated from the image's own RGB values, disperses stochastically and gradually reconstructs the image. It proposes mapping as a bridge between perception, code, and the evolving language of art. Project Web: <https://kenjikojima.com/AfterVanGogh/Sower/>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr4iMlmpBEw>

### Brain Drain

AnimaeNoctis

Massimo is lying on the bed. He wears a white shirt. Silvia unbuttons the shirt and reveals a drawing on Massimo's chest: it's a line art of Italy, made with a black marker. Silvia wets her fingers with her own saliva and slowly erases Italy's borders, that disappear. Eventually, Silvia's fingertips are covered in black ink.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWTweLt6XXI>

*Mapclock*  
Debra Bream



## Jezebel

Show don't tell. Met Jezebel in hell. Gave her a big kiss on the lips. She tasted like flat cherry coke with a hint of cinnamon. Wide awake but are you woke? We were fragile so we broke. She met Jezebel in hell. They swapped spit and tasted smells. Synesthesia. Amnesia. The scent of her skin tastes like peppermint. You forget. Hell bent. Too bent to get broken. Dropping in on a skateboard. Backing into a parking spot in a four door. Jezebel rings the bell. A closed door. Key is under the flower pot. Please, somebody, unlock the chains wrapped around our bodies. Our bodies. Waiting in screaming hotel lobbies. Riding shotgun on a trip to the surface of the sun. Burnt to a crisp. Wings melted. Icarus. Pegasus. A winged horse. Forlorn yet staying the course. Tiny violins playing every time they cry. Playing a game that is already in double overtime. Will it ever be over? Will it ever end? Who will win? Baskets, balls, rims, fields, goals. Walking across hot coals as hot knives slice spines riddled with scoliosis. Jezebel give us a kiss. Excuse me, miss? You forgot this. A little blue corset, a little red corvette, a black bonnet, a psalm, a song, a sonnet. A wish, a dream. Baileys Irish Cream and coffee. Halley's comet is coming soon to a theatre near you. Popcorn, chocolate covered raisins, ripped tickets, screens full of sex and violence. The tiny violins are sobbing. Never met a bank not worth robbing. Never met a woman more inviting. You are intoxicating. Drunk driving a five gear bike on a long journey through an infinite night that sometimes gets bright. Time doesn't exist. Jezebel smells of insect incest and Nag Champa incense. Incensed, angry, livid. This episode of life is vivid. Pass the chocolate covered raisins. Pass the blunt. So honest that frankly it comes across blunt. Fourth down punt. Baseball player world series bunt for a home run. Children run towards home after the school bell rings and class lets out. Jezebel don't pout. What is this about? Nostalgia. Memories are all made in China. Whisper turned shout. Lager, ale, stout. Mountains, cactus fruit, lizards, bushes. Gunshots from Beirut. The opposite of the truth isn't always lies. Jezebel sighs. The rock faces of Mount Rushmore cry. Show don't tell. Show and tell. A show on television. Surround sound. Technicolor. High definition. Brother, sister, mother. Had a vision. Now on a mission. Missionaries, rosaries, strawberries, chickpeas, mixed greens, salad dressing. Dressing up to spend the night in. Just because it came out doesn't mean it was ever in. Nearing the end of the sentence with periods of time like 25 to life. Laws are irrelevant and crimes are construct. Construction noises cause a cacophony. Authentic. Real. Phony. Phone rings; a voice speaks; bad news...are you sitting down? If not, take a seat. Tragedy. The revolution will not be televised but it will be available for streaming or broadcast live on a podcast online. Faith. Pacing the six by eight cell waiting for the guard to come back around. This existence is a prison. Lethal injection or electric chair, which is your preference? Which would you prefer? To be clear: everybody is unsure and underinsured. To be honest: the cure for cancer is death. For your information: stealing hearts is more than petty theft.

*-Sariya Okoye*



*Postpartum 2*  
Ellie Goodliffe

## A bottomless well

Being is a frozen river (under which something always flows)

$$\begin{aligned} &= \int_0^{\infty} \text{Outwardly shapes}^{\text{names-duties}} e^{-t} dt \\ &= \frac{\text{but under the thin glass of order}^{-\gamma z}}{\text{the black water of questions flows}} \prod_{k=1}^{\infty} \left( \text{Only some kneel} \right. \\ &\quad \left. + \frac{\text{and put their ear to the ice to hear}}{\text{how eternity seeks a passage beneath them}} \right)^{-1} e^{z/k}, \quad \gamma \approx 0.577216 \end{aligned}$$

-Radoslaw Rochalnyi



## The Hawks

All along the highway, the dogwoods—  
alone among the rows of bare branches—  
have burst into white blooms, and  
the hawks, in twos and threes and fours,  
make circles over the landscape, tracing  
their own I-65 of wind currents.  
Baseball is on the radio: the games, like  
the blooms, too early to mean anything  
but bright and wonderful. The hawks  
loop, mostly silent, some higher and  
some lower along the same orbits.  
Their wings are magnificent, outstretched  
and still, buoyant in the spring air.  
You can imagine for a moment that  
none of this is going anywhere,  
the blossoms, the hawks, the traffic,  
the voices on the radio, the ball  
sailing towards the bat—that it can all  
stay here, perfect and meaningless,  
harbinger of nothing. You can imagine,  
for a moment, the fresh white  
flowers unfailing, the sky clear and blue,  
and the hawks, endlessly tracing wide circles  
that never end in a dive.

-Rachel Linton



*Where is Home*  
Mariam Magsi



*Love of the Lego Man and the Seahorse*  
Corvengi



*Exile to the Blood Moon*  
Mariam Magsi

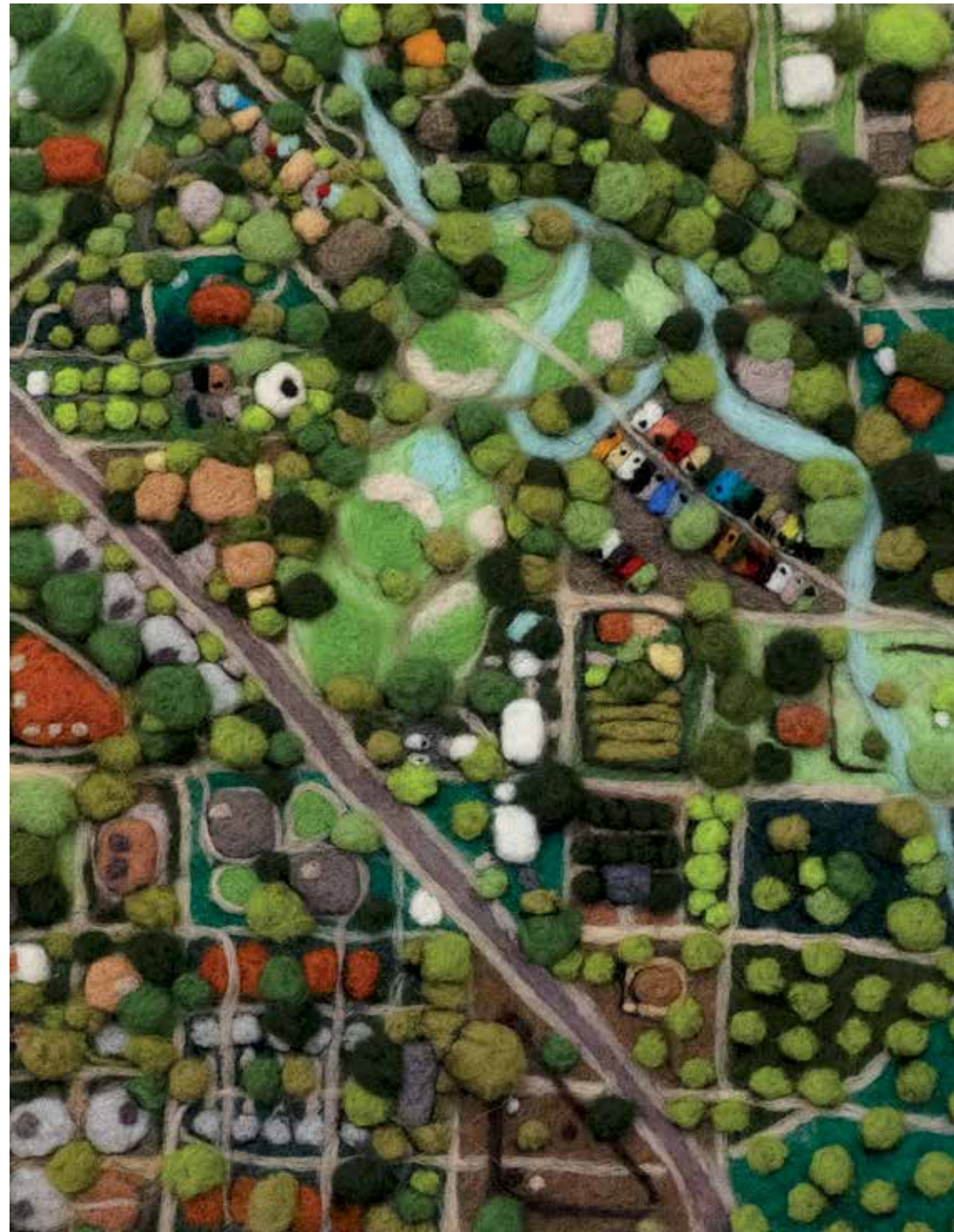
### Duplex

I entered a phase in which novelty didn't excite me the way it used to. I read the same book over and over, then the same chapter, the same sentence. The delusion—that a well-placed word could be a hinge, that I could pry it open and life would burst forth like a geyser—gripped me and wouldn't let go. When I closed the book each night, a great *e* lingered in my vision, a path spiraling and crashing into itself. I dreamt that death was a camera with spiderlike legs, and when I woke I became transfixed by my eyes in the mirror. Men had warned me before that they were deep, but I never realized how dangerous. Each pupil, an *o*, contracted and dilated as if it were breathing. I held on to the muddy iris as long as I could before falling helplessly into the pit. After a time of bracing myself for impact, it occurred to me that the falling was its own landing, and I began to live in it as in a home. I left shoes by the door and hung coats on hooks. I built fires in the winter and opened windows in the summer. All the while I scrawled the same sentence over and over on the walls like a penitent child. It ended with a question mark, in the hopes the inflection would be enough to lift me out of my predicament. And yet the syntax was not interrogative. Some part of me wished to remain as I was forever. I imagined both futures as I wrote my endless sentence, and by the force of my imagining, both came true: I existed in the bowl of a *u*. I stayed and I escaped, each life so vividly haunted by the other that it was impossible to tell them apart. Death, too, like a shadow on a screen, was visible from both sides, and inherently toothless. Any notion of fear was ridiculous as a pair of dentures hopping toward me across the hardwood floor. Though I turned my enjoyment toward new sentences again, I never forgot the one that held the possibilities of my lives together like the spine of a book. Living or dead, I'll never utter it.

*-Joshua Zeitler*



*The Still Boy*  
Michele Fesani



*Postal Code*  
Ann Enzlinger

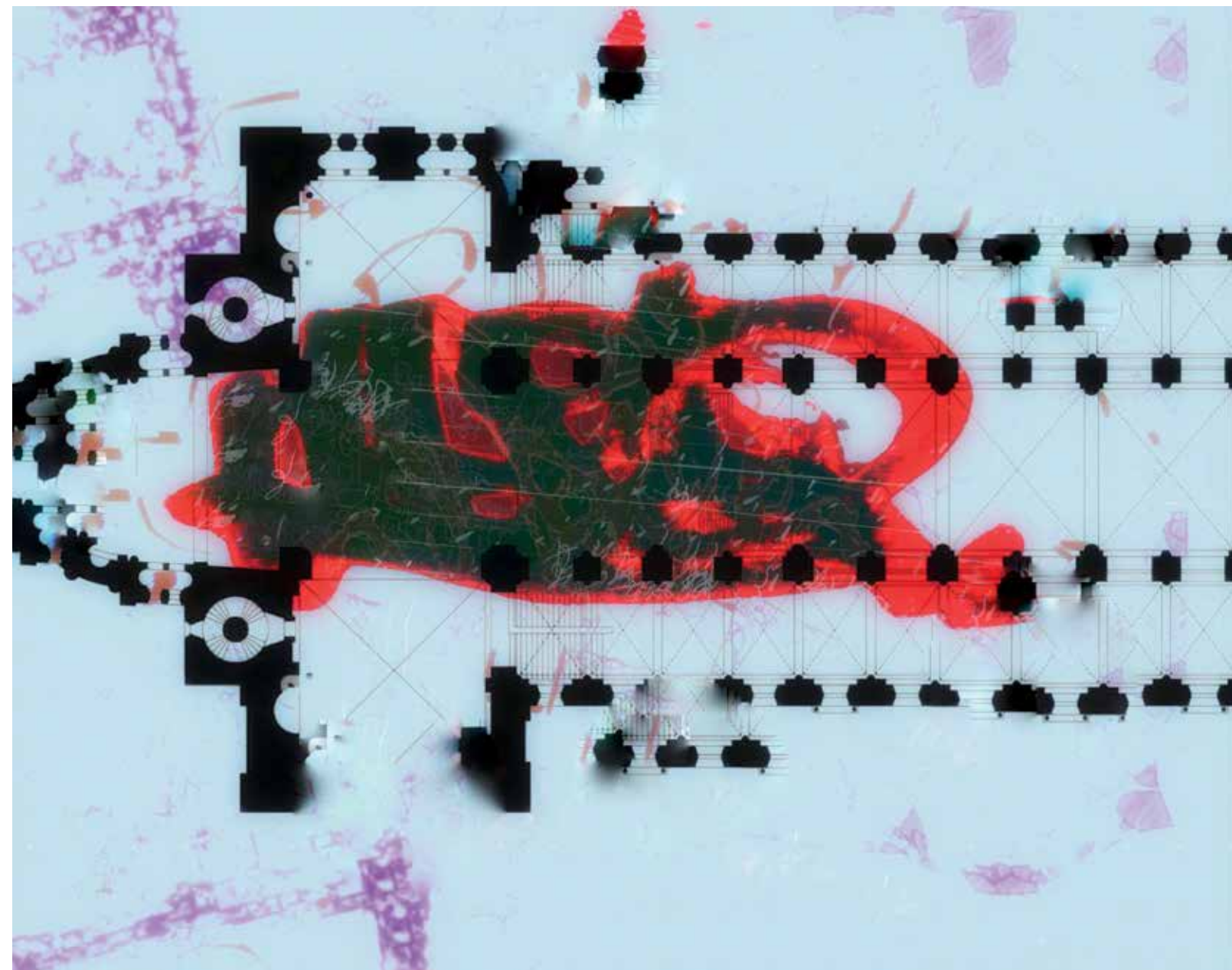
### Kandinsky's Study for Green Border

The border is always more important than what it contains--  
a hand reaching for a locked door,  
the key shattered into fragments  
no one will ever find.

In this way we keep the lid on the pot, keep  
the image from spilling over the page  
the shapes struggling to reach the other  
side.  
See how far they have to travel – all the white  
space they must cross to reach the  
green  
which softens like a bed of moss.

The border as a promise of relief: oh refugees,  
those disembodied hands,  
arms, legs  
humanity scattered like something broken  
trying  
to make itself whole.

*-Holly Karaetkova*



*Cathedral Core*  
Marco Magri

### Mr. Eve

Shirtless Mr. Eve meets the First Woman,  
his cheeks ripening from too much  
honey and misbehavior.

There's no knowledge in fruit, no plans  
of the garden, no one goes their solitary way.  
She tried to leave once but her legs grew heavy

with intimacy, the soft touch of flowers.  
Mr. Eve puts his tongue inside her and plants  
a rapture seed. Soon, she sees seduction

in every tree climbed, every skin shed.  
The thrill of ungodly apples inundate  
her dreams – the first flood. Mr Eve

raises his arm. The higher he lifts the apple  
the more alluring it becomes. She leaks bliss  
over the grass, a necklace of bitemarks

around her throat. There's so much pleasure  
in paradise. Too much, the Maybe God thinks  
with thoughts fostered by a more Jealous God.

With Mr Eve out of the picture, the first woman  
could be God's. He plants his murder seed as she  
slices her apple with a switchblade out of place.

The First Woman stabs Mr Eve's between the ribs,  
her first blood, a red river leading to the garden exit,  
drawing the world's first map of desire.

- *Ted Mico*



*Dust in the Light*  
Michele Fesani

## Di-rec-tions

*Dis-cre-tion*, my mother would say when I was nine, breaking it down into syllables for me. *Hy-ster-i-a. Neurotic*—maybe she didn't say that, just modeled it. She modeled hysteria, too, in the kitchen after she burned a baked potato. My mother's recipe for anything: when the fire alarm goes off, it's done. She hollered all her *ob, shits*, then grabbed the potato with an asbestos mitt and flung it out the window. Nine floors down—she said it hit the back courtyard. I never knew there was a courtyard down there. Now, I peeked my head out and understood what was at the back of the building.

*Hysteria*. She couldn't find her way to the country club in Westchester. Every weekend. Now that she had remarried, the country club pool was a new part of our lives. Baby oil, sunburns, chicken BLT sandwiches. Surely, it was a right turn here—no, left—"shit! It's right, yes?" she asked, turning left.

"No, the other way, Mom, the hand that doesn't have the diamond ring." I'd almost mapped the whole route, but if she couldn't learn left from right?

"Well, I can't do that here! The traffic..." Cars honked. "Oh, shit!" Even louder. I could see the sweat froth up at the base of her skull, her short, puffy hair springing spiky, wet pinfeathers. Lanes of traffic, an exit, a place to turn around, more honking. "Goddammit!"

I tittered. "That's four *shits*, two *goddammit*s, and one *hell*."

"It's not funny!" Enraged.

Over lunch on the club patio, she would tell the funny story to my new stepfather, who had ridden up with Duke Usdan and Mickey Gladstein for a nine AM tee-time. "Oh, I was so lost!" She smiled and dropped a hand on his blond-haired forearm. "I got so mad." She made it sound like she was adorable, an adorable, frustrated child. Glancing toward me, she said, "I got a little hysterical, didn't I dear?"

"She said *shit* four times, Papa." They made me call him Papa.

My stepfather glared. "Don't use that word!" At first, I thought he meant *Papa*. No, *shit*.

"I'm not the one..." Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry.

"Oh, go play in the traffic!" He flung his hand and always said it like he was kidding, but my navigating skills were good enough to know he wasn't. Who needed a stepdaughter? "It's not nice to tease your mother," he said. "She was upset."

"Oh, I was." She literally batted her eyelashes, like a star in an old movie.

Maybe *he* could drive us up. But no, that would be worse, ugh, all together for so long, the ride up and back, *and* we'd have to get up at seven AM on Sunday mornings to make his tee time. Better to put up with my mother, bounce her like a crying baby, become a human compass, a child cartographer.

*The Hutch-in-son Parkway*, I taught myself. *The Bruckner. The Major Deegan*, heading south when we drove home.

When the delight of her second marriage began to wear off, my mother went back to school and became a psychoanalyst. I won a full fellowship to the UCLA Ph.D. program in Geography.

-Valerie Ann Leff



*Enclosure*  
Liz Riley

## Sex Ed

Magnolia buds look just like  
clitorises, or is it clitori? They come  
out of last year's husk all shine  
and pink, exposed, thrust  
shameless, into the first bright blue.

In school no one knew the true shape  
of this pliant wishbone, how she extends  
the whole length of the vulva  
hidden under the soft mounds, how she swells  
like an alpine lake receiving  
meltwater in Spring when touched  
well. They said nothing  
about touching well, or that girls get  
the only part of the body made  
purely for pleasure.

I remember the racket  
in class as we labeled *labia minora*  
*labia majora* on blurry photocopies  
of line-drawn anatomy. *What's the point*  
*of this dumb red button?* The boys  
unaware they were already

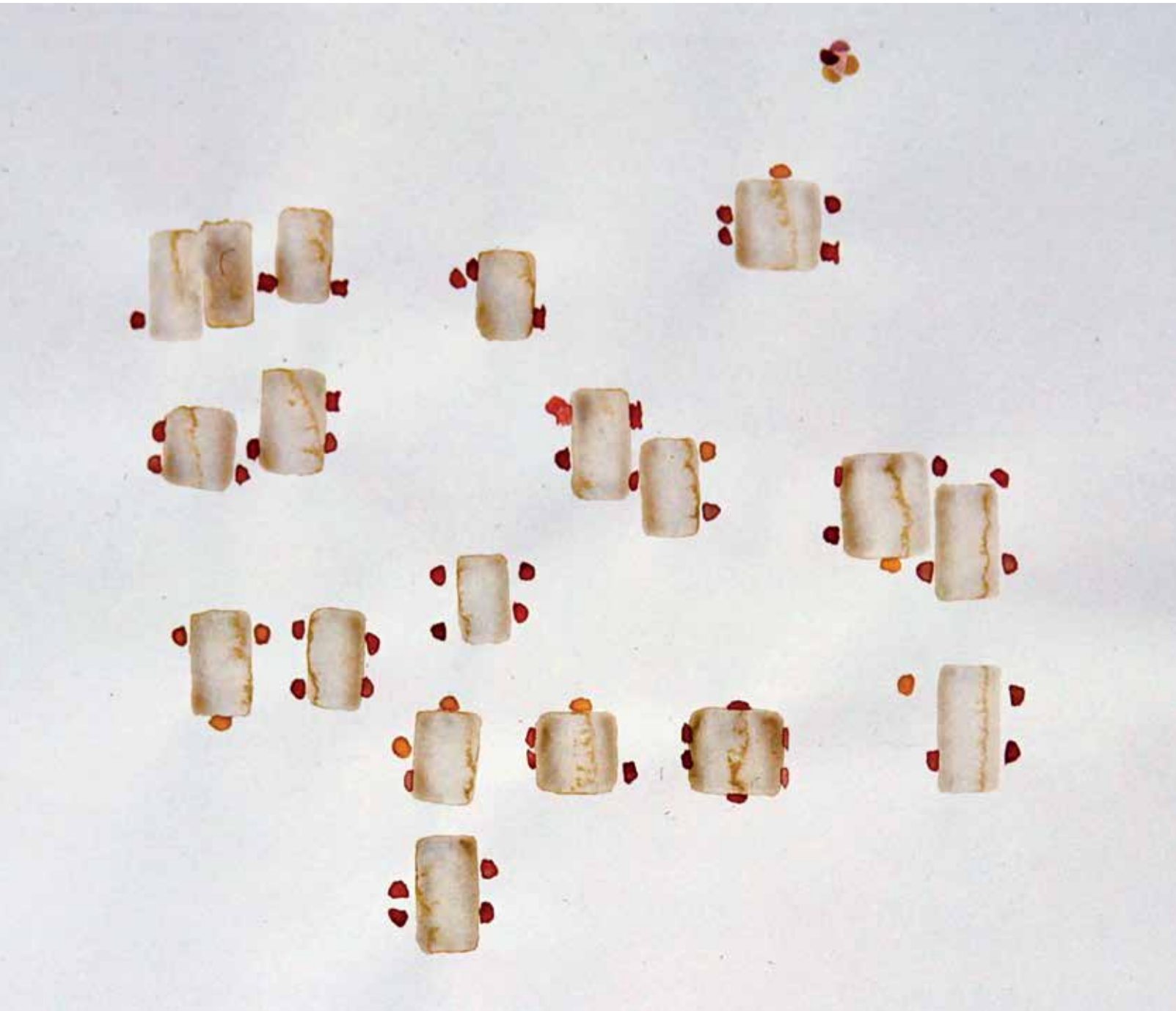
afraid. Quietly, I dreamed  
that between my legs grew  
a mystery, a fistful of wet petals.  
But there's no time to let the bloom fall  
open, when all our bodies  
kept morphing, growing hair  
at the hinges, compelled by impulses  
more urgent than we could name.

There's no one to applaud  
when she blooms, the Magnolia,  
I mean. But I pass her on my walk  
each morning, and praise  
her flushed emergence, inch by inch,  
gently thumb that yet unbroken skin.

-Emily Kedar



One it to myslef  
Odarley Morton



*Soft Measures*  
Joe Arts



*The Goat*  
Sara Jabbari



*Migrational routes of car bomb technology and locations of fatal car bombs from 1920 to present-day*  
Grant Lambie

ONE DAY, WHILE DRIVING TO MASS, WE STOPPED  
AT THIS LIGHT. MY GRANDMOTHER SAID, "BUTTERNUT  
STREET. OUR OLD STOPPING GROUNDS. OUR HOUSE  
WAS JUST DOWN THIS STREET."

"WE LET BILL LIVE THERE WHEN MOMMY AND DADDY  
DIED, BUT WE SOLD IT WHEN HE DIED."

"WAIT," I THOUGHT, "THEY KICKED OUT HIS WIFE  
AND KIDS? UNLESS THERE WEREN'T ANY..."

"GRANDMA," I ASKED, "WAS BILL MARRIED?"

"NO," SHE REPLIED, "HE WAS A HOMO."

"A FRIEND OF BILL'S LIVED IN THE HOUSE WITH HIM  
FOR A LITTLE WHILE. HIS FRIEND WAS A HOMO, TOO.  
HIS FRIEND WAS MARRIED, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK OUT.  
THEY TOLD THE HOUSE DOWN AFTER WE SOLD IT.  
THERE ARE STORES THERE NOW."

LATER, I FOUND OUT THAT THIS FRIEND, JOE EARNEST,  
HAD LEFT BILL TO GO BACK TO HIS WIFE.

*Butternut St (Bill in Abilene)*  
Hal Shipman

*Where the Gavin House Stood (Bill in Abilene)*  
Hal Shipman

## The Investigation Board as a Contemporary Art Form

There is an image that now belongs to the global collective imagination: a wall, often cluttered, on which photographs, clippings, notes, proper names and arrows of different colors are connected through taut strings, pins, adhesive tape. We recognize it immediately. We see it in crime films, television series, video games, memes. And yet this same image — which I will call, in its broadest sense, the *investigation board* — is also something else: it is one of the most radical visual forms that contemporary art has produced in recent decades, often without recognizing it as such, or recognizing it too late.

The theme of *mapping* — of cartography understood not as a simple geographical reduction of territory, but as an epistemic device, as an act of construction rather than mere representation — is one of the great returns of twenty-first-century visual culture. And yet its most pervasive and, paradoxically, most invisible manifestation is not found in conceptual atlases, nor in installations by artists working explicitly with cartography. It is found instead in that practice of connection, accumulation and relation that the investigation board carries with it, and which in the field of art has taken multiple forms, often lateral to its own genealogy.

Let us try to reconstruct that genealogy.

The Dadaist collage, the assemblages of Picasso and Braque, the *papiers collés*: these are all practices that share with the investigation board the fundamental gesture of heterodox juxtaposition, of putting in relation elements that do not expect to find themselves together. Eisenstein's montage adds the temporal and rhythmic dimension, the conflict between fragments as the engine of meaning. The Situationist *détournements* radicalize the gesture by stripping it of all innocence, turning it into a critical and militant tool. William Burroughs' cut-ups carry it into writing, voice, sound. *Found footage* cinema — through to the more recent currents of experimental film — brings the same logic into the domain of moving images: the pre-existing fragment torn from its original context and reinserted into a new *constellation* of meaning, to use a definition dear to Walter Benjamin, in which significance emerges precisely from the friction between materials and their unexpected proximity.

In the field of music, it is rap sampling — known technically as *sampling* — that codifies this practice as a generative aesthetic: the producer who builds a beat by drawing on fragments of other people's records is not simply quoting, but remapping an already existing sonic territory, redrawing its internal connections. The DJ who mixes, and the remix as an autonomous form, complete this picture, radicalizing the idea — theorized in different contexts by both Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes — that every text is already a network of other texts, every surface a layering of previous surfaces.

It is in this context that Lev Manovich introduces the distinction — crucial for understanding where we are — between *linear narrative* and *database narrative*: whereas the former proceeds according to an oriented sequence, with a beginning and an end, the latter organizes the world as a set of elements that have no intrinsic hierarchy, only possible relations. The database does not tell stories: it offers materials. It is the navigator — the user, the viewer, the artist — who constructs the path, and every path is a different map of the same territory.

The most recent example of this logic is *corecore*, a digital aesthetic that emerged between 2022 and 2023 on short-video platforms — TikTok in particular — and has remained deliberately on the margins of the official circuits of visual culture. Corecore works through accumulation and collision: sequences of heterogeneous clips edited in rapid succession, without explicit

commentary, without declared narrative. Nineties advertisements, art-house film scenes, amateur footage of everyday life, archival images, cartoon fragments, poetic texts superimposed — everything coexists in the same flow, held together not by an argumentative logic but by an affective and atmospheric one.

Meaning is not asserted: it settles.

It is a practice of emotional mapping before it is a narrative one, in which the map does not represent an external territory but produces an interior experience through accumulation and juxtaposition. What makes corecore particularly significant in this context is its implicit self-awareness: those who produce it know — even without having theorized it — that heterodox montage is the only language available for saying something authentic in a media ecosystem in which every image has already been consumed, every emotion already codified. The *détournement* here is not militant as it was for the Situationists; it is melancholic, almost elegiac. But the basic gesture — taking fragments of the world and putting them back into relation to produce meaning — is the same one that can be read in the incendiary pages of Isidore Ducasse — aka the Comte de Lautréamont — in *Les Chants de Maldoror*, dating all the way back to 1869.

Each of these practices is, in its own way, a form of mapping: the attempt to render visible a network of relations that would otherwise remain latent, submerged, illegible.

But the investigation board adds something that these historical practices do not contain, or contain only in embryonic form: structural incompleteness as a condition. The map of clues is never finished. It is not, by definition. Every arrow points to another possible connection, every node is also a point of departure toward the outside. This openness is not a shortcoming — it is the internal logic of the form. It is what Manovich described as database narrative, as opposed to linear narrative: not a story with a beginning, development and end, but a reticular structure that can be traversed in multiple directions, that resists closure, that prefers accumulation to synthesis.

In the field of art, this logic has produced some of the most significant works of the last thirty years. Consider the work of Mark Lombardi, whose *narrative structures* — large ink drawings on paper that map the connections between financial, political and criminal powers — are perhaps the most complete example of the investigation board elevated to artwork. Lombardi does not illustrate a story: he constructs a topology. Meaning emerges from the structure of relations, not from the content of individual nodes.

Or consider Thomas Hirschhorn's *Monuments*, his installations made of adhesive tape, aluminum foil, photocopies and strings, which recreate the chaotic density of a clue wall as a form of political and historical critique. Or, again, Sophie Calle's *Recherches*, in which the artist transforms her own life into a network of traces, clues, photographs and documents — a map in which the object being charted is not territory but desire.

What these works share is a specific epistemology, one that Nicolas Bourriaud had already intuited — albeit from a different perspective — in 1998 with *Esthétique relationnelle*: the idea that meaning is not given a priori, but produced in the *between*, in the space of connection between elements, between subjects, between fragments of the world. Bourriaud described the artistic practices of the nineties as generators of social interstices, of temporary and situated forms of relation. What the investigation board carries with it is an analogous logic, but shifted onto the cognitive and visual plane — it is not the space between people that produces meaning,

but the space between signs, between nodes, between arrows stretched from a photograph to a name, from a date to a place. The comprehension of the world becomes inseparable from the act of connecting, of tracing lines between points that are waiting to be put into relation: a cartography that does not represent the territory, but constructs it in the very act of traversing it. It is a visual epistemology before it is a verbal one, and for this reason art — which works with spatialization, with arrangement, with the simultaneous coexistence of elements — is the field in which this logic finds its fullest expression.

And yet there is a paradox. Precisely because this form has become so pervasive, so natural — because it is, to use David Foster Wallace's metaphor, the water we swim in — it risks becoming invisible. The very gesture that an artist like Lombardi performs with analytical lucidity and rigor, popular culture replicates unconsciously in television series, procedurals, thrillers. The result is that the investigation board as artistic practice finds itself today in an ambivalent position: it is simultaneously a learned form with a precise genealogy and a mass cliché so thoroughly consolidated as to appear devoid of history.

This ambivalence is, however, itself productive. Contemporary art that works with the logic of the investigation board — with mapping as a practice of constructing meaning — can exploit this tension, render it visible, make it its own material. It can interrogate not only what is mapped, but the very gesture of mapping: who traces the connections, with what authority, with what blindness. It can show that every map is also a selection — and therefore an exclusion — a partial point of view that passes itself off as a complete panorama.

The clue wall, in short, is not only a narrative tool: it is a form of thought. And like every form of thought that becomes sufficiently pervasive to seem natural, it deserves to be looked at with the same attention with which a detective looks at their own board — seeking not so much the solution, as the connections that still cannot be seen.

-Francesco Ciapponi

*Memory Matter*  
Luiza Stere

NEXT PAGE  
*Aktion T4. (Euthanasia programme  
from 1939- 1945 of people with learning  
disabilities and mental health issues,  
Germany)*  
Grant Lambie







## Reverberation

INTERVIEW 1. *Project lead, physicist Alan James Denny.* We identified the anomaly at 12.02pm and it only lasted for twelve minutes. Start from the beginning? Well, there was some anticipation for the experiment because the technique promised to be quite revolutionary. We use two lasers in an angular orbiting momentum to apply a self-torquing property to light. But we actually shape it with harmonics, you see? That's right—in simple terms, sound. Sure, I'd say there was some excitement in the team. We were all pretty excited really. There was one visitor in to observe, some lanyard from Intus, the primary industry partner. I'm sure the team all signed non-disclosure agreements. You're talking to them, too? Okay, then. Well, we had the cycle ready for noon with a celebratory lunch prepared for afterward. Yes? Oh, a cycle of the sync. The synchrotron. It's a small particle accelerator, about the size of this interview room. In looks it's rather like the Rolls Royce engine in my grandfather's Spitfire. We were going to reverse the torque of photons, that's what the champagne was for. Yes, quite amazing the implications. We're right at the cutting edge now. Anyway, we fired the sync up... No, nobody had been drinking—safety regulations are strict. The team were all next door in the control room behind shielding, vacuum doors and the like. We build up energy in a containment battery—like a lightning discharge—and then let it rip in a controlled pulse. This accelerates plasma in the circular vacuum and bob's your uncle, we spend the next week sifting through all the data. When I gave the go-ahead there was an unexpected flash of light that signalled something wrong. Yes, it was bright—a kind of cold, blank light. Short duration, very intense...

INTERVIEW 2. *Research assistant, Suyin Cheng.* It was so bright that I had to cover my face. In a flash I saw all the bones in my hand. We thought that the focal rings had blown in the sync, or something. Then, as I recall it, Alan called in the protocol for securing the chamber. Radiation was the worry... And I had this persistence of vision, like some kind of retinal burn. No, it wasn't the image of my hand. It was the face.

INTERVIEW 3. *Physicist, Joseph Cartwright.* The data is what speaks. It was all there to be seen and boy was I surprised. Already I could see that we'd bagged something really strange. To tell the truth, it wasn't so much new particles as counterintuitive behaviours in the ones we already knew. You could say things were all over the place.

INTERVIEW 4. *Science liaison, Intus Group, Jan la Dorré.* You could tell the team were worried but once they read the room was normal they went in to inspect the machine for damage. No, it's not exactly a state of the art facility. It's like a spaghetti farm crammed into a basement. Because there's no window they had to watch everything through computer screens. I heard a scream, like somebody had hurt themselves. Of course, my underlying concern is always for our exposure and it's only normal to be worried about safety too. I went to the door, to see if I could help. No, (long pause)... I wouldn't say that I saw the face myself... Yes, I may have taken photos of the wall. It's hard to recall. As you can see for yourself, there was nothing there.

INTERVIEW 5. *Synchrotron operator, Leigh Kretzmer.* There was a face in the wall. It wasn't there before... Just a plain cement brick wall, painted white. Yes... a woman's face... What was it like? I don't know how to say... (weeps)

INTERVIEW 6. *Physicist, Danny Godwin.* We were all just speechless. None of us approached it but we spent a fair bit of time observing. And it was watching us! No, I wouldn't say it moved. It was like those masks that change expression when the light source moves. One of those Japanese masks. Plain white, but the eyes were definitely open and watching us. When Leigh screamed we all panicked and got out of there quick as we could. Then Alan wouldn't let anyone leave the control room. The bastard locked the outer door and stopped the Intus woman

who was about to share a photo.

INTERVIEW 2. *Research assistant, Suyin Cheng.* I helped comfort poor Leigh while Alan was making some kind of plan to record the thing. He made us all promise, and then had Joe and Danny set up the equipment. That took a few minutes. By then Leigh had calmed down but she wouldn't go back into the sync chamber. It's a small, sealed room, lots of sensors everywhere. I was monitoring radiation and readings were the same as normal, and Joe was insisting that the torque of some basic particles had reversed. I think he was worried about contamination or something, as if it wasn't too late for that. Alan insisted we open the chamber again. They went in and set up reflective panels with lights and two video cameras, maybe two metres away from the anomaly. They were recording the whole time. Oh, you've watched the footage? Then I guess you know what they recorded.

INTERVIEW 3. *Physicist, Joseph Cartwright.* Nothing! Nothing at all, man! Just a recording of a blank wall. Empty space. I don't know what to tell you. We all saw it—even that corporate lady—but nothing made it onto video. What can I tell you? Yeah, I have a pet theory, but how would you test it? No, it doesn't make sense. Just as a feeling, you know? That somehow we made an echo chamber and were looking back at ourselves.

INTERVIEW 1. *Project lead, physicist Alan James Denny.* No, I wouldn't like to speculate. That's your department, isn't it? I'm a scientist. The energy spike burned out many of the sensors so we don't have much hard data beyond that rather peculiar particle activity. And obviously, some weird psychological effects. You saw how the team are.

INTERVIEW 6. *Physicist, Danny Godwin.* Like a man's face. It chose to look like us. That's an act of communication. Yes, I'm certain. I feel it. A delivery. It's inside me. Even now. And when I shut my eyes I can still see the face.

INTERVIEW 5. *Synchrotron operator, Leigh Kretzmer.* (composes herself) I felt like, I don't know... All right: I felt like God was judging me. To change me. To warn me. Don't ask me why I feel this. I don't care what the university does. They can fire me. I won't lie anymore. I won't. Sure, I've done things I regret. Everyone has things they'd like to forget, but that day... It was like, every memory that came into my head the face was there. All my life. You don't know. Those are my memories! My life! (weeps)

INTERVIEW 2. *Research assistant, Suyin Cheng.* Not much to go on without any data. I guess once we realised that the phenomena had stabilised we began to get excited. Alan was convinced this was something big. He wouldn't let Jan go. You can't get phone signal down there and when she tried to leave he threatened

to lock her in the storage cupboard. (Laughs) There was an argument when we were trying to hash together how to measure this thing. We were trying to rule things out.

INTERVIEW 5. *Synchrotron operator, Leigh Kretzmer.* There were some crazy ideas. Then someone said: 'If this is a face, then where is the body?' Bloody Danny wanted run the sync again. To apply more energy! He wanted widen the aperture. But I knew that this thing had always been in my life. Like a worm in the apple of time.

INTERVIEW 6. *Physicist, Danny Godwin.* The observer alters the experiment. How could we be objective? We were the experiment. That thing, it could see us even with a metre of shielding between us. There was a kind of... a kind of collapsing of space. Suyin thought she'd been taking notes while we were all talking. I remember her face when Joe pointed out that she'd just been drawing the face. The biggest shock was when we used the quantum camera.

INTERVIEW 1. *Project lead, physicist Alan James Denny.* Yes, perhaps it was a bit unorthodox. No, there was no clearance and the ethics board are having a fit right now. I adjudged that this was a potentially short-lived phenomenon of singular importance. We had one shot to measure as much as we could. The camera was the most sensitive equipment we had. What? Well, I suppose so. We were all emotional. The phenomena induced a strange... effect. I don't know, I would say that I was elated. Danny, he wanted to talk to the thing.

INTERVIEW 4. *Science liaison, Intus Group, Jan la Dorré.* It was getting out of hand. Alan superseded his authority and nobody was listening to me. They were all arguing and shouting and then Danny Godwin tried to go back into the chamber so he could try and talk to the... the... appearance. No! I didn't see anything myself. I think they were all delusional. Some kind of mass hysteria.

INTERVIEW 3. *Physicist, Joseph Cartwright.* Danny? He's just a crazy guy. Sorry, that's a figure of speech. He has some religious beliefs. But a very good physicist. Myself, I didn't want him to go anywhere near the thing. I got scared all of a sudden, like we were all gonna die. Like nothing meant anything, you know? I'm not really making sense. But nothing was making sense.

INTERVIEW 2. *Research assistant, Suyin Cheng.* We used the quantum camera. It took about five minutes to set it up. That thing was watching us the whole time. The camera is about this big, on a trolley. How does it work? It uses entanglement to show a referred holographic image of subatomic particles. We thought that the reverse-torqued photonic stream had brought in some exotic material. The sync has these open magnetic 'traps' that hold particles, and that's where I found this particular one. I want to call it the 'Noh particle'. Unfortunately it didn't last. Disappeared like a ghost. If I had to hazard a guess I'd say that it didn't survive measurement.

INTERVIEW 5. *Synchrotron operator, Leigh Kretzmer.* Suyin wouldn't say what was wrong but suddenly she desperately wanted to leave. Wouldn't tell us why. Alan tried to throw his weight around, ordered her to stay. She opened the door to the outside world though, and somehow that broke the localised environment.

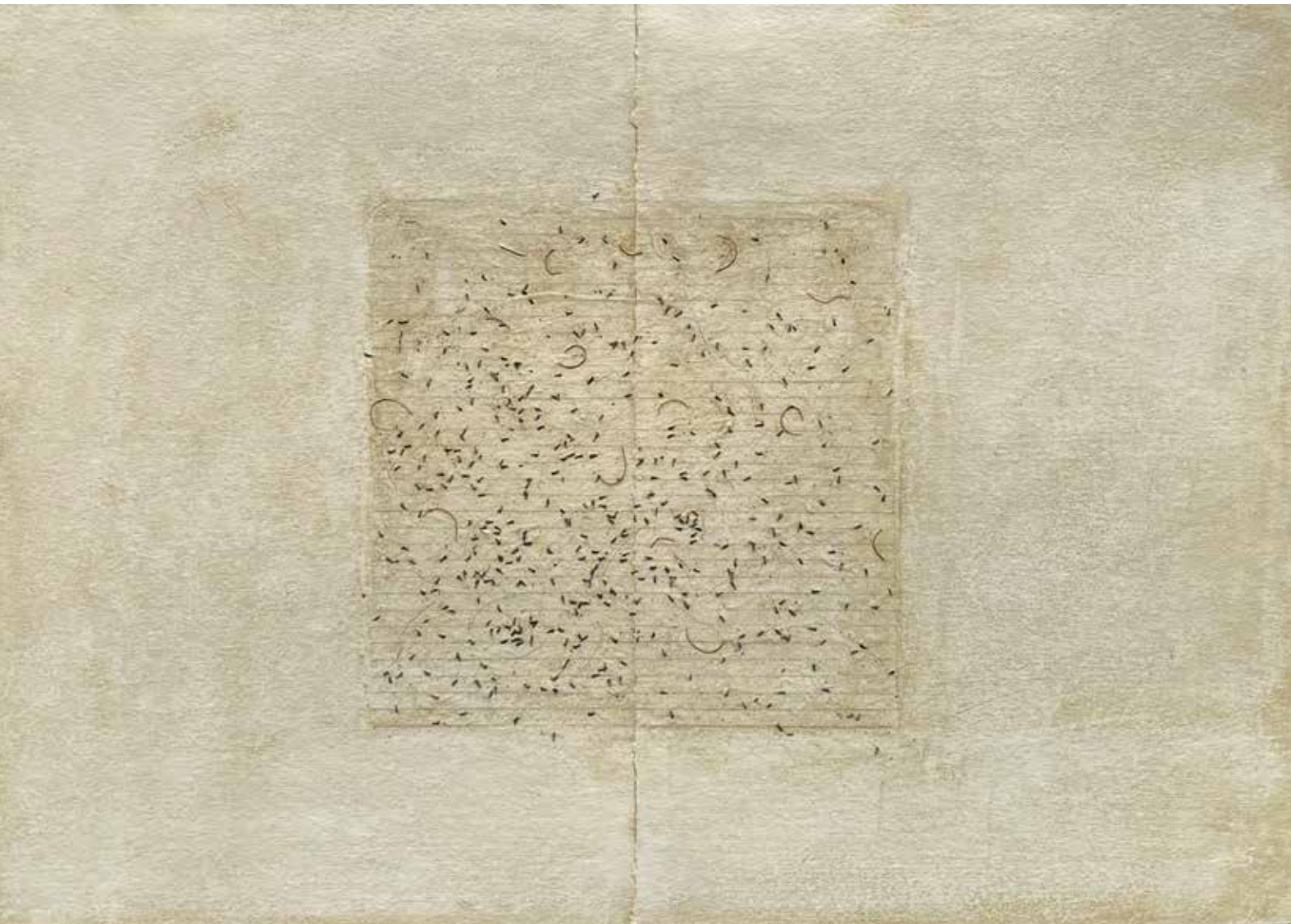
INTERVIEW 3. *Physicist, Joseph Cartwright.* The quantum camera shoots a kind of 'ghost beam' of twinned particles at the subject. It's like a holographic periscope, indirect, like seeing something out of the corner of your eye. The computer interprets the resulting map so you can see a representative image of the subject at an incredibly small planar scale. But of course, all we saw was the face, looking back at us.

INTERVIEW 6. *Physicist, Danny Godwin.* I was standing perhaps two metres away from it and found I couldn't approach. Something stopped me. Nothing physical. I just couldn't get closer no matter how hard I pushed. So I asked it a question, I can't remember whatelipsis... I recall that there was no sound, like everything was muted. The face was there and then it was gone. So I turned around and came back through the doors.

-Lee Hana



*Internal Language*  
Luiza Stere



**People who hate summer are the most patient people**

the most empathic.

People who eat vegetables look hard at the sun.

People who lose weight always find it again  
like a new friend you find out is a cousin of your pain.

Pain, if a person, is someone who never grieved losing you.  
They had faith in your friendship even though you forgot them.

Tell pain your memories of walking until your legs ached.  
Memories smell like hot creosote on railroad ties.

Days of no rain  
smell like two weeks of purple lilacs

sound like the endless song of chipping sparrows  
look like solar light shining through iron tables at night.

The patterns pain makes and how it is stored.  
Name them a name you won't forget

like which lightswitch goes to which light  
which way to turn your car home.

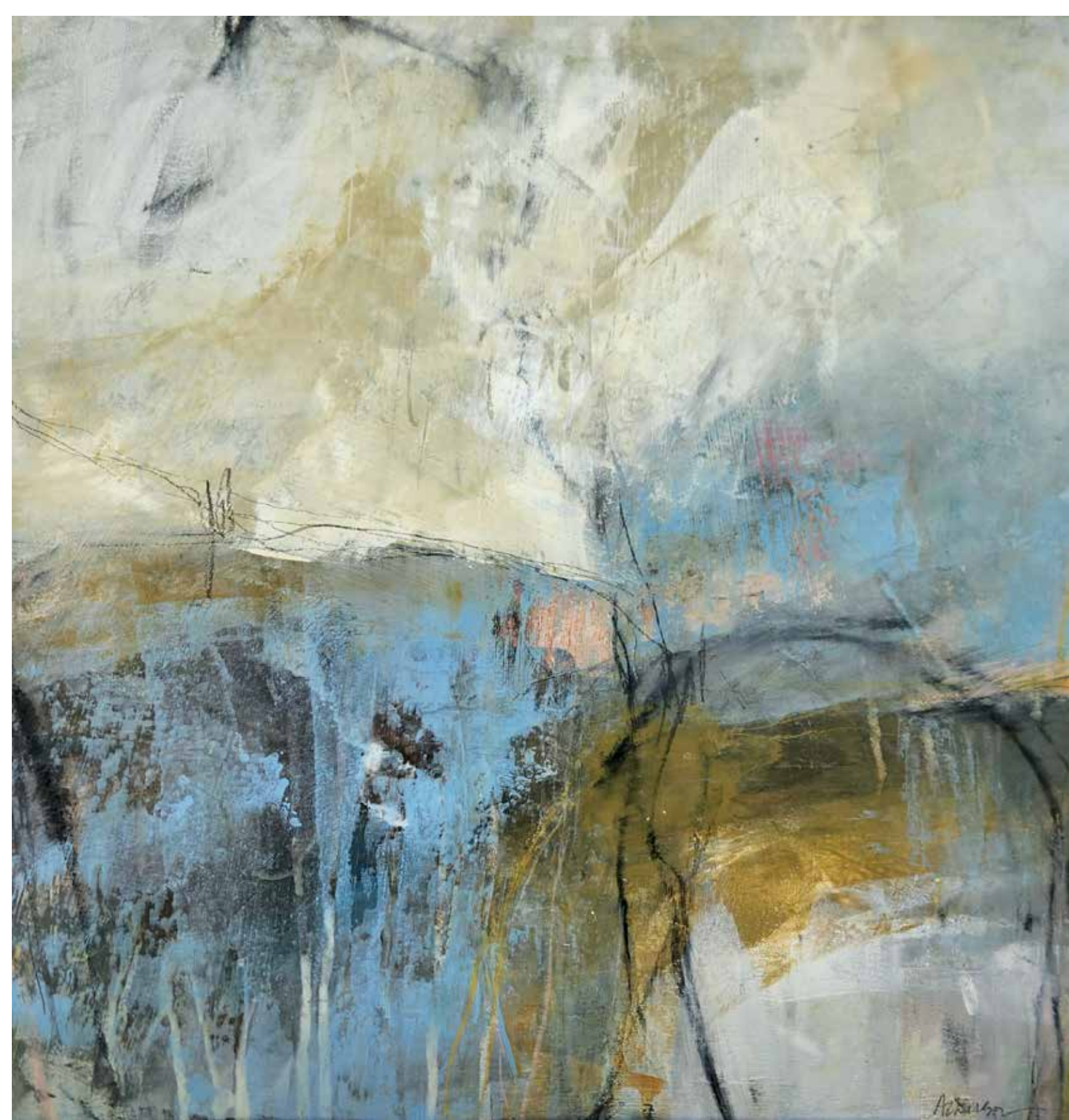
*-Jessica Purdy*

### Rain in Dublin

—after “Snow In North Jersey” by August Kleinzahler

Rain is falling on Lansdowne Street station  
as if for the first time, enters the platform  
in a fine mist that creeps into coat linings.  
At Tara, the River Liffey slides by pedestrians  
who bottleneck at intersections tourists feel  
are lovingly marked: “look right,” and thoughtful  
beeps count down the seconds until they can cross.  
Rain falls evenly on every soul out this afternoon  
whether working, shopping, or begging,  
and on the holiday lights stretched over Henry Street  
that glow more brightly with each passing minute,  
and on O’Connell Street’s Christmas tree that squats  
in front of The Spire, on the banner’s two languages,  
slicks up even the statue of James Joyce  
forever gazing through his bronze glasses  
and leaning contrapposto on his cane.  
The open mall’s cobblestones are greasy with rain,  
and all the wares in the market carts  
are sealed under transparent tarps, items on the cheap  
sold by the louder voices aggravated by the damp.  
Their laughter is charged with the nearness of closing  
and the streets drain of people,  
their coats left to dry on radiators  
where people had woken up this morning  
to winter birdsong, a silver sky, and green green grass.

*-Jessica Purdy*



*Demarcation*  
Anne W. Ackerson

### A Rose Is Not Arose Is Not *Arroz*

Following the Appalachians across northern New Brunswick, I stopped at Mount Carlton Provincial Park visitor center to inquire about Serpentine Mountain. My atlas showed it by that name, with Serpentine River running off what I presumed to be its heavy metal flank. Serpentine is an uncommon stone rich in iron, magnesium, and rare plants. The name derives from a reticulated surface pattern suggesting the scales of a serpent.

The visitor center information person at first looked puzzled, then sincerely said, “Oh, you mean Suppertime Mountain.” So I wondered whether the locals renamed the mountain by a gradual change of pronunciation, a misunderstanding, or a biblical assault on all things reptilian. Only later did I learn there is no serpentine on the mountain or beside the river. So who knows how the name on the atlas came about?

This is not the first time I encountered a difference of opinion between those who live on the land and those who merely map it. On the U.S. Geological Survey topographic map for the “down-east” region of coastal North Carolina are two landscape features with the word “merkle” in them: Merkle Bay and Merkle Hammock Creek.

With the possible exception of German prime ministers, there is no such thing as a merkle, or at least there wasn't before this map was printed in 1949. In the real world, these features are Myrtle Bay and Myrtle Hammock Creek. “Merkle” is how the locals pronounce it, but “myrtle” is how they would spell it if asked. Apparently by phonetic transcription, the clueless cartographer unwittingly transformed a word he knew into one he didn't. But really, don't you wish there were a merkle?

Myrtle is the name of a plant common in coastal Carolina, *Morella cerifera*. Also known as wax-myrtle, it is a relative of the bayberry found north to Newfoundland. Myrtle isn't the only word given a new sonority by the down-easters. Turtle is “terkle” and tar kiln is “tarkle.” These people may be direct linguistic descendants of those who gave us “huckleberry” from England's “whortleberry” by way of “hurtleberry.” They may also be the wordsmiths behind the fanciful-sounding but real “farkleberry,” the name of a small blueberry tree, *Vaccinium arboreum*. But the origin of that name remains unknown.

Now about that tar kiln. It was a relatively simple, extremely crude, and no doubt hazardous way to extract tar (pitch) from pine wood. During much of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, pine tar was North Carolina's greatest export. It was especially important for caulking and waterproofing wooden ships, and was known as naval stores. Most tar was collected by stripping bark from living trees and using a bucket to collect the pitch that gathered in the wound, somewhat like the method for collecting maple sap.

A tar kiln was used to extract pitch from cut wood and stumps. The earthen kiln could be of various sizes and shapes, but the remains I have seen in the pine woods of southeastern North Carolina are low circular mounds about 30 feet in diameter. They are one to two feet higher than the surrounding ground (probably higher still in their prime), with a few spoke-like troughs cut in the sandy dirt and running slightly downhill from the center to the outer edge. The wood was piled in the middle of the kiln, set on fire, then covered with dirt to produce a slow burn. The melted tar would run down the troughs to collection barrels.

A foreman was once heard to say, “The pitch in that thar tarkle is 'bout as fast as that terkle nappin' 'neath the merkle.”

-Richard LeBlond

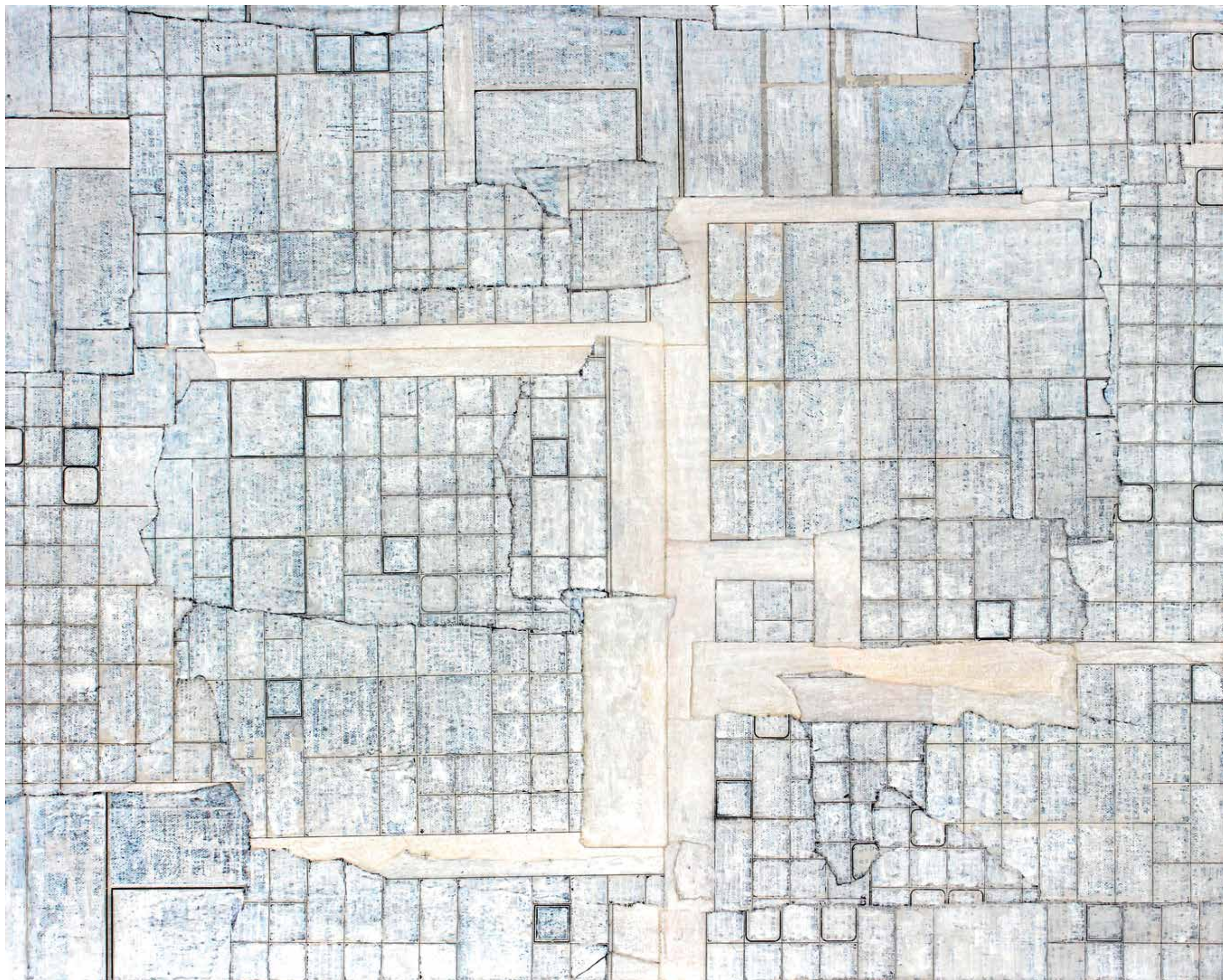
### Crush

The feeling, when it came, was all-consuming, unhinging like a python's jaw. *This will end*, I told myself as instructed, the once-thrashing animal stretching tessellated scales as it dissolved. I imagined the feeling as a float in a parade—beneath every green streamer and capital-letter banner, a series of wheels. Passing in front of me, one and then another and another, an exhilaration I pretended to have shed. Instead of scrabbling for strewn candy, I fumbled the uniformity of a rosary, the last of the beads approaching. About prayer, there was nothing to say except the prayer itself, the way lips, unbidden, found lips. In the breath between, a vacuum and the impression of a shape repeating. *This will end*. In 1604 Kepler observed the *stella nova* in the foot of the serpent-bearer; from the remnants centuries later, astronomers extrapolated: type Ia, runaway star, bipolar planetary nebula. A stellar hourglass trickling light-millennia behind. Once I swallowed a box of cough medicine from the dollar store and watched reruns in a fetal ball on the sofa. I heard the laughter for what it was: the mounded tumuli of a sound wave. I was expansive and impassive, even as the pressure inside my skull mounted. This black hole became my archaic thesaurus, my bestiary of dying constellations, my endless atlas of streetlamps flickering out.

-Joshua Zeitler



Attempted  
Paul Carroll



*Post Dogmatist Painting #1035*  
Cecil Touchon

### Mimeograph: A Contrapuntal

you imparted to me	what never existed in my house:
validation--	craving for
your mirror--	my parents' presence
I did not know	I did not know there was another way
what to look for	to define the lines of self
scrutinizing, realizing	some people cannot change;
replaying every day	the blind spots of their lives, only
remembering can be	hardly any color;
a way to rewrite	I learn to create
the past	on my own

*-Loralee Clark*

### The Shortest Playlist

The soundtrack of his life was  
a series of whispers leaving him asking  
why he had wandered down this road,  
chosen a path that never seemed to arrive,  
always in transit between the forgotten  
and the unknowable, a temporal bardo  
he waiting for a rebirth, the question  
“and then?” hanging over him Damoclean.  
He knew there had to be a destination  
but perhaps it was easier not knowing  
what that might be, for he was always  
somewhere, his life map and endless  
parade of “You Are Here” signs with no  
idea where here was or where there might be  
He was sandwiched between the past  
and the future, one a rock, the other  
amorphous, fluid, evanescent.  
He wondered if life was like this  
for others, if they felt the vacillations  
between destiny and purpose.  
Or was he alone in his geographic sense  
of lack of place, always in motion  
yet never homeward bound, always home.

*-Louis Faber*

### Weekend LSD

Accent chairs

Shade: Humanity Gray;

Chrome countertops.

A pressed white shirt,

Pattern: tiny blue planes,

stylish and versatile:

Takeoff or

take-downs, jet-set. Except

Which is industrial

Who is farmhouse

Where are the walkable locations, and

How much slower is the pace, and

Where are the farmer's markets

which sell only

the pits of pomes?

*-Meagan DeJong*

### I waited at the train station

I waited at the train station in Warsaw—I was going to say “in a foreign land” but “foreign” is a slippery word, dependent on where the sun rises and sets on you on any given day.

Any land can seem foreign given the right circumstances, even the one in which you were born and spent half your life—the language of childhood untranslatable to your adult self. My body, too, has become a foreign land to me with its ever-changing topography, for which there exists no map to chart my way back to familiar territory. All the trail markings smudged, faded, illegible.

*-Bernadette Geyer*

## The Landing

The Olympic wall climbers move so fast  
up the hand and foot holds of the wall  
they look like all the different spiders  
in the Spider-Verse of whatever dimension  
they crawl through the Marvel-ous universe.  
So much is at stake.

Attached to a safety cable at a fair,  
I tried that once—climb—crawl.  
Harnessed to conquer fear of *up there*,  
or like my father-in-law always joked  
about flying his turquoise 1946 Aeronica Champ,  
cloth stretched over a steel skeleton:

*It's not the takeoff that worries me; it's the landing.*

Once in the trainee seat, I'd flown with him  
over the Mackinaw State Forest, over  
the private lake invisible from ground,  
over the second-generation pine growth,  
over my children and husband waving,  
smiling up at us from the gravel road,  
maybe wishing they were *up there* too,  
but I was the only one  
light enough and old enough to sit  
with a trainee joystick and not touch it,  
while we lifted from the grass runway,  
flew under the radar out of military airspace,  
later bumping to a stop on that grassy airstrip.

Decades of slips and bumps and crashes later,  
I spidered up a climbing wall,

on a commando crawl  
at the perpendicular against the gravity  
of many weighty situations.

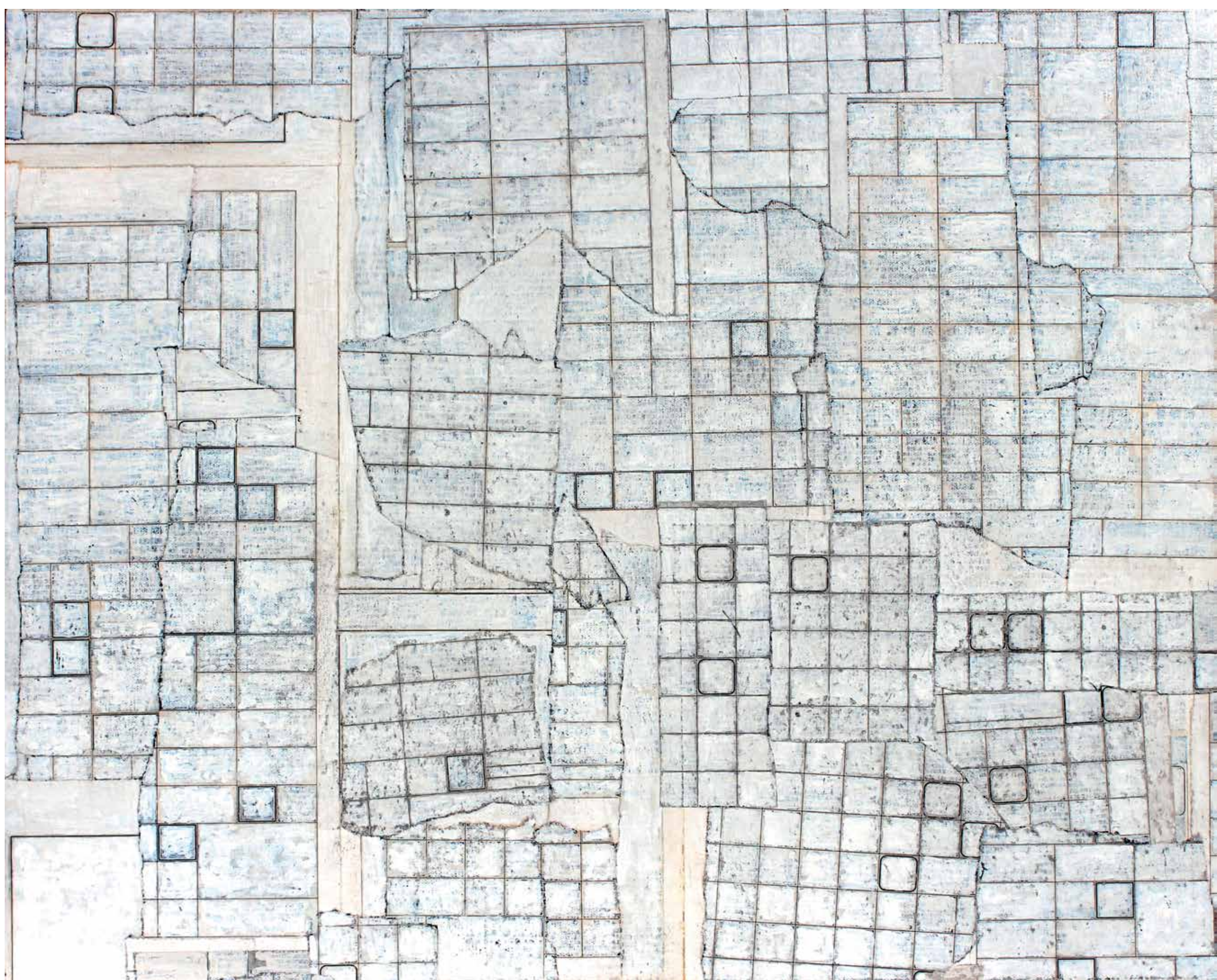
*It's not the takeoff that worries me; it's the landing.*

Finally on the mountain top,  
I felt the celebratory  
reckless lack of discipline,  
looked down—my glasses slipped off,  
clattered on the holds as they fell,  
landed on the rubberized crash pad,  
bent but not broken.

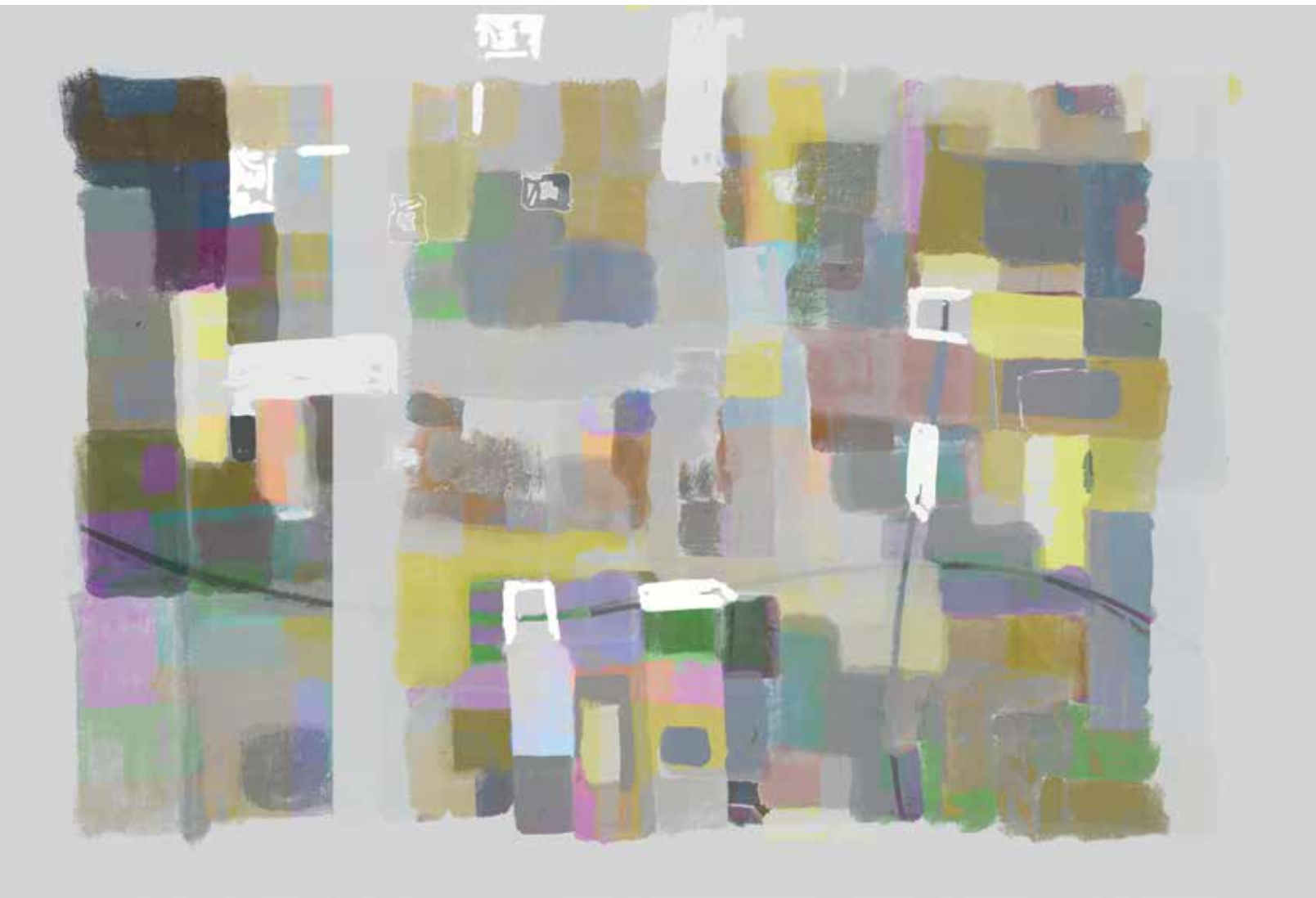
In seconds glee melted in a myopic fog.  
I am no Spider-Gwen, no pilot, no gymnast.  
Rappelling into the unknown—  
is it less fraught in half blindness?

If you can call bumping  
a path to ground without crashing a win,  
I stuck the landing.

*-Jeanne Blum Lesinki*



*Post Dogmatist Painting #1036*  
Cecil Touchon



*In the Grid*  
Paul Ledington

### **In Canada looking at a map of North Tipperary**

*The placenames sing out to me:*

*Birdbill, Ballina and Killaloe.*

In Nenagh schools they told us,  
over these wet hills  
Sarsfield and his men marched,  
silent in the night with a rapparee,  
an epic hike, armed with cunning, pike and sword.

*The placenames stretch my tongue and mouth:*

*Castlcranna, Silvermines and The Devil's Bit.*

On an August midnight they approached  
a bulwarked Ballyneety and were asked,  
“What is the password?”  
Sarsfield the word, Sarsfield the man,  
and a short thunderclap battle began.

*The placenames whisper hard at me:*

*Killoscully, Portroe and Templekelly.*

A siege-train seized and set alight,  
the roar and whump shook the ground, and walls  
miles away, fell apart. The sky was a  
tundra of orange plumes, two counties  
stood still and watched.

*The placenames spellbind me:*

*Keeper Hill, Ballyvally, Clonallan and Toon.*

In a barrio of Buenos Aires, Argentina,  
there exists Club Atlético Vélez Sarsfield,  
and when the wind shifts on winter nights,  
the ball falling strangely, they know from where it comes:  
*Ballintinoe, Arrabawn and Birdbill.*

*-John Doyle*

### Having Lost All Sense

Like broken clocks, the birds chime.  
October's forehead is slick  
with sweat; the marigold light sighs-  
Summer has died on the throne.

The sun flashes her chipped tooth  
in a shriveled grin, drunkenly  
stumbles through my bedroom window  
and same as we all flirt with light  
as it wanes at our thighs,  
I recall

The ladybug like a mistaken angel  
on her bedroom floor. I remember  
the yolk of moonlight pooling around her,  
I remember myself - soft stone fruit  
blushing like candlelight.

See, September was a bleeding exhale.  
I woke every day with a spiritual hangover,  
acutely aware that everything vibrates  
at the atomic level, always.

Today all my stringy pulp and pit  
lay strewn across my room.  
Having cut out the soft spots,  
I try to bend sound, sweetly  
with this new shape.

*-Juliana Briggs*



*Echoes of Heritage*  
Mariam Magsi

## The Body Hieroglyphic

after *Self-portrait and Autobiography* by Alice Rahon (b. France/Mexico), 1948

I am flesh and bone,  
muscle and sinew.

I am gene structures,  
skin and inheritance.

I am the burnt smell of pogroms  
and chicken soup on the stove.

I am the swept-up remains  
after a festive meal,  
and the ashes that seep  
into the walls, altering  
their shade.

I rise like dough kneaded  
for fresh baked challah.

I am the full-bodied taste  
of good *shabbos* wine,  
not sugary sweet, but bold  
and well balanced.

My eyes reflect candlelight  
marking joy with each waning moon.

I am a collection of triumphs  
and struggles of those who came before;  
generations of men and women  
who made me possible.

I am what lingers  
after too much  
slaughter.

-Kaila Schwartz

## Comparative Religion

From my kitchen window, I observe  
his twice daily treks through the alley.  
Gait quick, chin forward, ferocious

arm swings, he is ancient man chasing  
game. He dons a flapping trench coat  
and black gloves fall to spring. Grungy

jogging shoes add bounce to uneven steps.  
As he passes, a glance sometimes darts  
my way. I don't know if I should fear him.

One block down he'll pass the graffiti end  
of the Gothic church. Sunday mornings  
the bell in its turret tries to woo us.

Two blocks and he'll get to where I think  
he's going—Taco Bell, Rally's Hamburgers,  
the Super America with its carry out liquor.

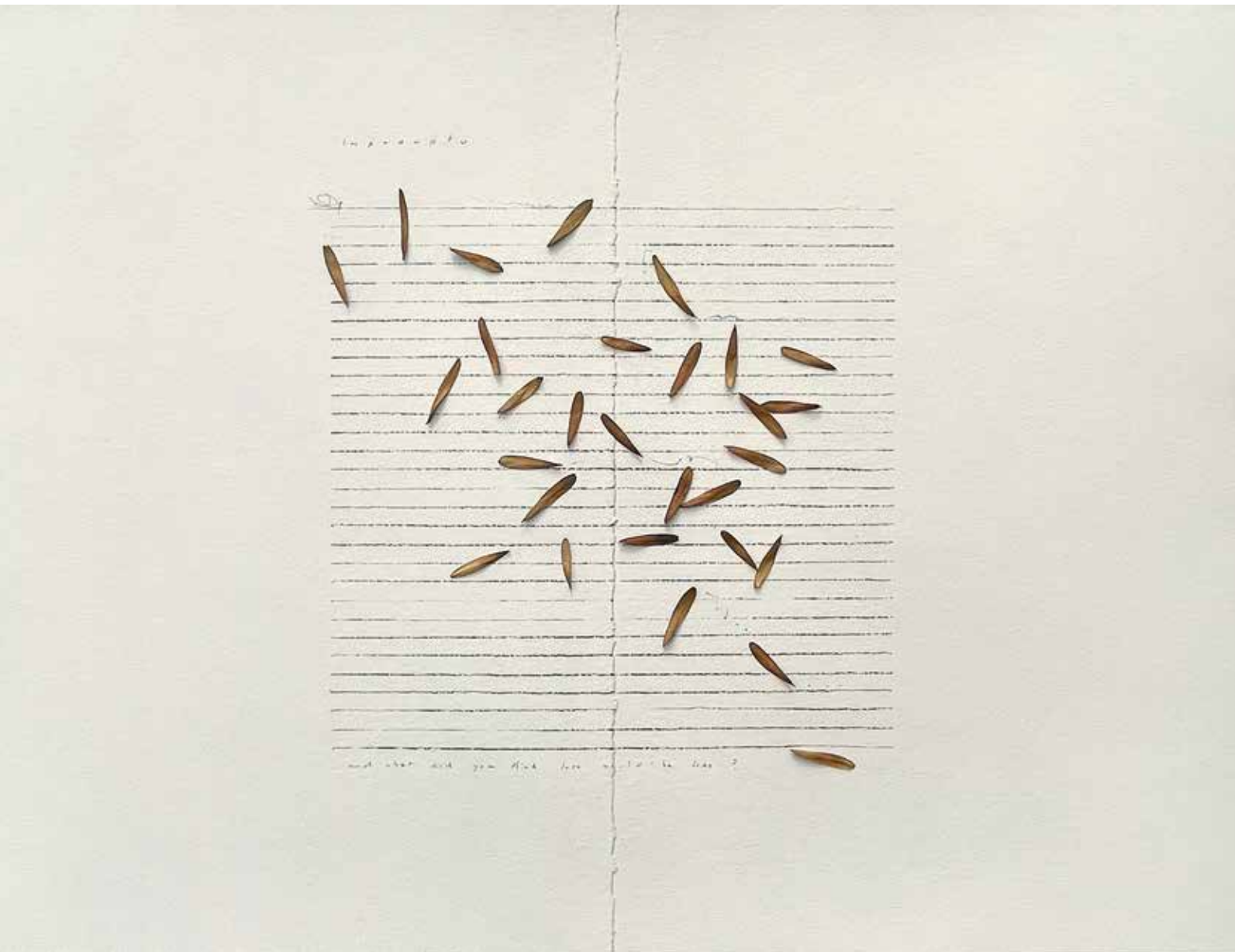
A week till Christmas he trudges  
through the alley's rutted snow  
passes my tulip tree that is bare

but for seed-pod crowns the squirrels gnaw.  
He's lost his gloves. Fingers flutter  
in the cold like frightened cherubs. He stops,

turns to me a face sprouting bristles  
of salt, thrusts his fists in the air and screams,  
*Hallelujah!* displaying a passion

I never acquired. In an instant he returns  
to his sloppy pilgrimage for burger or burrito,  
maybe some spirits to take home.

-Linda Fuller-Smith



*Impromptu - and what did you think love would be like*  
Fric J. Jacobs

## Superfine

Dredged up from the seabed where it rested, the gown is nearly perfectly preserved. The men who are bringing it up to the twenty-first century do not realize what it is they have surfaced. Four centuries earlier, it was flung from the hold and hurled into the murky depth. It descended, torqued by underwater currents, until settling on the ocean floor: submerged femininity.

The dress is found inside a chest packed with a velvet robe, a toiletry set, stockings, and a bodice. There is also a velvet purse and a comb for removing lice. All the accoutrements needed to chart a path towards womanhood.

In the rude daylight of today, colors swirl across the ancient silk brocade: carmine and russet blotched from the centuries. A dress of silk damask in an alluring gold that seems to emit as much light as it caught. The rich fabric is surely a treasure from Damascus, city of silk and steel, two materials prized for their strength. The textile is created by reversing the action of the warp and weft threads. Weft threads move deftly on the horizontal line, over and under the vertical strings of the warp. It is a matrix fashioned by patience and devotion.

The stays are stiffened with whalebone, flexing to meet flesh. The times dictated; a lady must be redressed, corrected by her stays. These are the rules which are sutured into the dress by the seamstresses, each stitch the autograph of an artisan.

It must have belonged to a Lady-in-waiting, maneuvered into it by a dresser. These dresses were designed to convey, display, entice. Tiny silk covered buttons which require a special tool to apply. Gold and silver buttons begging to be opened, to be slipped free, unloosed.

Removing them is a different sort of task. A lover might pluck them off like little grapes, spitting them onto the floor. They'll make a delicate clatter, a sound that is something like laughter. Oh, the things this garment saw before it escaped to the sea: dinner parties and lush inner chambers, hands groping, crystal glasses clinking.

Some speculate the dress was stolen by a band of roving thespians, who absconded with it on a Dutch merchant ship and plotted their way across the northern hemisphere with their stories. This dress contains plans for anarchy, defiance, deviance. The ship warps forward, sailors working the ropes. They switchback over open waters, navigating from England through the North Sea and up the curve of the Netherlands, urging themselves back home alongside the Frisian islands. But their path is perverted, warped by storm.

Shipwrecked, the gown is finally freed.

The superfine golden fabric settles, flush against the ocean bed. When it is discovered centuries later, it will be the richest cargo ever found. But until then, the sandy bottom is a graveyard. It is buried so deep that the silk will not decompose. A world of sea creatures float past, some of which will never be recorded, never seen by a human eye: spiny sea urchins and globular jellyfish, delicate seahorses with their breakable spines forever suspended upright. The bottom feeders suck up whatever microscopic nourishment they can squelch from the sand. No light will reach here, except for the phosphorescence of particular fish. Instructions to the past, buried so deep, waiting for those willing to dive.

*-Melissa Moschitto*

## Contributors

**AnimæNoctis** is a multimedia duo launched in 2019: Silvia Marcantoni Taddei (November 26, 1994) & Massimo Sannelli (November 27, 1973). They are musicians, filmmakers, photographers, models, performers, 3D items makers, publishers, post-porn artists, dancers, activists via art. Silvia & Massimo left Italy in 2025 and are now based in Novi Sad, Serbia.

**Anne W. Ackerson** (she/her/hers) is a Troy, NY-based visual artist bringing the drama and fragility of the rural landscape to paper. She works primarily in acrylic and mixed media, using a variety of mark-making tools -- charcoal, graphite, pastel, crayon – and sometimes natural materials such as bark, stone, leaf litter, and soil to create a strong multi-layered mix of pattern, texture, and colors. Anne writes, “I am exploring my relationship to the natural world – a world in peril due to climate trauma and one that will be forever changed before my lifetime is over.”

**Joe Arts** is a Studio Arts graduate of The American College of Switzerland and The University of North Texas. He has exhibited widely and has participated in various artist’s residencies throughout the country. He lives and works in Central Wisconsin.

**Gabriele Artusio** was born in Ciriè. He studied at Liceo Artistico Aldo Passoni in Turin and later at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan where he graduated in painting in 2020. He was in partnership with a textile studio in Como and I currently live in Volpiano (TO). He teaches graphic design in an art high school in Castellamonte and he is in partnership with the Milanese company WallPepper as a wallpaper designer.

**Debra Bream** is an award-winning artist, wife and mother. A graduate of Washington University in St. Louis with a BFA in fine arts, she also attended John Carroll and has a CPA (inactive) and worked as financial analyst. She has written travel articles for aviation periodicals, including GANews, Private Pilot Magazine and Flyer Newspaper. The world around her provides a never-ending source of inspiration for her paintings and cyanotypes. Color and light call to her, as the framework to tell a visual story.

**Juliana Briggs** is a Pittsburgh-based writer, runner, and drummer working as a research technician in trauma and transfusion medicine. Her writing often employs imagery and abstraction to approach the edges of memory, mortality, love, and the body. Her work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and has appeared in *Rogue Agent*.

**Paul Carroll's** photography practice documents the interaction between people, communities, and their environment. Carroll's narrative-driven documentary work unfolds over several years. These series emerge from thorough research, offering a comprehensive view of the subject by amalgamating landscape with other photographic genres. This approach is captured in his two monographs, *Gaelic Fields* and *Redd*, which explore the intersection between humanity and environment through considered storytelling. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. It resides in public and private collections and has been supported by The Arts Council of Ireland.

**Francesco Ciaponi** is a scholar of the history and aesthetics of underground culture. In 2015 he founded the website Edizioni del Frisco. He teaches History of Print and Publishing at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome and at the Accademia di Belle Arti G.B. Tiepolo in Udine, and Theory of New Media at the Modartech Institute. He has published numerous books, including *Underground: ascesa e declino di un'altra editoria* (Milieu, 2025), *Controculture 1955–1995* (Lazy Dog, 2024), and *Fanzine Culture* (Flaco, 2024). He contributes to Italian and international magazines like *Artribune*, *Grafica magazine*, *The Good Life*, and publishes fanzines on the themes of his research, including *Sticker Art: storia dell'arte adesiva* and *Xerox Art: l'arte della fotocopia*.

**Loralee Clark** has had two chapbooks and two books of poetry, the latest being *Neolithic Imaginings: Mythical Explorations of the Unkenom* (Kelsay Press, 2026). Clark has been nominated for three 2026 Pushcart Prizes. She resides in Virginia; her website is [sites.google.com/view/loraleeclark](https://sites.google.com/view/loraleeclark). Her Substack, which focuses on the process of creativity, is [nosuchthingasfailure.substack.com](https://nosuchthingasfailure.substack.com).

**Meagan DeJong** (she/her) is a writer from northern New Jersey now living outside of Philadelphia with her family. After earning her Master of Arts in Writing Studies from Montclair State University, she taught college writing for nearly a decade, worked supporting educational cybersecurity initiatives for the government, and now helps to craft proposals for a large energy and sustainability firm. Content to serve as a story midwife for the last twenty years helping others bring their voices into the world, she is finally finding her own.

**Katerina Dementeva** is a queer and feminist writer, poetess, performance artist, and facilitator of creative writing events based in Riga, Latvia. Her work, both prose and poetry, has been published in various European independent magazines and underground zines. She has been a resident at the International Writers' and Translators' House in Ventspils, Latvia, Jaunpils castle, Latvia, the Women in the Mountains program in Bulgaria, and has participated in projects supported by Europeana, the European digital cultural heritage library. Substack – <https://substack.com/@kdementeva>

**John Ahern Doyle** is an Irish-born author, poet & playwright in Canada. He worked for the Globe and Mail as a journalist and wrote two non-fiction books. One, *The World is a Ball*, about his adventures covering soccer, was a bestseller. He wrote poetry in the long-ago and returned to it, with poems published in Canada and Ireland. His play *Shelter* will be staged in 2026. He lives happily in Toronto.

**Ann Enzminger** is a San Antonio-based multidisciplinary artist and curator whose practice encompasses collage, painting, fiber, and installation. Her work examines memory, material culture, and the ways personal histories are shaped. In addition to her studio practice, she founded Enzminger Studio, an artist-run exhibition space that presents emerging and mid-career artists through exhibitions, workshops, and community programming. Her work reflects a sustained interest in storytelling, documentation, and the transformative potential of everyday materials.

**Louis Faber** is a poet and writer. His work has appeared in *The MacGuffin*, *Cantos*, *Alchemy Spoon* (UK), *Meniscus* and *Arena Magazine* (Australia) *New Feathers Anthology*, *Dreich* (Scotland), *Prosetrics*, *Erothanatos* (Greece), *Defenestration*, *Atlanta Review*, *Glimpse*, *Rattle*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Eureka Literary Magazine*, *Borderlands: the Texas Poetry Review*, *Midnight Mind*, *Pearl*, *Midstream*, *European Judaism*, *The South Carolina Review* and *Worcester Review*, among many others, and has been nominated and twice nominated for a Pushcart Prize and twice for a Best of the Web.

**Rachel May Ferriman** is a South African artist, poet and writer. She has a BA (Fine Arts) from Wits University. She has poems published in several online journals, a short story in *Botsotso Anthology* (Issue 1), and a flash fiction piece in the anthology, *In Other Stories 2025*.

**Michele Fesani** was born in Cesena, Italy, in 1991. After earning a degree in Biomedical Engineering, he began a self-taught artistic path at 26, focusing on painting. His work blends figuration and abstraction, with faces, bodies, and animal forms emerging through layered colors, scratches, drips, and gestural marks. Moving away from academic drawing, his style is instinctive and contemporary. Influenced by twentieth-century movements such as German Expressionism and Fauvism, he reinterprets their emotional intensity in a personal way. His paintings explore identity, emotion, and character, with eyes often becoming symbolic mirrors of inner psychological depth.

**Duncan Forbes**. British poet published by Faber, Secker and Enitharmon, who produced a *Selected Poems* (2009), drawn from five previous collections. He has won a Gregory Award, Stephen Spender Prizes, Hawthornden Award and *TL5/Blackwells* prize. For his most recent collections, *Human Time* (2020) and *Under the Sun* (2024), see [www.duncanforbes.com](http://www.duncanforbes.com)

**Ryan Di Francesco** (he/him) is a neurodivergent Canadian writer, teacher, and editor based in Ontario. His journalistic work has appeared in *The Toronto Star*, and his poetry and fiction are published or forthcoming in over fifty literary journals and anthologies. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *Shadow and Sax*, an independent literary and arts press. His chapbooks include *Mirage of Burning Things* (Parlyaree Press), *Skeleton Mine Disaster* (Bottlecap Press), and *The Paper Hound* and *Canadian Classic* (Alien Buddha Press). His forthcoming books include *Let the Dogs Have It* (Parlyaree Press) and *Along Tongues Full of Time* (Ethel Zine & Micro Press). He was shortlisted for the Rhonda Gail Williford Poetry Prize.

**Angela Fragkou** is a Greek new media artist, researcher, organic chemist, and PhD graduate in Arts whose interdisciplinary practice combines biosciences, digital technologies, sound, and immersive media. Her work explores the intersections between art, scientific methodologies, ecological systems, and speculative futures through experimental processes and hybrid audiovisual forms. Drawing from her background in chemistry and visual arts, she develops projects that integrate real scientific data, bio-art practices, generative systems, and virtual environments. Fragkou has participated in numerous European research projects, conferences, exhibitions, workshops, and collaborative initiatives focusing on interdisciplinary artistic research and the relationship between humans, technology, and living systems.

**Linda Fuller-Smith** was once a professional ballet dancer. Now she enjoys her work managing a quilt fabric store. A Central Ohio native, she also lived a decade in Southern California and nearly a year in Florence, Italy. Linda's poems engage with both personal experience and history, and she is currently writing a book of poems related to the 1927 school bombing in Bath, Michigan that killed her grandmother and sister. The poet received an Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award and has two grown daughters who amaze her.

**Gary Glauber** is a widely published poet, fiction writer, and musician. He recently retired from teaching. He was awarded this past year's Peter Heinegg Literary Award from Union College. He guest-curated the Fall 2025 issue of Sheila-Na-Gig Online. He has five collections. *Small Consolations* (Aldrich Press), *Worth the Candle* (Five Oaks Press), *Rocky Landscape with Vagrants* (Cyberwit), *A Careful Conitron* (Shanti Arts Publishing) and most recently, *Inside Outrage* (Sheila-Na-Gig Editions), an Eric Hoffer Medal Provocateur finalist. He also has two chapbooks, *Memory Marries Desire* (Finishing Line Press) and *The Covalence of Equanimity* (SurVision Books), a winner of the 2019 James Tate International Poetry Prize.

**Bernadette Geyer** is the author of the poetry collections *What Haunts Me* and *The Scabbard of Her Throat*. Her poems

have appeared widely in print and online, including in *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Plant-Human Quarterly*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Bennington Review*, and elsewhere. Geyer lives in Berlin, Germany, where she works as a writer and editor.

**CJ Giroux** lives in Michigan and teaches college English. He is a reader for *Dunes Review*, and his most recent chapbook is *Sheltered in Place*.

**Ellie Goodliffe** masterfully bridges biological science and human emotion. Self-taught, she initially embraced art during a challenging childhood for emotional escape. Holding a Biological Science degree, Ellie infuses her deep fascination with nature, health, and pathophysiology into striking visual narratives.

**Lee Hana** has worked on electoral systems and peace-building projects, from Kabul to Kathmandu, from designing national ballots to writing-producing Timor Leste's most beloved telenovela, *Suku Hali*. An Australian who has spent much of his career in Asia, Lee's writing attempts to make sense of turbulent histories. Lee Hana's writing has appeared in *New Australian Fiction 2024*, *Cordite*, *Dark Mountain*, *RIC*, and *Antipodean SF*.

**David I. Hughes** is a British writer based in West Cornwall. His work explores place, attention, and the relationship between landscape and human experience. His fiction, poetry, and essays have appeared in UK and US literary journals, and he has been recognised in several international competitions, including the Flash 500 Short Story Prize (3rd) and the Lit Fox Poetry Prize (Semi finalist). His work has featured or is forthcoming in *The Berlin Review*, *Shadowplay*, *Ink*, *Sweat & Tears*, *149 Review*, *Metaphrastics* and *The Lake*. He is the author of *The Listener*, a work of speculative literary fiction.

**Sara Jabbari** is an Iranian multidisciplinary artist born and raised in Iran and currently living in Germany. She works across poetry, painting, and sculpture. Her work explores themes of womanhood and cultural identity through poetry and visual art. Inspired by Iranian nomadic rug motifs, her sculptures reinterpret traditional forms through a contemporary lens. She has participated in several painting exhibitions in Tehran.

**Frie J. Jacobs** is a Belgian interdisciplinary visual artist. His oeuvre includes paintings, drawings, visual music scores, asemic writing, handmade artist's books, site-specific interventions, three-dimensional and digital work... For this, he uses virtually everything that can be found in nature: plants, seeds, flowers, roots, a mushroom, charcoal, pigment, beeswax, rain, wind, fire, but also photography, video. Jacobs also composes music and soundscapes for videos. <https://www.frie-j-jacobs.be/>

**Paul Ledington** lives on the Redland Coast [Brisbane] Australia, but was born in the UK 1950. He had a career as a Management Information Systems academic before turning to Art at the age of 70. He completed a Master of Visual Arts (MVA), Queensland College of Art (QCA) Griffith University in 2022, has a practice in extreme digital collage using Procreate on iPad (Non-AI). His practice explores abstraction with a particular emphasis on the 'edge of chaos' where abstraction and representation meet and the noise becomes a signal. A particular focus of his work is the border between abstraction and maps. He has been a finalist in 3 national art prize exhibitions.

**Holly Karapetkova** is Poet Laureate Emerita of Arlington, Virginia, and recipient of an Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellowship for her work with young poets. Her third book of poems is *Dear Empire* from Gunpowder Press.

**Emily Kedar's** poetry has been featured in *Best Canadian Poetry*, *Prairie Fire*, *The Malabat Review*, *Rust and Moth* and *Brink*. She is the past winner of the CBC Toronto Poetry Face-Off. Her manuscript, *Felt Stars*, was a finalist in the 2025 Cider Press Review Book Award. She holds an MFA from Pacific University, where she was a merit scholar. She splits her time between Toronto and Salt Spring Island, Canada.

**Kenji Kojima** has been experimenting with the relationships between perception and cognition, technology, music, and visual art. He was born in Japan and moved to New York in 1980. For the first 10 years he painted contemporary egg tempera paintings. Personal computers improved rapidly in the 80's. He felt more comfortable with computer art than painting. He changed his artwork to digital. He developed the computer software "RGB MusicLab" and created interdisciplinary works. His digital art has been exhibited in New York, media art festivals worldwide, including Europe, Brazil, Asia, and online exhibitions.

**Grant Lambie** explores how map makers decide what becomes visible: such as contours and churches, and what is invisible. His practice searches for the unseen, untold or covered-up histories, giving different relationships with space and time. In 'Spaces of Global Capitalism', David Harvey writes 'the ultimate outcome of capitalism is the elimination of labour and the destruction of all resources (*land*)'. Placing capitalism and climate emergency as synonymous with each other. Grant makes new maps to deal with how land is used and mis-used, in three interlocking areas: history; present practices; and futures.

**Richard LeBlond** is the author of *Homesick for Nowhere*, a collection of essays that won an EastOver Press Nonfiction

Publication Prize in 2022, and was a finalist for general nonfiction in the Spring 2023 San Francisco Book Festival. His essays and photographs have appeared in many U.S. and international journals, including *Montreal Review*, *Weber – The Contemporary West*, *Burningword*, *Lowestoft Chronicle*, *Trampset*, and *Still Point Arts Quarterly*. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, Best American Travel Writing and Best of the Net.

**Valerie Ann Leff's** fiction and essays have been published in *The Antioch Review*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, *Lilith*, *The Sun*, *The Seattle Review*, *Southwest Review*, and many other journals. Her novel, *Better Homes and Husbands*, was published by St. Martin's Press and optioned by NBC-Universal. She served as the executive director of Westport Writers' Workshop, turning it into an independent, non-profit literary arts center offering about thirty creative writing courses per quarter, and before that, she served as Co-Director of Great Smokies Writing Program at UNC—Asheville. She directed a one-day writing conference at the 92nd St. Y in New York and a conference in Creative Writing and Social Justice at the Westport Library in Connecticut. After a long break for mothering a special needs child in crisis and caring for an aging parent, Leff is happy to be able to focus again upon writing.

**Jeanne Blum Lesinski** is a poet in the wild, unaffiliated with any institution or school of thought. Her works have appeared in journals and anthologies, including *Quartet*, *Midwest Review*, *MUSE* and *Literary Mama*. Her poetry collection *Tethers End* debuted from Shanti Arts in 2023. Find her at [jeanneblumlesinskiwriter.com](http://jeanneblumlesinskiwriter.com).

**Rachel Linton** (she/her) is a playwright, poet, and lawyer. Her poems have appeared in *Strange Horizons*, *Emerge Literary Journal*, and the Sunlight Press, among others, and have been nominated for Best of the Net, the Pushcart Prize, and the Rhysling Award. She enjoys stage combat, cats, and time travel—usually into the future at approximately one second per second. Find her at [rachellinton.com](http://rachellinton.com).

**Robert Lunday** is the author of the memoir *Disequilibria: Meditations on Missingness* (University of New Mexico Press, 2023), *Gnome*, a lyric essay (Black Sun Lit, 2017), and *Mad Flights*, a collection of short poems (Ashland Poetry Press, 2002). Lunday lives with his wife, Yukiko, in rural Japan, with horses.

**Mariam Magsi** (she/they) is a Karachi-born, Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist working in photography, film, performance, installation, writing, storytelling and other arts. Grounded in inter-cultural and multi-faith traditions of resistance, Mariam draws on lived experience, archival inquiry, and intergenerational histories to examine memory, inheritance, gender, migration, displacement and embodied forms of belonging through anti-colonial, intersectional feminist, and queer frameworks. Mariam's practice interrupts linear, historical structures, and unsettles fixed constructions and stereotypes of marginalized identities.

**Marco Magri** is an artist, guitarist and improviser based in Italy. A sonic and visual explorer, he utilizes various creative tools like electronic sampling, field recordings and ASMR-esque techniques. In his works much emphasis is given to DIY and lo-fi ethics. His most recent artistic development centers on asemic writing and digital collages.

**Jonathan Memmert.** His poetry is published in *Anti Heroin Chic*, *Arteidolia: Swifts & Slows*, *Global City Review*, *Heavy Feather Review Side A*, *Hole In the Head Review*, *Jambu Press*, *Lone Mountain Literary Society*, *Poets for Science Global Gallery*, and *Viridine Literary Journal* (UK) in addition to other journals and anthologies. He co-edits the online poetry journal for emerging poets, *The Marbled Sigh*. He has an MFA in creative writing from The City College of New York. He lives in New York City.

**Ted Mico** began his writing career in London as Features editor at the weekly music paper *Melody Maker*. His poetry has recently featured in *Cincinnati Review*, *Lumina*, *Illanoï Review*, *Slipstream*, *Arboreal*, *Cordite Review*, and *Blood & Bourbon*. He was the featured Poet in High Windows Press Fall edition last year and was a finalist for the 2025 Yellowwood Poetry Prize. He's edited three books of non-fiction and is a regular at the Beyond Baroque poetry workshop in Venice, California.

**Ara Mikaelian /Corvengi/** is a visual artist whose work merges painting and architectural thinking in a sustained exploration of symbolism and composition. His talent was recognized at an exceptionally early age, leading to his first solo exhibition at the age of six. He later trained at the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia (1982–1987), a formative period that deeply shaped his structural and spatial approach to art. Since 1994, Corvengi has lived and worked in Barcelona, where he has developed a distinguished international career. His large-format paintings, characterized by a unique technique, evoke dreamlike worlds and emotional landscapes in which time and space dissolve.

**Melissa Moschitto** (she/her) is a fiction writer and investigative theatre maker lifting up feminist narratives to catalyze conversation and change. She is the Founding Artistic Director of The Anthropologists, a theatre company dedicated to the creation of devised research-based plays. She is the author of two published plays: *Artemisia's Intent* and *Give Us Bread*. Her fiction writing has appeared in *Macrame Literary Journal*, *The Avalon Literary Review* and *Writers Resist*. She resides in NYC with her husband and their two creative children and is currently pursuing her MFA in Creative

Writing at Cedar Crest College. [www.melissamoschitto.com](http://www.melissamoschitto.com)

**Odarley Morton**, a conceptual artist, painter, printmaker, and arts educator originally from Oakland, California, currently residing in France. With a Master's degree in Art and Art Education from Columbia University, her passion for printmaking and painting, focused toward African dancers and the essence of movement. As years pass, the interplay of movement, space, and subjects have always been central to her work. Living abroad, Odarley embarked on *Selfie Portrait Project*, to reconnect with cherished memories, exploring self awareness and honoring relationships through social media. Odarley conveys the movement of nature through her abstracted emotional portraits to engage viewers. With a multidisciplinary approach, Odarley fosters deeper connections within the artistic community, inspiring individuals who encounter her and her work.

**Sariya Okoye** was born in Seattle, Washington and currently resides in Tucson, Arizona. Her body of work includes poetry, short stories, and experimental novels. Her philosophy of life- developed as a result of her experience as a mixed-race, muslim-raised, neurodivergent, lesbian living with mental illness- is displayed in her writing.

**Thomas Piekarski** is a former editor of the *California State Poetry Quarterly*. His poetry has appeared in such publications as *Poetry Salzburg*, *Modern Literature*, *Creation Magazine*, *The Museum of Americana*, *South African Literary Journal*, *Home Planet News*, and *California Poets Anthology*. His books of poetry are *Ballad of Billy the Kid*, *Monterey Bay Adventures*, *Mercurial World*, *Aurora California*, and *Opus Borealis*.

**Paula Praeger**, an artist and writer, has exhibited her prints in the US and abroad and contributed to literary magazines. Her poems have appeared in *Hindsight*, *Cancer*, *Months to Years*, *Close Up*, *Visible Ink Anthologies*, *The Poetry Distillery*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Epistle Literary Magazine*, *Sad Girls Club*, and *Humans of the World* blogs.

**Jessica Purdy** is the author of six books of poetry including *Lung Hours*, chosen by Marsha de la O as a winner of Gunpowder Press' Dryden-Vreeland Book Prize. Her chapbook *The Adorable Knife: Poems* based on *The Nutsbell Studies of Unexplained Death* (Grey Book Press) received the NH Writers' Project People's Choice Award. Her poems have appeared in *Sixth Finch*, *Action*, *Spectacle*, *About Place*, *On the Seawall*, *Radar*, *Gone Lawn*, and elsewhere. She lives in New Hampshire.

**Sarath Reddy's** work explores themes of the Indian diaspora, memory, inheritance, and the ways culture and ritual persist and adapt within contemporary life across geography and generations. These poems are drawn from his first manuscript in progress, *Ancient Light in Borrowed Rooms*. Sarath's poetry has appeared in *JAMA*, *The Cortland Review*, *American Journal of Nursing*, *West Trade Review*, *Potomac Review*, and elsewhere.

**Omar Reyna** is a Mexican-Canadian artist who focuses on the intersection of research and the activity of making with an emphasis in lens base, sculpture and sonic art. Born in Mexico City and now residing in Yukon Territory, Canada, Omar has studied visual communication, photography, sculpture, sound art, painting, and the philosophy of image. His work has been exhibited in various countries, including Canada, Argentina, South Korea, Mexico, the UK, and the USA. Notably, Omar was a finalist in 2023, and long-listed in 2025 for the Yukon Prize for Visual Art.

**Liz Riley** is a largely self-taught textile artist from the north of England. Her work is abstract and a response to landscape, maps and the natural environment. 'Enclosures' was inspired by an enclosure map of an area close to where she lives, with social inequalities built into the landscape through the division of land. Increasingly Liz is using homemade plant dyes and earth pigments in her work, with natural materials that are from the environments that she depicts in her work. So far in 2026 she's had her work accepted into exhibitions in Kendal and Halifax.

**Madelyn Ritter** is a writer and ceramic artist based in Brooklyn, New York. Her fiction explores the quiet absurdities of everyday life and the stories people like to create about one another. *Ten Stops Left* is her first published short story.

**Radislav Rochallyi** is an artist and philosopher. He creates works at the intersection of aesthetics, logic, and conceptual thinking by combining mathematics, language, and philosophy. He is the creator of the philosophical framework TORQ, which examines the structure of reality, meaning, and knowledge by using precision, reduction, and formal systems. His work has been presented internationally and reflects his interest in perception, abstraction, and the limits of interpretation. Rochallyi's approach is characterized by his pursuit of rigorous forms of expression, using aesthetics as a tool to explore philosophical questions. Website: [rochallyi.com](http://rochallyi.com)

**Sarvagya J. Nair** is a visual and performance artist currently based in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India. He completed his BFA from Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh, and his MVA from the Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad. His practice spans drawing, installation, found materials, films, photography and performance, focusing on the body as shaped by labour, memory, and social conditions. His works often emerge from lived experiences and interactions, forming open-ended and process-based outcomes. Nair has presented performances and exhibitions across Raipur, Hyderabad, Delhi, and Dehradun, including projects with the Hexxyduxybox artistic collective (International Behavioural Art Festival), Conflitorium (Raipur), 14th Hyderabad

Literary Festival and Imagery Art Space. His performance-based documentary film *The Nobel Man* has been officially selected at the 12th Goa Short Film Festival and other platforms.

**Kaila Schwartz** runs an award-winning high school theatre program in the San Francisco Bay Area where she lives with her spouse and kitty overlords. She loves ekphrastic writing and can often be seen in museums scribbling away in notebooks. Her work can be seen in *Ekphrastic Review*, *Boudin*, *Metaphrastics*, and *Still Point Arts Quarterly*, among others.

**Hal Shipman** (b. 1963; Denton, TX) - Hal's artistic practice is centered around the narrative power of the family story and his family roots in rural West Texas. He centers this work around the story of his great-uncle, Bill Gavin, who lived and died of alcoholism, while in the closet in Abilene. Hal received his BFA Studio Art (Photography) from Rice University in Houston in 1989 and his MFA Studio (Photography) from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2024.

**Peter Vukmirovic Stevens** is a composer and visual artist based in Paris. His practice moves between visual art and composition, often exploring how marks, lines, and spatial arrangements can function as both image and score.

**Luiza Stere** is a Romanian multidisciplinary textile artist working with embroidery, stitching, and found fabrics to explore memory, intimacy, and emotional residue. Her practice transforms garments and textile surfaces into layered narratives where personal histories and human connection are embedded through handwork and material fragmentation. She is interested in the tension between softness and rupture, and how fragile materials can carry intense emotional states. Through experimental textile techniques and reconstruction, she builds tactile compositions that reflect lived experience, relationships, and subconscious imagery emerging through process and touch.

**Peri Sutherland** is a fine art photographer based in Houston, Texas. Her work explores psychological space, perception, and the quiet tension between connection and absence. She creates images that often focus on thresholds, light and structures that suggest waiting and a benevolent presence. Her ongoing project, *How We Wait* considers how environments hold emotion, memory and longing. Sutherland's practice is rooted in wandering, contemplation and allowing meaning to emerge through stillness.

**V. E. Taylor** is a Tennessee poet and author whose work offers a soft place for loud feelings. A two-time cancer survivor and mother, she writes from the fault line between grief and grit, where desire, memory, and the body are allowed to speak in full color. Her poems blend sensuality, cinematic imagery, and Southern sensibility, moving between salt-of-the-earth realism and a low, witchy shimmer. She is drawn to the quiet intensity of survival stories, slow-burning love, and women learning to belong fully to themselves.

**Robert Teteruck** is a photographer based in Toronto, Canada. He has been involved in a number of exhibitions in Canada and abroad including Capitol Hill in Washington, the Power Plant, Toronto City Hall, Ryerson Gallery, Gallery 44, Market Gallery in Toronto and the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. His work is included in a number of public collections including the Archives of Ontario, the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA), the City of Toronto Archives, Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) study collection. Published work include images for *Time*, *Macleans*, *The Globe and Mail*, CNN, *Photolife* and *Descant* among others.

**Randy Tibbits** is an old gray gay guy living in Houston, Texas. He writes for his Substack space, *Recollections, Reflections, Fantasies, Fictions: Scenes Of a Life I Think Was Mine*. His writing has also appeared in *Superpresent*, *Houston Press*, *Arts&Culture Texas*, *The Gay and Lesbian Review*, *Art Inquiries*, *The Magazine of the Houston Post* and several art exhibition catalogs. He has exhibited his *Naughty Boy Needlepoints* in solo and group exhibitions, including *The Big Show 2026*, at Lawndale Art Center, Houston. He is now old enough to "remember when" – and, thank goodness, is still able to.

**Cecil Touchan** (born 1956, Austin, Texas) is a contemporary American artist, poet, and theorist, best known for his Typographic Abstraction works. His practice involves dismantling, reassembling, and collaging typography from billboards and printed materials to transform language into visual architecture. His work ranges from small-scale, intimate collages to large-scale paintings on canvas and panels. His collage work has influenced various designers, including a 2019 collaboration with Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons. Lives and works in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Angela Townsend** is an eleven-time Pushcart Prize nominee, twenty-one time Best of the Net nominee, and the winner of *The Iowa Review's* Tim McGinnis Award and *West Trade Review's* 704 Prize for Flash Fiction. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *Arts & Letters*, *Blackbird*, *Five Points*, *Fourth Genre*, *JMWW*, *The Offing*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, *trampset*, and *Witness*.

**Joshua Zeitler** is a queer, nonbinary writer based in rural Michigan. They are the author of the chapbook *Bliss Road* (Seven Kitchens Press, 2025), and their work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Poetry Daily*, *Ploughshares*, *Foglifter*, *Sho*, *Hypertext*, and elsewhere.



